CONCEPTS OF SALVATION, AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN
Prolegomena to African Christian theology

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The title of our thesis speaks of concepts of salvation, African and European; the idea of concepts rather than concept indicates that the conceptions of salvation in African and European Christianity are not entirely identical. At any rate the notion of salvation is a basic tenet not only in both Christianities but also in all religious systems. This last point is particularly significant to our context since we cannot entirely talk about African and European concepts of salvation without assuming the legitimate contributions of African and European pre-Christian religions. However, the present thesis is not necessarily a report of a study of the theme of salvation; instead the notion is taken by our enquiry as the basic focus of theology which merely directed our investigations.

The phrase "African and European" is meant to emphasise the point that the basic problem of inauthenticity which has hitherto dominated the discussions of African Christian theology is a consequence of the encounter between African and European religious cultures. Historically speaking the meeting of these two cultures is prior to the overflowing of European populations beyond the borders of Western Christendom; and so prior to the modern idea of "the West" or "Western". However, our use of "European" and "Western" in the present thesis is on most occasions synonymous.

Again, the sub-title "prolegomena to African Christian theology", is an indication that our study is also to be considered as an attempt to contribute towards the clearing of the ground for any subsequent theological activity which can be said to be free from the present
preoccupation with the issue of authenticity. However, the idea of "clearing of the ground for any subsequent theological activity" does not necessarily mean that our research is simply preparatory in nature. Neither is its concern merely one of giving advice on how African Christian theology should be done. Instead the thesis may also be taken as an endeavour to establish the proper basis for (African) Christian theology; it is obvious that the various advices on how African Christian theology should be done tended to take less seriously the indispensability of such a basis. Our attempt in this thesis to establish it is thus a theological one which particularly involved the analysis, albeit limited, of the basic data of the Old Testament, the New Testament and the Early Church (cf. Chapter Eight, section 3). It is of course the case that the definitive context of our research is the world of African Christian theology. It does not, however, follow that that world is also definitive of the character of our enquiry or determinative of the nature of our conclusions. This is because the general field of Christian theology is the arena from which we basically asked and answered theological and other questions. We say other questions because our approach is largely inter-disciplinary. The inter-disciplinary approach is made necessary by the fact that, strictly speaking, cosmological, sociological, 'philosophical' and theological questions cannot be clearly and neatly separated from one another. Neither in biblical nor in African religious awareness are such separations made. At any rate it is part of the arguments of our present thesis that such separations need not be too sharply made. We may now say something at this juncture on some of the characteristics of our present thesis:

(a) As already pointed out our research is also fully committed to the necessity of solving the problem of inauthenticity which is presently the bane of African Christian theology. It is this commitment which
partly compelled our preparedness to interrogate existing knowledge seriously. Thus it is, perhaps, true to say that the terrain followed is as much dry as it is soft. Perhaps "faith" is on the whole called upon to face "facts" in our approach. However, the pattern of our enquiry is one of a constructive arrival at a better and effective theological understanding. Although we have learnt in the course of those enquiries that an objective approach is not always a true representative of the investigator's subjective feelings or convictions; nevertheless, it is the most reliable partner in any serious research.

(b) The thesis is structurally divided into four parts. The first part (more specifically Chapter One) sets out the 'theoretical' basis for the remaining part of the thesis. The second part examines the data provided by the Biblical world and the Early Church in the light of the conclusions of the first part. The third part does the same, though in a general sense, with the relevant materials from the Western theological history. The fourth part deals basically with African data. Thus throughout Chapters Two to Nine the 'theoretical' factors established in Chapter One are used as analytical criteria for assessing the relevant data. Among the factors are such notions as "ankhological" (from the ancient Egyptian word ankh = life), nousological (from the Greek word nous = 'mind'), and sunyatological (from the Sanskrit word sunyata = void). There are also such notions as "Persian primary interpretation", and "Einsteinian interpretation". All these factors and notions are, with the exception of the Einsteinian interpretation used as crucial theological notions; all are, however, shown to be primary perceptions of the world which in turn determined the characters of theological perceptions of Deity, man and his salvation, and the world. They are also used as analytical and explanatory concepts. It is also to them that our concepts of marginalisation/peripheralisation, and dominance/predominance are allied. All of these are basic to our analyses throughout the study. The
Introduction is more or less a prolegomenon which anticipates what came later in the chapters. It is perhaps also worth pointing out that all our eggs are not to be found in the one basket of the opening chapters, as the structural division into parts partially implies.

(c) It is necessary to say something about footnoting in the present thesis. We are well aware of the occasional complaint against "the tyranny of the footnote" (cf. J.P. McKinney, 1971, p.xii). But the realm of theological studies is a realm of controversies and objections. Consequently most definitive theological works have long learnt to live with the tyrant rather than leave out altogether questions which will only distort the flow of argument in the body of the text. Our thesis has also to deal with an additional problem because of the wider canvas in which it (the thesis) is set. As a result a chapter is almost invariably all we can devote to a given area of knowledge among the areas the general nature of our research took us into. Thus the occasional long footnotes in the thesis are perhaps the only way by which we can minimise the greater problem of raising too many unanswered questions. And we hope the reader will bear with us. It is also the case that on few occasions the full titles of the works of quoted authors are given in the bibliography rather than in the footnotes and references. This obtained particularly with Chapter Four.

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ABBREVIATIONS

AACC  All Africa Conference of Churches
AAR   American Academy of Religion
CMS   Church Missionary Society
CUP   Cambridge University Press
JIAI  Journal of the International African Institute
IRM   International Review of Mission
MMS   Methodist Missionary Society
OUP   Oxford University Press
RSV   Revised Standard Version
SOAS  School of Oriental and African Studies

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INTRODUCTION

I

Historical indications: The history and tradition of African Christian theology\(^1\) have their beginnings in the theological output of the "saints" and "heretics" of the Early African Church; represented by such great minds as Tertullian, Cyprian of Carthage, Origen, Arius,\(^2\) Athanasius, Cyril of Alexandria and Augustine of Hippo - to name only some of the best known ones. This initial surge of theological consciousness attained its highest growth point between the third and fifth centuries A.D.

The Early Church of North and North-east Africa like the Churches of modern missionary movement, came into being in a colonial context. As a result it could not get its roots past the inevitable conflicts inherent to such situations into the fertile soil of the Continent. Thus seventh-century African Christianity\(^3\) probably never welcomed Islam on any other ground than on that of a nostalgic search for political freedom and cultural and cosmological authenticity. In its existential predicament Islam was a liberator.

The European spirit began in earnest to break loose from the confinement of Christendom in the fifteenth century, in search of gold, spices, and lands to colonise. The Church followed in its trail. Thus between

1. We do, of course, reject the objections raised against the concept, African Christian theology. Thus we consider the concept adequate just as we do concede the validity of "Western theology" and "Eastern theology". And we are not aware of objections being raised against these. For an objection against the African case, cf. Pro Mundi Vita, "African theology" and theologising in Africa", Pro Mundi Vita Dossiers, March 1976; for its dismissal, cf. A. Shorter, African Christian Theology (London, 1975) pp.27-29.

2. Both Arius and Origen were condemned as heretics. The latter's condemnation is generally regarded by modern scholars as one of those miscarriages of justice in the Early Church; cf. The Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. IV, p.229.

3. Our unitary and Continental view of African Christianity is a conscious rejection of the basic premise of African Studies in the West which speaks of black Africa of "Africa South of the Sahara" and "black white men" of North Africa in the bid to retain certain theses built out of the nineteenth century evolutionary theories and foisted on Africa, with particular reference to Egypt.
the fifteenth and the third quarter of the eighteenth centuries Roman Catholic planted churches were scattered at various strategic points near the coasts of West, South and East Africa. However, the resilience of African traditional religion, and the close relationship of the Catholic missionaries and the slave traders assured, with time, their total extinction. This was before the turn of modern missionary activities in the continent spearheaded by the recently mission-conscious European Protestants and by the equally telling "modern Catholic work in Africa". The main object of attack to these modern missions is African culture; that is to say, the African way of life.

Both the Protestant missionary work in Africa and the reactivated Roman Catholic missionary enterprise began towards the end of the eighteenth century with the British Government's decision to repatriate the freed and the runaway, if socially rejected, black slaves inhabiting the slums of English cities. The spot chosen for their resettlement is Freetown on the west coast of Africa. The outcome of this unsolicited hug by Western Christianity is the coming into being of "African Missionary Christianity" which, as a descriptive term, covers the missionary churches. In using the term, "missionary church" we have simply followed Edward W. Blyden. From this usage we have also derived the collective term "mission Church" or "missionary Church", and "non-mission Church" or "non-

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5. Cf. Fr. P. Charles, S.J., History of Missions, Dossiers: 76-100, St. Joseph Missiehuis-Roosendaal, pp.95-98. This undated "dossiers" was prepared for the use of the students of the named institution. On the question of the initial Protestant lack of missionary-consciousness Fr. Charles points out that, "the Reformation...was practically sterile from the missionary point of view for 250 years" (p.95). A helpful clue to the question of dating is the remark, "In 1949 Africa ..." (p.72).
missionary Church". The latter represents the so-called "Independent Churches" in our present study. Though the difficulty with it is that Ethiopian and other older African Churches can legitimately be so described. However, we are going to use it with the "Independents" in mind (cf. Chapter Nine).

II

The reasons for our enquiry: The pains and problems of African Christianity, issuing in the despairing calls of "Africanisation", "contextualisation", etc. coupled with the lack of a convincing direction in much that goes for African Christian theology have all led our research-probings to the whole question of the nature of salvation in the religions of mankind. Christian theology has so far appeared to be unaware that the term, God, is a (theological) code-word. Neither the nature of salvation nor the basis of Christian theology, or any other theology for that matter, could be properly understood before it is decoded. This task is certainly taken up by our thesis.

The call of African theologians for Africanisation, etc. has an immediate cause: African primary interpretation of the world is locked in an unseen and yet mortal struggle with its European counterpart, which is still all too alive in our mission churches. In this primordial struggle African traditional religion has refused to yield; and it is doing the cause of Christ incalculable good by that refusal. For its giving up might well spell the disintegration of the African cosmos, and the collapse of African Christian faith. It will be our aim to demonstrate that the questions of salvation and theology can never be properly answered outside the context of a primary interpretation of the universe.

African theology, I would argue, is called upon to proceed analytically to the heart of the matter, especially since the descriptive approach has revealed its limitations. The task of African Christian theology is not one of adapting aspects of African culture to Western theological con-
clusions. Its task is to embark on an original assessment of the biblical data to see to what extent Western theological methodologies understood or misunderstood them. And then to address the social, political, cultural, and scientific realities of the (African) world with the results of such original assessment.

One of the crucial questions asked by our research is, "Is Western theological and methodological understanding of the bible possibly mistaken in any significance sense after all?" This pregnant question must be goaded to deliver its answers for the sake of the vitality of Christian theology and the authenticity of African Christian theology. Our insistence on the question means that we do not consider it necessary that African Christian theology should remain trapped in the complexities of the dated missionary origin of the larger segment of our Churches. Neither are we prepared to accept that it is a matter of course to foist on African missionary Christianity, through the back door of its Western missionary history, the various Western theological conclusions and methodologies.

However, we may put forward at this juncture the idea that the essence of Western primary interpretation of the world is MIND. It is an explanatory concept central in Western cosmology probably since the days of the Greek philosophers. It is equally the given presupposition in the Western understanding of the bible. It is also our thesis that the notion of LIFE is the kernel of African primary interpretation of phenomena; and the presupposition of her religious data. It is equally obvious that the biblical world would lose its core-meaning outside this notion of life. We will take up these matters in Chapter One. However, what we may say at this point is that both notions (mind and life) stem from two clearly different primary interpretations of the world.

This denomination of the dominant answers given by Western and African primary interpretations of the world immediately exposes the weaknesses in the positions of both the theology of contextualisation and the Black the-
ology of liberation. To speak of weaknesses is not, of course, to speak
of total ineffectiveness. However, as a theological system liberation
theology lacks sufficient source materials to enable it to sustain a the­
ological structure capable of bearing all the biblical data on Christian
theology. It seems to belong more comfortably to a branch of Moral the­
oLOGY. At any rate the serious issue which liberation theology has not
satisfactorily faced is that of its minimal appeal outside the context of
oppression. To be noted also is the fact that liberation theology is a
wayward son of Western theology. These matters will be discussed more
fully in Chapter Eight.

The major appeal of contextualisation theology is its grasp of the
necessity of African culture for African Christianity and theology. How­
ever, it still remains a species of Western theology, for its basic pre­
mises derive from it. Hence its difficulty in digesting most of the
materials taken out of African cultures in its conscious attempt to Af­
ricanise or contextualise. Our point is that African theology has yet to
read the bible from a standpoint which is free from the Western "neo-
Platonic" interpretation of it.

We will next take a look at some of the historical forms in which West­
ern theology has manifested itself. We would use the notion of life already
mentioned above as our criterion of assessment. As has been pointed out it
forms the very intentionality of the biblical sources. It is perhaps help­
ful at this point if we anticipate some of the conclusions of subsequent dis­
cussions by pointing out that life, as the essence of God and man's derived
meaning, in its total implications and concreteness, is not, in our judg­
ment, clearly or seriously addressed in both Western and Eastern meta­
physico-theological systems. The landscape of Western theological pilgrimage,
from its earliest origin in Patristic times through the medieval scholastic­
ism to the modern secular theologies, is one panorama of actions and re­
actions. The underlying ferment can perhaps be safely categorised as the
struggle of life to free itself from the strictures of metaphysical philos­ophy which both cradled and straddled it from the very beginning of West­ern and Eastern theological reflections. This metaphysico-philosophical influence naturally led to the mistaken and relentless view of theology as theodicy. In this system, man, who of all creatures is the highest embodiment of life, has little more than a rough, if reckless, deal. It is also important to note that the God who is the subject of the theodicy is either the mathematical One of neo-Platonism or the product of the scholastic syl­logistic method – the God of reason. 'He' is in every respect different from the living God of the biblical world-view, the "I am that I am". It must be noted, however, that scholasticism already assumed the God of faith which it tried to prove by reason; but He was by now identified with the One of metaphysics.

Anselm's notion of "that than which a greater cannot be thought", Thomas Aquinas' Aristotelian-inspired idea of "First Cause", Spinoza's concept of "Nature" or "Substance", Hegel's notion of the restless Mind (Geist) of History are differing ways of accounting for the One. But this One is no longer the God of Deutero-Isaiah who resides in the realm of religious experience and is encountered as a living Being.

Schleiermacher, on his part, ignored much of the theological assump­tions of his predecessors and began his massive The Christian Faith with the pious notions of "religious consciousness" and the feeling of "absolute dependence". The book embodies for the first time the airs of modern theology of which Schleiermacher himself is the father. Feuerbach followed the path opened by Schleiermacher with fuller vigour and fewer qualms and

9. Western pessimistic view of man derived much of its elements from European traditional religion and from St. Augustine's teaching on the Fall, Original Sin and Grace. So it is in order to point out that Eastern theology has a healthier and more sympathetic view of man. More on these points later.
consequently reduced theology to anthropology in his, The Essence of Christianity. With both men a new path in Western theologising was opened; it increasingly brought Western theology face to face with the principles of humanism. In other words, theology was beginning to learn the 'parts' of anthropodicy in place of the now worn-out theodicy. However, despite Schleiermacher's innovations, life as the concern of religion and theology has not been seriously faced by Western theology. That is the limitation that attends any system built on such a metaphysical notion as the Mind.

Søren Kierkegaard came nearer to this question of life only to end up grasping the "dread of existence" rather than grasping that life is the immediate and eschatological meaning of all existence. After the experience of the brutality of the Great War (1914-1918) in which the demonic aspect of scientific progress fully unmasked itself coupled with the scientific undermining of the Western metaphysical world-view this Kierkegaardian thesis would gain full flowering in existentialism.

Then the note of "God the problem" became inevitable and soon led to the "death of God" movement in the America of the nineteen-sixties. The movement operated in the context of what Brian Wicker describes as "an historically new situation" - the secular society.

Karl Barth wrote shortly after the turn of this century; he himself admits that the time was ripe for an effective attack on the nineteenth century liberalism and humanism. The idea seems to be to make them know that the human carnage of the Great War had presented them with inexplicable problems. Humanism's evolutionary hope that in the future lay the moment when man would lose his claws and canine appetite is an illusion fostered by a defective evaluation of scientific progress. Liberal theology also

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14. His Epistle to the Romans was published in 1918
tended to assume that man can come to know God by searching. Barth equally rejects this assumption with his concept of revelation. Hence he catapulted Deity out of human firmament and beyond human reach. His visits could now only be conceptualised in terms of occasional revelational thrusts downwards. Thus God cannot be known outside revelation. 16

Then the theological and religious problem of "God up there" became acute and intolerable to "pious" minds like Paul Tillich and J.A.T.Robinson. They promptly returned the whole question of the relation of God to man and to the world to the drawing board, in reaction: the notion of God as the "Ground of Being" or "Being itself" is not really different from the "Ultimate Reality" or "Nature" (as God) of the ancient philosophers and the pantheists. Nor do the nature deities of northern Europeans not share in any of the characteristics of such being. For all nature itself manifests deity. But to the general run of religious piety the sky is ominously 'unoccupied', with respect to the concept of Ground of Being; the firmament is 'devoid' of any personal Being to reassure the theistic believer. This is partly the problem posed to Western Christianity by the theory of relativity (cf. Chapter Seven).

The kind of theological changes we have hitherto noted are almost wholly absent from the East. Eastern "Christendom" had been securely furbished with a highly sophisticated cultus and rituals. In the absence of any serious ecclesiastical, social or scientific disruption of the religious community it is normal that theological fermentation would be slow to rise and gain a clear direction. 17 However, theology in the East as in the West, on the whole, has hardly addressed itself to the notion that the concern of religion is not religion but life.

17. Thus the Russian Communist revolution, which gave rise to the emigration of many Russian theologians to the West, particularly to Paris, had to give rise to a theological movement reflecting the experiences of the fermentation; cf. W.M.Horton, Contemporary Continental Theology (London, 1938) pp. 1-40.
Turning to the changes the understanding of salvation might have undergone in the light of the above review we may note that in a healthy theology the understanding of God, man and salvation form a complex whole. However, the notion of life which is clearly visible through the pages of the bible could not really be expected to survive with its full glow within the 'neo-Platonic' structure of thought employed by the Early Church theologians. Certainly the note of the triumph of the Son of God over the demonic powers remained alive, but the inevitable (see Chapter Five) rise of heresies and internal controversies, increasingly led to the use of such weapons as credal formularies and excommunications. Then, in the equation of pressing factors, attention shifted away from the notion of the victory of life over death to catholicity over heresy.

Augustine's whole teaching on the subjects of original sin and predestination on the one hand, and Pelagius' view of human freedom on the other, illustrate in no uncertain terms that "the drama of salvation" had taken a radical theodical recast. The preposterous "ransom theory" had been taken for granted until Anselm appeared on the scene (1033-1109) to spell its end with his "satisfaction theory". This latter posits God as a feudal lord whose wounded honour requires to be mended with the death of Jesus. This being is hardly the "Father of our Lord Jesus Christ", despite the fact that the theory made sense to medieval Europeans. Abelard's rather modern view of Christ as our Teacher and Example, whose death on the cross moves us to sympathy and love, could not soften or shift the Augustinian grip on the Western Church. Also Aquinas, after minor though important modifications, still left Augustinianism in its stead. However, we must point out that the Catholic Church was more emphatic on Augustine's teaching on the Church than on his teaching on the Fall and original sin. His teaching of the latter would come back remorselessly in the Magisterial Reformers. While Abelard's ideas had to wait the rise of the nineteenth century liberalism

of which Abelard himself may be considered a forerunner.

The Reformers, in line with the spirit of Renaissance went back to the writings of the ancients; in this case to the Scriptures and the writings of the Church Fathers, especially to Augustine's. As a consequence they rejected the legalistic "latin view" of salvation in favour of a reinforced Augustinian doctrine of the Fall and original sin. The unscriptural doctrine of "total depravity" was the outcome. Despite Aulen's apologetics on behalf of Luther and the Reformers the fact remains that they did fail to grasp that the concern of religion is life. The profusion of Confessional formularies at this period and the religious wars and persecutions do put that failure in clear relief.

Any concept of salvation necessarily assumes a given system of anthropological, cosmological and theological understandings. The three belong together. However, the last is extremely vulnerable to any serious breach in the first or the second. The unintentional and intentional assaults were to come from many and often unexpected quarters: from Luther, with his policy of the mass production of vernacular bibles; from Copernicus, with his then mind-boggling relegation of the position of the earth to that of mere satellite of the sun; from Descartes, with his cogito ego sum, implying a prior doubting of received impressions and traditions simply on the authority of the exercise of his own individual thought. With him the rationalists learnt to elevate and honour thinking and appreciate doubt. From Newton, with his scientific establishment of the principle of Natural Law, which apparently does not require the hand of God to keep the universe going; from David Hume, with his philosophic system which in various ways undermined the certainties of the orthodox Faith, thereby making them depend on make-belief; from Darwin, with his theory of evolution which provided an alternative to the Genesis account of creation and the Fall; from Einstein, with his theory of relativity, which strengthened the position of "secular

society", and from Freud, with his psychological theory which undermined the traditional Christian anthropology. All these factors combined to shake the Western theological construction of the world to its foundations. The end result was the rise of secularism, and the consequent separation of the secular and the sacred; and, of course, theological confusion (pp.61,239-240) for a distinction between "cosmologico-secularism" and "secularism").

The separation opened the way for science to endear itself to the mind of secular society - with its apparent ability to deliver results which "enhance life". Its demonic and destructive dimensions are simply viewed as the "unavoidable" dangers which come with the goods.

Ironically this "new situation" with its different diagnoses of man's salvation in a differently interpreted universe tends to come to the same prescription which Gilgamesh had advocated for humanity at the dawn of history: "Eat and drink", as if hedonism is the ultimate definition of life. Nevertheless, the untheodical tone of this prescription, though narrowly conceived and with a pessimistic abandon, proved a better gospel to many a secular mind than the Church's other-worldly oriented teachings. The Church on her part largely responded to the secular situation with added stress on the supernatural nature of faith, as is made clear by the teaching of the eighteenth-century revivalists. The latter did not share the idea of "eat and drink". However, their message appealed to the rich partly because they were already rich, and to the poor mainly because they would get their reward in heaven.

Meanwhile, African slaves had provided the West with the labour which created the wealth that made the Industrial Revolution possible. The Industrial Revolution in turn made the slave trade redundant, with its mass production of products. Mass production in turn called for more and more foreign markets for both the procuring of raw materials and the disposal of finished products. The search for foreign markets, which increasingly turned

imperialistic and eventually issued in colonialism, coincided with the missionary thrust into the African continent. The latter went with theological systems which viewed evangelism in terms of the propagation of "the life to come", at the expense of one's present personal and commensal life, of course. Consequently African mission Christianity was not well placed to listen with a nostalgic attention to the insistence of African traditional religion that life is the meaning of the world. Equally the conflict between traditional culture and the missions effectively debarred traditional religion from learning that human life in many respects is not only one to be lived but also one to be saved. The reconciling voice of the emerging non-mission Churches was effectively drowned in the heat of the conflict.

It is now the task of the main body of this thesis to explore and work out the basic issues raised in this Introduction for it is a pressing necessity that this notion of LIFE be brought to the forefront of Christian theology.

III

Scope of the study: It is generally accepted that research studies confined to a given theme, subject, or to a limited area of the field of a particular discipline would be more likely to exhaust all the questions and problems arising in the context of the research and yield better results than one based on a very wide area, which may at worst prove unmanageable. It is equally an open secret that research institutions do prefer and encourage the former, and rightly too. However, it is at the same time recognised that certain research problems do impose their own rules of procedure. It is our opinion that our present enquiry, which investigates (a) the apparent inability of African Christian theology to proceed with its task in a clearly convincing manner and (b) the Western theological understanding of the bible, do fall within this latter category.

At any rate is traditional Africa not now called upon by the complexities of the problems placed upon her collective consciousness by her varied
and sophisticated historical experiences of the last four hundred years to take a wider view of things and critically re-examine all forms of knowledge bequeathed to her by 'fate' and 'fortune'? The particular has meaning only in the context of the general; both dimensions need the attention of African Studies.

IV

Nature of the study: The study is an exercise concerned with deriving from the biblical world its central concern without which its basic teaching would be lost on us - and any theological method or hermeneutic largely unrepresentative. It is also an attempt to establish that central concern as the proper base for Christian theology, African, European or Asian. Our approach is more or less one of perceiving theological questions in the light of man's phenomenological experiences of the world and God as distinct from the traditional Western metaphysical procedure.
PART ONE

CHRISTIANISATION AND THEOLOGICAL DISAGREEMENT
CHAPTER ONE

THE PRESUPPOSITIONS IN THE CRISIS
(of Christianisation and Theological Disagreement)

1. The Context of the Disagreement:

We are to bear in mind that it is the predicament of African Christianity, evident in both the social and the church life of many Christians and in the writings of their theologians, which necessitated our enquiry.

The problem of inauthenticity which still obtains in the African Church stems, of course, from the historical experiences of her missionary church segment. The missionaries from Europe and America, who entered Africa in force from the early decades of the nineteenth century, were not merely actuated by evangelistic motives. Evangelistic motives alone would imply that they had a home Church base to which they were eager to return as soon as the Holy Spirit had accomplished conversions through


2. The Missionary Societies tended to maintain independent and separate existence from the Churches. Consequently they existed solely for the purpose of planting and maintaining Western-type Christianities in other lands. The recent desire to operate from within the cover and legitimisation of particular Church denominations are more in reaction to protests from the receiving nations than out of anything else. Cf. J. Rossel, 'In the Process of Change' (in) IHRM, Vol.LXII, No. 245, January 1973, p.26 ff.
their proclamations. In which case the new converts would have had the final say in the organisation and administration of their new Churches along the lines of the principles inherent in the total reality of the New Testament. That this was not the pattern things followed was partly because the missionaries were also inspired by the colonial spirit which had already, in the course of the centuries since the fifteenth, conditioned the European view of non-European lands. As a matter of fact the southern tip of South Africa was already colonised from as early as the seventeenth century. The nineteenth century newcomers, having learnt the lessons of the failure of the earlier Roman Catholic presence in the continent, had come to stay. Yet the new Churches were never conceived as African Churches. They were, instead, viewed as Western Churches catering for African converts from 'paganism'. The African church members did not, of course, immediately realise that their missionary-churches were not really African Churches, administratively and theologically speaking. However, the realisation gradually dawned on them.


4. Dutch presence in this area began in the first half of the seventeenth century. Permanent settlements began in 1652.

5. The collapse of the pre-nineteenth century Catholic work made the Protestants and the renewed Catholic enterprise extremely nervous in their dealings with African culture. They were wholly determined, this time, to assure the triumph of Western Christianities at the expense of African culture. The latter was generally considered as essentially demonic. The strategy deemed most effective at the early stages was that of founding holy "Christian villages" to keep in African converts and keep out heathendom. Cf. R. Oliver, op.cit., pp.50-73; J.P. Jordan, Bishop Shanahan of Southern Nigeria (Dublin, 1949), p.35; C.M.S., Notes on Africa for Missionary Students (Salisbury Square, 1906) pp. 16-17. This book was issued by the CMS for the guidance of their prospective missionaries. It aims at pointing out avoidable pitfalls which brought the initial Roman Catholic work in Africa to nought.
in the course of their experiences of the alien nature of the administrative set up.

The above factors mark the beginnings of that European endeavour to bring the life-style of the African in line with that of the West. The technical term for it is 'civilisation'. The hope was to achieve it through Christianisation. At any rate, the achievement of such a goal clearly required the constriction of African culture, which stood in the way. The missionaries, consciously and unconsciously, never moved back from adopting this latter policy. They took the first step with the categorisation of that culture as paganism and heathenism. The dog can now be hanged; it has got a bad name. However, things were far from being that easy because African church members are equally the authoritative bearers of their proscribed culture. The call for Africanisation by the Churches, which reached its peak in the nineteen-seventies with the call for a moratorium, bears clear evidence to their inevitable commitment to the culture which 'created' their world.


8. Cf. E. Kendall, op.cit., see Chapter Six entitled 'Moratorium'. For an Evangelical discussion of the subject cf. P. Watakama, Independence for the Third World Church (Downers Grove, Illinois, 1976). The idea of moratorium as it was used in the context of African missionary-christianity basically means the demand by the leaders of the African mission Churches that their respective mother-denominations in the West leave them alone - for a while! This period of being on their own is supposed to be a period in which the missionary-churches should discover their true self, culturally, spiritually and financially.
This cultural vitality can never be properly grasped without recourse to a people's primary interpretation of the world; an interpretation, which at every given moment, gives that world its meaning and, therefore, its cosmological balance. It is one of the theses of the present study that this primary interpretation usually underpins the basic disagreement or eventual indepth agreement in culture clash or encounter between belief-systems. It is certainly our claim that it constitutes the fundamental area of theological disagreement between African traditional religion and Western Christianity from the moment of their encounter on the African soil. Thus the anxieties and the problems of African Christianity stem from the failure of African and European primary interpretations to come to agreement over this question of (view of) meaning, and over the issues arising from it.

2. Three Primary Interpretations of the World:

By a primary interpretation we mean that which follows on an a priori cosmologico-existential question and as such is not a posteriori to its present cultural, cosmological, or religious context. It is instead the that which informs and conditions that context; the teleological kernel in which such context attains its harmony.

It is the realisation of this factor which makes it clear that no theological construction would be true to the system it claims to represent and interpret without embodying as its own theological kernel the very kernel of that system. This obviously places us on the threshold of a 'different' theological and soteriological understanding of the bible, as will become clear in Chapters Three and Four. Another point which we may stress is that it is of the nature of the various cosmologico-

religious systems of the world to embody various primary interpretations; that is to say, meaning. We must therefore shake off the understandable temptation to confine ourself to the analyses of African and Western primary interpretations; as if the question does not involve other culture-worlds. Consequently we are including a third interpretation for more extended discussion, than would be the case with the "Persian interpretation" or the "Einsteinian interpretation", both of which will be encountered in the course of the thesis.

Let us also note that the concept of primary interpretation (it could also be a revelation - more on this point later) in a given culture-world also implies the existence of other interpretations of the world which are not considered primary by the culture-world. That is to say, none of them is subscribed to by the majority of the people covered by the culture-world. Consequently they are marginalised as the opinions of the minorities. However, what is marginalised in one culture-world may in another culture-world be the dominant standpoint. And a given dominant primary interpretation at a given period in time may in the course of history become a marginalised interpretation. All these seemingly complex questions will gradually become clear as we go on. At any rate the important point to bear in mind with respect to this paragraph is that every culture-world is the actual matrix of the different (that is, the dominant and the marginalised) views of meaning, which may be raised at different points in the present study. However, it is necessary for us to avoid a muddled analysis and account; so we will pay most attention to the all important primary interpretations (i.e. views of meaning) in our enquiry.

We have already said that an a priori question presupposed a given interpretation. Three different a priori questions are involved in the three Interpretations we are about to consider: (a) a philosophical-
question, (b) an existential-question and (c) a philosophico-existential-question. The first, in practice, stands at one remove from the immediate entailments of our three interpretations. But it is, nevertheless, implicated. By itself it deals with questions of ultimate reality (or realities) in a scientifically oriented sense. It deals with it for its own sake; for the sake of obtaining epistemological facts. It does not pretend to be cosmological in its answers. In other words, it is not concerned with any form of a religious salvation of man. The second type of question proceeds with a clear understanding that a 'philosophical-question', which is scientifically oriented, and legitimately for that matter, cannot at the same time be an existential-question. Its contention is that two different, but legitimate, questions cannot be asked and answered in the same breath. Consequently it proceeds to deal with the existential-question; but, in so doing, has put on one side the scientifically oriented question - viewing it as a separate question to be asked for its own sake, later. Its meaning of the world is, as a result, conditioned by its view of the place of life in a world that, on the whole, tends to undermine life.

These clear distinctions seen in the first and in the second types of question disappear with the third type. The latter, instead, undertakes the roles of the first and the second and, in its impatience, consistently confuses the scientific and the existential positions. This confusion, in its manner of interrogating the chaotic world, consequently characterised the nature of its interpretation (its view of meaning\textsuperscript{10}). More on these distinctions later.

\textsuperscript{10} We have used this term, meaning, to the extent that we can no longer remain oblivious to a possible philosophical retort of 'supernaturalism', metaphysicism, or 'verification', despite the fact that we are basically using it in a theological sense. Basically such retorts do derive their assumptions largely from the context of the opposing conflicts foisted on 'nature' and 'supernature' in the West. Cf. A.J. Ayer, \textit{Language, Truth and Logic} (London, 1946); L. Wittgenstein, (continued on next page)
3. An Asian primary interpretation:

We may point out, before undertaking the discussion of the three primary interpretations in this chapter and in Chapter Two, that our concern is not as much as arguing our way to the establishment of a theory or theories as of naming what we regard as the views of meaning dominant in the cosmologico-religious worlds considered. This distinction implies that supportive materials (in the nature of proofs) can fairly be kept down to the minimal as the primary interpretations eventually isolated are already recognised chief-characteristics of the systems under consideration. In this connection it is perhaps helpful to indicate at this point that the method we used to identify the primary interpretations is a very simple one which involves: (a) the knowledge of the teaching of the religion (or cosmology) under consideration; (b) the isolation of its chief characteristics; (c) the identification of its basic characteristic, which usually legitimises the chief characteristics - more often than not this basic characteristic is understood as God. But this does not prevent the further question as to the meaning (as opposed to his/its attributes) of this God. It is this further question

10. (continued from previous page)

Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (London and Henley, 1961, 1974) paperback; John Hick, 'Theology and Verification' (in) The Philosophy of Religion, ed., B. Mitchell (OUP, London, 1971) pp.53-71; the series of debates in New Essays in Philosophical Theology give a good coverage of the problems relating to this issue of meaning. (It is edited by A. Flew and A. Macintyre, SCM, London, 1955); G.J. Warnock, 'Verification and the Use of Language' (in) A Modern Introduction to Philosophy (revised ed. by P. Edwards and A. Paps, N. York, Lon., 1957 and 1965) pp.715-725. Our notion of meaning derives from the fact that there is this world. There is this world rather than no-thing. In the light of this fact and the facticity of death this world must make sense. That sense, to us, is the existence of God. The latter in the absence of any meaningful other appears to override the complacent questions of verifiability, and the demands of linguistic philosophy.
which leads to (d) the identification of the (view of) meaning embodied by the religious system, to which man's desire for harmony is usually directed. Some other aspects of the above points will be made clear during the course of this and the next chapters. However, what we may say immediately is that the answers given by the dominant Indian, 'Western' and African primary interpretations of the world are implicated in their respective notions of Brahma/Nirvana, and God.

Having characterised our idea of primary interpretations and the procedure we used to identify them we may now enquire into the specific nature of the different interpretations starting with the Asian. In talking of an Asian interpretation we specifically intend the Indian interpretation, which we see with the light of day in Hinduism and Buddhism. In fact the widespread influences of these two related religions in the Asian continent are such that one may even speak of the primary interpretation of the world which they embodied as "the Asian interpretation". But this is an unnecessary and intolerable stretching of a point. So we must settle for "an Asian primary interpretation". We earlier referred to African and European (views of) meaning as "LIFE" and "MIND" respectively. We may now describe the Indian (view of) meaning as VOID; this bears the characteristics of "emptiness" and "non-thought". The negative notion runs through Hinduism and Buddhism, although conceptualised under varying terminologies.

(1) Hindu view: The Vedic Period of Hindu Religion (2500-600 BC) witnessed the gradual emergence of the philosophical ideas contained in the Upanishadic corpus. These philosophical notions are already present in the Mantras (i.e. Hymns) of the earliest period. Speaking of these hymns Yong Choon Kim points out that,

"There is a progressive movement in them from polytheism of the early Vedas, through monotheism to
suggestions of monism. They paved the way for the monistic philosophy of the Upanishads.”

To the Upanishads intuition, rather than thought or reason, is the trusted guide to ultimate truth. This ultimate truth is the monistic Brahman whose extension in man is atman. The whole of phenomena are viewed as the visible, if illusive, manifestation of Brahman. It (He?) is at once the One and the manifold which in itself is impersonal and beyond definition. Consequently any description is only an aid to expression. E.G. Parrinder informs us that,

"The many gods of olden times were obviously unsatisfactory, but in search for unity behind the diversity of appearances they are now seen to be but one... That One is the Brahman, the divine impersonal spirit."

Thus the reality behind multiplicity is, in a materialistic sense, No-thing.

(i) Buddhism: This Brahmanic principle known by intuition is taken up in the 'reformed Hinduism' - Buddhism. However, Buddhism did not adopt it without a reinterpretation. The new Teaching first looked at phenomena from the teleological point of salvation. Its conclusion is that salvation is an individual return to the all-inclusive No-Thingness (Nirvana); a state described by one school of thought within Mahayana Buddhism as Sunyata (void). This void or Nirvana is the Buddhist understanding of the Hindu notion of Brahman:


"Sunya...is derived from the root 'svi' which means 'to swell, to expand'... The word Brahman is derived from the root 'brh' or 'brnh' which also means 'to swell, to expand'. "14

(a) Theravada Buddhist view: Thus the concept of salvation as a return to the void is already presupposed by the conservative (Theravada) analysis of phenomena such as we meet in the Three Signs (or Marks) of Being. These are expressed in the triple formula, **Dukkha** (Suffering), **Anicca** (Impermanence), and **Anatta** (Non-self); and in the Four Noble Truths: (1) existence is suffering (2) the cause of suffering is desire (3) the cure of this problem of desire is its extinction (4) the right method for its extinction is to follow the **Noble Eightfold Path**. Namely, Right View, Right Determination, Right Speech, Right Conduct, Right Livelihood, Right Effort, Right Mindfulness, and Right Concentration.

The goal of these meticulous analyses is **Nirvana** or extinction (Void) - as opposed to annihilation.15

(b) Mahayana Buddhist view: However, the undying reformatory principle in Buddhism soon led to the Mahayana emphases which liberalised the above basic ideas held in the 'Hinayana' school. Christmas Humphreys points out that Mahayana Buddhism, "compared with the older Teaching, are adventurous, positive and boldly speculative."16 We must try to keep to our track (dealing with the Indian meaning) and resist being


distracted into the concerns of the various schools of thought in this
branch of Buddhism. So let us follow instead this concept of void (i.e.
Sunyata), as the 'Mind Only' school, in the course of the elaborations
of the concept, interpreted it. In fact the Sunyata doctrine is the
logical expansion of the Anatta doctrine.

Humphreys indicates that,

"In the Mahayana the doctrine of Mind-Only figures
largely. All is Mind and the stuff of the world is
mind-stuff. It follows that 'all that we are is the
result of what we have thought'. But not only are
we the product of our thinking, but the world around
us has no validity for us save as the product of
that Mind of which each 'mind' is a partial mani-
festation."

Humphreys' emphasis on "thought" and "thinking" is rather too strong as
the next paragraphs clearly show. However, this mind is the void
variously referred to as Sunyata or Suchness. It is known not by thought
but by intuition (prajna) through the cessation of thought - thought
which is by nature discriminatory.

The Buddhist repudiation of thought is unequivocal. In the words
of Dhammapada,

"He who delights in quieting his thoughts, always
reflecting, dwells on what is not pleasant, he
will certainly remove, nay, he will cut the bonds of
death."

The Tantras teach that, "Discriminating thought is then the great demon
that produces the ocean of the samsara. But being free of this discrimi-
nating thought, the great ones are freed from the bonds of existence."

This teaching is the yoga way. The yogin arrives at reality by the pro-
cess of eliminating thought. This notion that reality (Sunyata) lies

17. Cf. Humphreys, op.cit., p.153; however, see D.T. Suzuki, op.cit.,
pp.46-54.
19. Cf. E. Conze, Buddhist Texts Through The Ages (Harper Torchbooks,
beyond discriminatory thinking is one which runs through the Indian world of Hinduism and Buddhism, from ancient to modern times.

We see it in J. Krishnamurti, who carried it over to the West in our own time; though with his own peculiar emphases. But it is obvious that he maintains faithfulness to the ancient traditions. With great force he declares that,

"Thought is the word, the symbol, the image. Without this symbol is there thought? We have used thought to reconstruct, to change, the social structure. Thought, being old, reforms that structure into a new pattern, based upon the old. And basically, thought is divisive, fragmentary, and whatever it does will be separative and contradictory. However much it may explain philosophically or religiously the new and necessary social structure, in it there will always be the seed of destruction, of war and of violence. Thought is not the way to the new. Only meditation opens the door to that which is everlastingly new. Meditation is not a trick of thought. It is the seeing of the futility of thought and the ways of the intellect... Meditation is the flight from the known. There is only one freedom: it is, from the known. And beauty and love lie in this freedom" (italics mine).20

The above quotation clearly reveals the Indian mistrust of the world of sense. However, what we have so far tried to isolate and establish is the place of Sunyata (variously referred to in the course of Indian religious history as 'Brahman', Suchness, Nirvana, Mind, etc.) as the meaning of the world in Indian cosmology. Thus the Brahman of Hinduism, the Nirvana of Hinayana Buddhism, and the Sunyata of Mahayana Buddhism, taken up recently by some of the Asian gurus, all imply the same thing in the final analysis. They imply the non-phenomenal void (sunyata) which is posited as the meaning of the otherwise chaotic world.

We are now in a position to say that the Indian primary (view of) meaning is SUNYATOGICAL in character. Thus Sunyata (as Brahman, Nirvana, Mind, etc.) is the goal of religious concern; and is at once the chief characteristic of the Buddhist and (as Brahman) of the Hindu religions. What we must note, however, is that the notion of sunyata is not a notion which deals with the question of life in the world as a separate question. It also deals with the scientific question of the nature of material phenomena at the same time. This attempt to answer soteriological and scientific questions in the same breath is what we previously described as philosophico-existential approach to the question of meaning. It is basically the tendency of primary interpretations of the world which are metaphysical in orientation. However, sunyata is an interpretation of the world which we meet already occupying a central position in both Hindu and Buddhist religions. This implies, of course, that we could not view it in its original pre-religious cosmological state. Thus, within the religious system, it has been 'theologised', 'anthropologised' and 'soteriologised'. To be saved, now, means to attain harmony with meaning and thereby halt the threat of the meaningless world in its tracks.

It is this soteriological commitment of Buddhism (and, we might add, Hinduism) which led Edward Conze to declare that,

"Philosophy, as we understand it in Europe, is a creation of the Greeks. It is unknown to Buddhist tradition, which would regard the enquiry into reality for the mere purpose of knowing more about it, as a waste of valuable time. The Buddha's teaching is exclusively concerned with showing the way to salvation."21

What Conze failed to realise is that, until recently, only few philosophers in Europe actually carried out the task of philosophy without an eye to the salvation of man. Thus Western philosophy, despite its peculiar

characteristics, was not scientific as Conze appears to imply. It is also the case that it was deeply affected by its attempt to answer soteriological and scientific questions in the same breath. This is of course a confusion of the separate existential question as to what life means in the world given the fact of death with the other question which concerns itself with scientific investigations for its own sake - the philosophico-existential approach (more on these matters later).

4. The Western Interpretation:

Indian interpretation has repudiated the idea that thought is a feature of Sunyata (or void). It is rather seen as an error which ought to be overcome with meditation and preference for intuition (prajna). The immediate and clearest way to grasp the Western (originally Greek) interpretation is that it is Mind; which is, in many respects, viewed as an active (intellectual) divine principle known through contemplative 'thinking'. Thus while Indian interpretation expresses strong aversion to thought the West affirms it; even though both Sunyata and Mind are metaphysical notions which are approached through meditation and contemplation. We may now approach the next section by indicating that the Greeks accepted the world stock, lock and barrel until the Platonian thesis of two worlds - this world and the ideal World of Forms.

Our enquiry into the Western interpretation would look at the views of Aristotle, Plato, Plotinus, Dionysius the Areopagite (Syrian?) and St. Augustine of Hippo (African); the latter two because of their enormous influence on the West. We would also consider the views of Descartes in order to get a sufficient spread which includes a comparatively modern thinker.

(i) Aristotle (c.382-322 BC). In Metaphysics (XII,IX.4)\textsuperscript{22} Aristotle

indicates that, "Mind thinks itself ... and its thinking is a thinking
of thinking." In XII·IX·1 he points out that, "Mind is held to be of
all phenomena the most supernatural."\(^{23}\)

Aristotle's comments, however, need be seen in the context of his
metaphysical system. He holds, unlike Plato, that the natural world
contains its forms. In other words, he rejects Plato's claim of a
separate and invisible World of Ideas to which this visible world is a
copy. He also holds that there is evidence of purpose discernible in
every phenomenal existent. For instance, the acorn seed has its purpose
in a fully grown oak; as the child in a fully grown man. Even the
ordinary falling stone has its purpose in the hope of coming to rest.
Thus the changes of our everyday experience occur in the course of the
quest of potential existents to achieve their actualities - their purpose-
ful goals.

It is only the objects which are pure forms, because devoid of
matter (i.e. potentialities), which are not subject to change. Thus the
true goal for phenomenal existents to attain is that of pure form. God
(Mind), the Unmoved Mover of Aristotle's system, is consequently that
ture goal. However, as R.H. Popkin and A. Stroll point out,

"Although all natural objects, except the Unmoved Mover,
undergo change in order to actualize their potenti-
alities, they are bound to fail because they never can
become pure form.... The world, thus, is seen by
Aristotle as an eternal series of processes, always
pursuing the same goal, and never arriving at this end."\(^{24}\)

Nevertheless, what is clear in Aristotle despite his objections to
Plato's ideal World of Forms, is that the Mind that thinks its thoughts
is supernatural, and is pure form. However, it is important to note that
Aristotle is purely concerned with our category of philosophical-question.

\(^{23}\) Cf. op.cit., p.163.

\(^{24}\) Cf. R.H. Popkin and Arum Stroll, Philosophy (Made Simple Books,
His is not a philosophico-existential-question and, therefore, has no commitment to the salvation of man. His concern is for this empirical world. His problem is a philosophical one of "change" and "permanence" in the world. On that he has given his opinion which is that they require the Unmoved Mover to account for them.

(ii) Plato (born c.428-7 BC). To turn to Plato is to turn to a different world from that of Aristotle. Plato's real world is the World of Ideas. The world of our everyday experience is the realm of appearance rather than of reality. Whatever forms are found therein are introduced by an agent called the Demiurge. However, as the material world is only able to sustain such forms for a while there are bound to be the flux we witness to in phenomena, owing to the constant dissipation of the forms so introduced.

The human mind belongs to the real world even though his body is of the unreal world. The case of the soul is different: it is trapped between the two. Though its true goal ought to be the world of Forms to which the mind soars in nostalgic contemplation, because it is capable of knowing forms. In Chapter 27 of the Republic we read that,

"The whole course of study in the arts has the corresponding effect of leading up the noblest faculty of the soul towards the contemplation of the highest of all realities."25

This highest of all realities is the Good, "which must hold a ... higher place of honour".26 The soul's contemplation of the Good is important because it "is immortal", though it is presently "marred by association with the body."27

The question we are really concerned with is Plato's view of ultimate

meaning. The notion of World of Forms has already demoted the phenomenal world of our experience. He also located the Good (also called the One) above the Forms. In the Republic (under Dialectic) the philosopher-student "must be able to distinguish the essential nature of Goodness, isolating it from all other Forms". The Good is Pure Form, of course, and one of the "states of the mind... (is) thinking."  

Once Plato's intelligible world is posited nothing could keep permanently apart his ideas of the One, the Good, the Mind, the soul, thought or thinking. As we will see later, the proximity, if not the identity, of these notions were ultimately merged in his Neo-Platonic interpreters.

Plato's system falls into the category of the philosophico-existential-question. His ideas on the world of matter, the world of Forms, the immortality of the soul, justice, and the rewards of justice after death put him in that section. In other words, his philosophical system has soteriological concerns, and is as such philosophico-existentially construed.

(iii) Plotinus (204-70 AD): This founder of neoPlatonism gave Plato's system a clear religious and mystical interpretation. Bertrand Russell points out that,

"The metaphysics of Plotinus begins with a Holy Trinity: The One, Spirit and Soul. These three are not equal, like the Persons of the Christian Trinity. The One is supreme, Spirit comes next, and Soul last."  

The One is, of course, that of Plato. The Spirit in the above context can also be translated Mind. The Greek word, nous, connotes the two

senses. Thus the word carries the idea of intellectual and spiritual activities. The One engendered the Spirit as Its image. Russell says that "nous may be considered as the light by which the One sees itself."\textsuperscript{32}

We must also allow Russell to have the last word on the question of the Soul:

"Soul, though inferior to nous, is the author of all living things; it made the sun and moon and stars, and the whole visible world. It is the offspring of the Divine Intellect. It is double: there is an inner soul, intent on nous, and another which faces the external. The latter is associated with a downward movement, in which the Soul generates its image, which is Nature and the world of sense."\textsuperscript{33}

Man's knowledge of the One, according to Plotinus, comes through ecstatic experience and by one's study of one's own soul.

From what are said above it appears that the One (and phenomena!) is one great Mind. This One is also called the Good. Of It Plotinus warns us,

"Therefore, when you have said 'The Good' do not add anything to it in your mind, for if you add anything you will make it deficient by whatever you have added."\textsuperscript{34}

This habit of viewing everything as one great active Mind is the merging of the comparatively separate elements in Plato. Plotinus has no regrets regarding this procedure:

"yes...the multiplicity of life came from what is not multiplicity, and the multiplicity would not have existed, if what was not multiplicity had not existed before the multiplicity. For the origin is not divided up into the All, for if it were divided up it would destroy the All too." (Ennead 111.8.10)

(iv) Dionysius the Areopagite (5th century): This process of seeing the entirety of noumenal and phenomenal existence as One reached one of its highest articulations in Dionysius' works. Page after page, without

\textsuperscript{32} Cf. B. Russell, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 293.
\textsuperscript{33} Cf. B. Russell, \textit{op.cit.}, p. 295.
\textsuperscript{34} Cf. A.H. Armstrong, \textit{Plotinus} vol. III (\textit{Enneads}, 111.1-9), 111.8.11, p. 399.
restraint or reservation, he insisted on the premise which we may sum-
marise as, the Super-Essential is all else and all else is the Super-
Essential. Even the presence of evil in the world could not disturb or
deter his mystical confidence. He dismissed all evils as the privation
of the good. The One is beyond all predications; any term used is a
compromise. It may be noted that while Sunyata (void) tends to turn
away from phenomena even while affirming the Middle Way the Western
notion of Mind tends to affirm phenomena even while turning away from
the world.

In Dionysius neo-Platonism is fully christianised or rather Christ-
ianity is neo-Platonised. Consequently salvation is one's mystical
realisation of one's oneness with the Super-Essential. His influence on
the West is enormous.

Perhaps we have said enough to enable us to ascertain what the
meaning of the world is to this Platonic-neoPlatonic axis of thought.
The axis includes, of course, the basic premise of all forms of Gnostic-
ism which is that the world of our experience is essentially evil and
that the good world lies beyond. We may conclude that to this axis the
meaning of the world is mind conceived as active thought. Through its
thought-activity the world was engendered. Thus the world is somehow
faced. It may be in flux or in the process of becoming but it is cer-
tainly not definable in terms of Sunyata. Its concept of meaning also
falls into our category of philosophico-existential-question because of
its preoccupations with mystical salvation on the one hand, and with the

35. Cf. Dionysius the Areopagite, The Divine Names and The Mystical
Theology, tr. C.E. Rolt (London, 1940 ed.) pp.125-128; Augustine
of Hippo had earlier taught this view of evil in the world cf.
Enchiridion, tr. M. Feebles (in) The Fathers of the Church, vol. 11,
see sections 4.13 - 4.14.

scientific question of "change" and "permanence" in phenomena on the other.

(v) St. Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) born at Tagaste in Numidia:
Thus it is with this concept of Mind, in mind, that we would approach Augustine, the neo-Platonist and Bishop of Hippo. Perhaps it is a safe claim to make if we say that Augustine's theological edifice would come crashing down if the conception of truth as essentially Mind or Reason is eliminated from it. That is his neo-Platonic heritage. Shopp points out, in one of his footnotes in The Immortality of the Soul, that to Augustine,

"Only God is the immutable Being. Truth itself; therefore, He is in the highest degree and from the very beginning. He also is the highest Reason, and man can avoid foolishness and recognise truth only if turned toward that Reason. This idea runs through the whole of Augustine's philosophy and is, therefore, the foundation of his concept of truth, upon which his metaphysical-intellectual voluntarism is based."37

Shopp is entirely correct with this assessment. One only needs to read, at least, the Immortality of the Soul, De Ordine, and De Trinitate to see the pervasive functions given to reason, intellect, mind and thought in his conception of Christian theology. To him contemplation is the turning of human mind to the divine Mind; either of them is immortal.38 He once affirmed that "intellect is...itself the sum total of all things."39 It is not without reason, therefore, that H. Armstrong describes him as "a Christian Platonist, indeed perhaps the greatest, and certainly the most influential".40

The reader may have felt that our account of the Western primary

38. Cf. The Immortality...Ch. 2.2, Ch. 12.19; St. Augustine, 'De Ordine' (in) The Fathers of the Church, vol. 5, Ch. 11.31.
39. Cf. 'De Ordine'(in) op.cit., Ch. 9.26.
interpretation of the world has tended to stress the "reason", "intellect" and "thought/thinking" aspects of nous (mind). This is because they are seen in Western religious awareness as the channels for reaching out to the metaphysical World of Forms - the ideal world. We may term this form of primary interpretation, the NOUSOLOGICAL (view of) meaning. Obviously Descartes' philosophical approach to phenomena represents the decisive turning point in the attempt to free reason, intellect and thought from the matrix and censorship of the metaphysical nature of this view of the world. We may now give a short consideration of the nature of the contrast between Descartes and his predecessors.

(vi) Rene Descartes (1596-1650): Augustine's relation of one's certainty of one's existence to the fact of one's reason or mind ("If we who reason exist, that is if our mind does..."\textsuperscript{41}) clearly belongs to a different context from that in which Descartes propounded his idea of cogito ergo sum. Augustine's cogito belongs to the nousological world; Descartes' is already a retreat from that world. He staked everything on his application of the notion in his apparent bid to demonstrate once and for all the existence of God and of the soul. In his written dedication of the Meditations he declared,

"I have always considered that the two questions respecting God and the Soul were the chief of those that ought to be demonstrated by philosophical rather than theological argument."\textsuperscript{42}

However, it is the way he proceeded to that demonstration which was then disturbingly revolutionary. It was revolutionary and disturbing in the context of the theology and philosophy of the time. To the Age the authority of tradition, in Church and in State, was paramount and sacrosanct. Free thinking was thus shackled. Descartes burst the shackles and set its many prisoners free. To that extent he is the father of modern thought.

\textsuperscript{41} Cf. The Immortality... Ch. 1.1.

The necessity of doubt before certainty and acceptance was this new element which dealt a lasting blow to the easy assumptions of tradition. It is the contribution of his Meditations. However, our present concern is with his isolation and elevation of the notion of cogito. To be true to precedence, neither Thomas Aquinas nor Anselm would have quarrelled over the idea of cogito as a means of demonstrating the existence of God and of the soul. Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and St. Augustine would all have likewise understood such a usage of the notion. Augustine, as a matter of fact, originated the concept in that very religious context. However, Descartes' arrival at it by the form and extent of his doubting would have disturbed every one of them, although in varying degrees; precisely because prior to Descartes the conception of cogito is basically nousological in character. With him it began to retreat from its traditional role in the intelligible world. In Chapters Six and Seven this process will be dealt with in greater details.

5. African Primary Interpretation:

When we turn to African primary interpretation we find ourselves in a different world resulting from a pure existential-question. (It is necessary, however, for us to remind ourselves, with respect to this idea of pure existential-question, that the primordial question which lies behind it and behind the philosophico-existential-question is "what is the meaning of life in the world given the fact of death?") Here the meaning of the world is life. The unexpected universal lack of understanding as to its real meaning and total implications commits us to endeavour to lay it bare; hoping that whatever remains or escapes us (and much would), because of our ignorance or weakness, would receive the attention of others.

However, the legacy of history has meant that we have to deal with two important matters which tend to obstruct an original and direct interro-

43. There is admittedly a widespread reference to the term, life, in studies dealing with Africa; but there is equally a widespread lack of indepth knowledge of the total implications of the term.
gation of African world of thought regarding what her intentionalities are. It is only on such intentionalities that the new can attain a con-
tinuation and the old retain its continuity.

The two matters are (a) the basic premise (thesis) in Western defi-
nitions of "African personality" (b) the so-called "philosophy of
African being" known under the concept of Negritude. The first has come
to constitute the basic thesis of African Studies in the West. The second
was originally formulated in that section of Africa once ruled by France.
Though it forcefully and effectively articulated a universal feeling in
the black world, which derived from their experiences of the slave trade
and colonialism, yet it never really gained a universal or permanent
acceptance among African scholars.

(i) The basic premise of African Studies in the West: This premise
is the view that "Africa south of the Sahara" demonstrates the Western
theory of the primitive stage of human evolution. It is also a thesis
which is not meant for Western consumption only. Had that been the case
then the problem it poses for us would have been negligible. It would
have appeared to us like American studies in Russia or Russian studies in
America. The implication is that either side would regard the basic pre-
mise of the other as the product of nationalistic and political fears,
wishes, and commitments; for in truth neither side ever expects its very
definition to be the one definition for the other. Our point is that
America does not accept the Russian definition of Americans, and Russia
does not accept the American definition of Russians. This analogy is
probably oversized, however, it helps to put our argument in perspective.

The first predicament of African Studies in Africa is that historical
processes and misfortune did not only give power to the 'enemy' but had
also made that 'enemy' the judge - to speak metaphorically. Thus African
studies in the West was also the founder of African studies in Africa.
The second predicament is that the thesis, once accepted in the West, was
also insisted upon as the definition of Africa and the African; within
the institutions built for the education of Africans; containing subjects formulated and taught by Westerners; Westerners who, then, possessed the monopoly of the power of the pen. In the end, both Western and African scholars and students are, in a very real sense, though in varying degrees, left to study and write within the gravitational pull and effects of this basic premise of African Studies in the West.

Also of no less importance is the obvious overwhelming impact of Western technological knowledge and manufacture on the educated and uneducated African mind. They operated on the African conscience like the paintings and images of the Middle Ages and of today's Roman Catholic Churches in Africa. There was no antidote! because no African community had any such level of technological knowledge.

The real social and academic implications of all we have said so far come home to us in two forms: Firstly, the "definition", which has penetrated much of African consciousness, has tended to leave its victims with the behaviour-characteristics that do resemble that of a post-hypnotic obedience carried out in accordance with suggestions made during a hypnotic state. That can never augur well (unless if shaken off, of course) for a nation's healthy persistence or for a people's sense of inventiveness and creativity. Secondly, the definition has come to constitute the basic starting point of Western perception of Africans. Only very few Westerners of integrity have consciously freed themselves from its grip - with a tremendous feeling of relief.

Some historical accounts of the above discussion seem necessary. Okot p'Bitek has already done a useful work along that line. His conclusion is,

"I traced the study of African religions by Western scholars from the Classical times to the present day. Two major conclusions are reached. First, that whereas different schools of social anthropology may quarrel bitterly over methods, they may all share the same view that the population of the world is divisible into two: one, their own, civilized, and the rest, primitive. The second conclusion is that Western scholars have never been genuinely interested in African religions per se."^44

Ali A. Mazrui, in his Epilogue to the book says,

"The tone of this book is, in places, highly detached and collected. But the spirit of the book is basically argumentative, sometimes even polemical. It is the kind of literary temper which seeks to grapple with the errors of others and attempts to contribute towards their correction" (italics mine).

Our concern with p'Bitek's "conclusions" lies in its direction of attention to the need to correct past errors than in any objection which may be raised against them. So we need to have some feeling of these errors of others which calls to be corrected by reference to some Western writers.

John Locke wrote at a time (seventeenth century) when European sailors and settlers abroad were still not really acquainted with the cultural spirits of the world lying outside the confines of 'Christendom', as is made clear by his rhetorical question: "hath not navigation discovered, in these later ages, whole nations amongst whom there is no notion of a God, no religion?" Needless to say that some nineteenth century Western anthropologists answered that question in the affirmative, with particular reference to Africa.

We are rather amused at the remark of the great eighteenth century thinker, David Hume, who affirmed with a rather philosophic certainty that, "A Laplander or Negro has no notion of the relish of wine". It has to be remembered that by this time much of the Western knowledge of Africa and Africans was informed by the many-sided nature of the already two-hundred-year-old trade in slaves. It is possible that some slaves known to Hume were not in a position to gain any "notion of the relish of wine".

46. Cf. Benjamin Ray, *African Religions* (Prentice-Hall, N.Jersey, 1976). Ray has obviously accepted the necessity of such correction of the errors of the past; see pp. 1-14; Evans-Pritchard's *Theories of Primitive Religion* (OUP, 1965) was also written for that purpose. See also R. Horton, 'The Romantic Illusion: Roger Bastide on Africa and the West' (in) ODU (No. 5, 1-4, 1969-70) - a review article.
48. That was in fact the view of Sir Samuel Baker which he presented to the Ethnological Society of London in 1867 cf. B.Ray, *op.cit.*, p.3.
A trade involving and implicating Christian Europe in unparalleled human suffering, degradation, and cruelty can only go on for the length of time it did at the expense of a healthy view of the land of the slaves. The process by which the guilt-striken 'Christendom' justified and carried on the appalling trade (in collaboration with the African middlemen!) was also the same process which informed the European definition of Africa.  

With the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species* an important new element entered African Studies in the West. The new element is, of course, the evolutionary view of life on earth seen in terms of the survival of the fittest. From then on it became fashionable to insist, directly and indirectly, that the negroes (or the euphemistic Africa south of the Sahara) demonstrate the post-ape stage of Darwin's thesis - physically, culturally and technologically.

James Hunt wrote only a few years after the appearance of *The Origin of Species*. His works illustrate clearly the Western thesis. He has argued that,

1. That there is as good reason for classifying the Negro as a distinct species from the European as there is for making the ass a distinct species from the zebra; and if, in classification, we take the intelligence into consideration, there is a far greater difference between the Negro and the European than between the gorilla and Chimpanzee.

2. That the analogies are far more numerous between the Negro and the ape than between the European and the ape.

3. That the Negro is inferior intellectually to the European.

4. That the Negro becomes more humanized when in his natural sub-ordination to the European than under any other circumstances.

5. That the Negro race can only be humanized and civilized by Europeans.

6. That European civilization is not suited to Negro's requirements or character.  


These bold assertions have, of course, been battered by the weight of objective knowledge since they were written (1863-4). Thus twentieth-century Western view of Africa and the Africans has undergone enormous overhauling. However, for the majority, it remains only an overhaul which is renovative in nature, and not a rejection of the original (thesis).

There may be differing liberal and conservative variations on the six points, striking off this or that idea, yet the basic thesis of African studies in the West demands that they be maintained in one form or the other. And they are so retained in various forms to this day. Hence all sorts of intellectual acrobatics are being performed on such terms as 'civilisation', 'culture' and related notions. They are seen as problem-terms: How can such terms apply with equal force and meaning to the 'night-time' in man's evolution and to its 'day-time'? The French political policy of assimilation was in a sense a concessionary answer to the question. The British policy of Indirect Rule was partly a refusal to risk an original standpoint. Both worked from the basic thesis.

However, the Western anthropological/sociological and historical conviction (with regard to Africa) is that the notion, civilisation, is a particularly Western phenomenon. Until recently (however, note the dates of the works in the footnote) whenever it occurs anywhere in Africa it proves the presence or influence of the West rather than African initiative. To concede the latter amounts to a refutation of the Western thesis. Consequently many Western writers on Africa set themselves the task of sorting


out what is African and what is not (it is necessary to note the
dates of works in the remaining part of this section) as regards physio-
logical, technological and cultural facts of the African continent:
the ancient buildings of Zimbabwe were erected not by primitive Negroes
but by previously resident caucasoids.\textsuperscript{54} The bronzes of Ife, Benin, and
other parts of Equatorial Africa were originally the products of the
Greeks.\textsuperscript{55} Igbo-Aros, because of their business role as suppliers during
the years of the slave trade, are (as late as 1969) claimed to be Jewish
settlers who originally came from Portugal, fleeing from the Inquisition.\textsuperscript{56}
The role of a supplier implies above intelligence! The ancient bronze
industry of Igbo-Ukwu in Igboland are said to have probably originated
out of trade contacts with people from across the hitherto insuperable
Sahara desert.\textsuperscript{57} The ancestors of the Itshekiris were said to be cauca-
soids, on the ground that they tend to have 'thin lips', and tend to dig
their latrines outside the village quarters - unlike other negroes!\textsuperscript{58}
Certain ditches which Talbot came across in Southeastern Nigeria are said
to be obsolete Carthaginian mines.\textsuperscript{59} The Fullah people are claimed to be
descendants of past caucasoid settlers - because of their fair skin.\textsuperscript{60}

\textsuperscript{54} Cf. H.H. Johnston, The Opening up of Africa (Home University Library,

\textsuperscript{55} Cf. H.H. Johnston, op.cit., pp.96-97. Plato's myth of Atlantis was
adopted by Frobenius (1913) to account for Ife bronzes, cf. E.B.Idowu

p.26. Even the light skin of most Igbos was to prove an irresistible
temptation to Floyd, too, op.cit.


D. Forde Western Africa, Part xiii, pp.196-197.

\textsuperscript{59} Cf. P.A. Talbot, The Peoples of Southern Nigeria, vol. 1 (OUP, London,
p.25. See the whole of pp.19-29 for other cases relating to the whole
Continent.

\textsuperscript{60} Cf. H.H. Johnston, op.cit., pp.115-121. In fact Johnston's book is an
attempt to prove that this or that part of black Africa had at one time
or the other been ruled by the invading "white race". Johnston was a
British Government's Commissioner in Africa! For an account of how this
attitude manifested itself in Nigerian historiography cf. A.E. Afigbo,
'Facts and Myth in Nigerian Historiography' (in) Nigeria Magazine,
The Ethiopians came under the same hammer. There is no limit to what length some writers are prepared to go in order to maintain the basic thesis. However, the attitude is no longer so openly stated in modern works. But one meets it, nevertheless - in one form or another. It is, however, the case that some modern works have shunned the attitude altogether.

At any rate, real problems arose over Egypt: Original Egyptians are certainly not "white". The physical characteristics of many Pharaohs show them to be negroes. Neither the civilisation of Egypt nor its culture could with scientific integrity be fitted into a European or Semitic world. This fact was clearly disturbing to Champollion as he admitted it. Again the Nile valley defies the presuppositions of the concept of 'Africa south of the Sahara'; the heartland of Pharoanic Egypt was towards the south and not in the north; foreigners, usually settled in the Delta area, never really exercised a dominant influence on the native Egyptians. Clearly Egypt belonged to the African culture-world. The thesis of African studies in the West thus encountered its gravest challenge in Egyptian realities.

Egyptology was created to take up that challenge. Its approach and method are sufficiently clear by now. Realising that Egypt cannot really be whitened it resorted to the unscientific style of forcing its claims through, even in the absence of clear supportive evidence (cf. note 63 below) and to what C. Anta Diop describes in these terms,

61. See part of the original text reproduced in Prof. C. Anta Diop, The African Origin of Civilization - Myth or Reality, ed. M. Cook (Westport, USA) pp.46-48. For its full discussion see, pp.43-84. Champollion's problem as he courageously admitted the "non-Caucasoid" character of Egyptian reality is, "I certainly did not expect, on arriving at Biban-el-Moluk, to find sculptures that could serve as vignettes for the history of the primitive Europeans, if one has the courage to attempt it. Nevertheless, there is something flattering and consoling in seeing them, since they make us appreciate the progress we have subsequently achieved." Needless to say that Egyptology, as the West conceived it, did not possess Champollion's courage. They considered a systematic "falsification of history" an easier way out.
"The scientific interest of the European scholar with regard to African data is essentially analytical. Seeing things from the outside, often reluctant to synthesize, the European clings to explosive, more or less biased micro-analysis of the facts and constantly postpones ad infinitum the stage of synthesis...the aim...seems to be the fragmentation of the collective historical African consciousness."

We need not go further with the problems of Egyptology. But what we must point out is that 'Egyptology' having bitten off Pharaonic Egypt from the rest of Africa in fulfilment of the demands of the hoary Western thesis is now showing strong signs that it has bitten off more than it could chew or swallow. Thus a whitened and Europeanised Egypt only led objective scholarship to a dead end of subjectivity and wishful thinking. Not only that the "inverted lips" of a host of Pharaohs could no longer be forced into the moulds fashioned for them by the specialists but, more importantly, Egyptian cosmology belongs inseparably within and to African cosmology; and can never be rightly understood or related in European or Semitic context.

Pharaonic Egypt sits deep in the collective consciousness of Black Africa and within the borders of her historicity. Pharaonic Egyptians are ancestors. This African claim of ancestorship, over and against its hollow denial by Egyptology (Western), have its overriding bases as much in the common African social categories of Totemism, Circumcision, kingship, cosmogony, social organisation, matriarchy, kinship and language.

62. Cf. Prof. C.A. Diop, op.cit., p.257. One is familiar with such use of words as, Bantu, Hottentot, Pygmy, Hamite, Caucasoid, Negroid, Negro, Negritic. One is also aware that much effort is made, especially since after the second World War, to avoid such fragmenting approach in studies dealing with the Western world. Instead words like European, the West and Indo-European are generally preferred. This fragmenting approach proved an extremely powerful tool in the hands of Western Egyptologists. On the idea of Indo-European (an idea that is sometimes used by some Western writers to plant the caucasoid presence in any part of the world where such presence is deemed necessary or desirable - note the evidence in the present section) see Mircea Eliade, A History of Religious Ideas, vol. 1 (Collins, London 1979) especially, pp.187-214.
structures, as in other historical evidences. The Western definition of Africa, the basic premise of African studies in the West, is not and cannot be the basic premise in African perception of herself. The recognition of this important fact is one which African Christian theology cannot afford to overlook. And socio­logical, historical, literary, etc. studies in Africa can only ignore it at incalculable costs.

(i) "Negritude - Philosophy of African Being": This is the very title of A. Irele's excellent article on the subject in the Nigeria Magazine (Nos. 122-123, 1977). In it he appears to define Negritude in these terms:

"It is simply an articulated moment in the movement of the black consciousness breaking through the bounds of its historical and sociological determination towards the recovery of its original, existential freedom" in the course of his account of the nature of Jean-Paul Sartre's connection with the movement at its early stages. C. Anta Diop points out that,

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"Negritude has been defined by its theoretician, Leopold Sedar Senghor, as 'the sum total of the values of the Negro-African world'. The word was first used by Aime Cesaire, poet, essayist, and dramatist. As a literary and cultural movement, it is perhaps best illustrated by the works of its three founders: Senghor of Senegal, Cesaire of Martinique, and Damas of Guiana. Essentially it stresses the Black man’s past, present, and future potential contribution to the world."  

Irele goes on to indicate that, "The point of departure of Senghor's Negritude is the fact that for him black peoples all over the world form a community of experience, due to their peculiar relationship with the western world." Thus Senghor's Negritude defines itself, in its immediate aspects, as a preoccupation with the fact of racial belonging, and as an effort to clarify its particular significance. It is this aspect that he refers to as the 'subjective Negritude' - the assumption of one's blackness as the external mark of an original and fundamental identity.  

This search for African identity (which includes the African diaspora), forced on African thinkers by her dissipating experiences of the last four hundred years has, already, a precedence in the rallying calls made under such terms as African and Ethiopian since the eighteenth century. The racially oppressed American blacks sought refuge in the powerful term, African. The racially and colonially oppressed Africans stretched forth their hands to Ethiopia - the single African land that knew no such 

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67. Note the time of emergence and names of these Churches: First African Baptist Church, Savannah, Georgia (1788); African Baptist Church, Lexington, Kentucky (1790); Abyssinia Baptist Church, New York City (1800); Free African Meeting House, Boston (1805); First African Presbyterian Church, Philadelphia (1807); First African Baptist Church, Philadelphia (1809); Union Church of Africans, Wilmington (1813); First African Baptist Church, New Orleans (1826); First African Baptist Church, Richmond, Virginia (1841); cf. St. Clair Drake, The Redemption of Africa and Black Religion (Chicago, 1977) pp. 26-27.
oppression. Such term as "African personality" also possessed its magic appeal. Then, there is the political movement under the name of Pan-Africanism. All these groped after something buried deep in the word Africa or African.

However, Negritude movement differs from all of these in the sense that it presents itself as a kind of philosophy, an African philosophy. At any rate its claim to speak for Africa needs to be evaluated in the light of the nature of its origin. The West has fixed on the 'black' skin of the African, using the 'white' skin as the standard of measurement and judgement, in denying the African a normal humanity. This led to the rise of the movement. In reply it affirmed the beauty of the black skin and its indispensability to "African personality". Onto that affirmative framework such concepts as emotion and the notions of vital force, inspired by the writings of Henri Bergson, were added.

Thus the impression is given that once the West emphasises reason and thought the Negritude philosopher ought to stress the opposite concept of emotion. This in a sense is an acceptance through the back door of the nineteenth century Western contention that the African is mentally retarded. Levy-Bruhl's pre-logical thesis shows that the contention did not die with that century. Consequently the consensus-opinion among


Western writers quickly accepted the Negritude thesis. For it is clear
that the dog can bark, but cannot bite. An article in Pro Mundi Vita
Dossiers of March 1976 informs us that,

"Some writers now recognize that the wide acclaim
afforded negritude was indicative of its inherent
weakness: the enemy does not welcome radical
ideologies." 

The writer is not, of course rejecting Negritude for something better.
The main thrust of his (or her) argument is that past European conclusions
bearing on the Continent and peoples of Africa still hold good. The
writer is a theologian, and is on the whole contending for the continu­
ation of the Western type of Christianity for Africans.

Of the various kinds of objections that could be raised against the
movement the most serious is that it does not stem from Africa's basic
interpretation of the world; an interpretation that also embodies her
self-definition. It is an interpretation which originated from her direct
responses to phenomena and not in response to a comparatively recent
phenomenon of racism. Negritude was an ad hoc 'philosophy'. Real African
philosophies would stem from the original African analyses and syntheses
of the world, either in reaction or in agreement. But there must be a
measure of continuity in midst of the turmoil of historical discontinuities.
It is to this original African interpretation of a disordered and threaten­
ing world that we must now turn our attention to uncover its structures
and its intentions.

(iii) The meaning of the African world: Life is the core of African

73. Cf. Pro Mundi Vita Dossiers (March 1976 edition) pp.18-19; published
in Belgium.

74. A. Irele, op.cit., contains a good discussion of some of the object­
ions cf. pp.11-72; see also, J. Maquet, Africanity (tr. J.K. Hayfield,
Reith Lectures, London, 1980) pp.10-13. However, it is important to
point out here, before the wisdom of hindsight clouds the achievements
of Negritude, that the movement made substantial contribution to the
general effort by African leaders and scholars to reject the Western
(negative) definition of the African.

75. Of the various writings which have dealt with African cosmology, most
of them written with the basic premise that the "primitive African"
can only possess a primitive unphilosophical conception of the world,

(continued on next page)
cosmology and African traditional religion. It is a view of the world which deems it meaningful only in the context of the notion and experience of life. Following from this all inclusive framework (i.e. life) for conceptualising, interpreting, and ordering the world are two sub-frameworks, answering to social and spirito-religious matters. These are the social ideology of commensality and a metaphysical notion which, for the sake of clarity, we have called phenomenon-aura. Diagram 1 (see p.50) is, perhaps, a helpful imagery.

From the Egypt of the Archaic Period through to the New Kingdom, and down to the coming of the Greeks, 76 to the traditional west, central, east

that of Placide Tempels' (Bantu Philosophy) is probably most influential. Its major appeal appears to lie in his use of the exotic term 'vital-force', which seemed to fit what can be expected from 'primitive societies'.

Henri Bergson had used the notion from the last decade of the nineteenth century. He wrote as a philosopher, neither in an African context nor with Africa in mind. At any rate, his works influenced some thinkers, directly or indirectly, involved with Africa - Levy-Bruhl, Fr. Placide Tempels, L.S. Senghor etc. However what is notable is that once the notion of 'vital-force' had to be used with the assumption of the basic premise of African studies in the West (discussed above) it underwent an undiscussed epistemological transformation. It took on the new meanings of "mystical" and "magical". Thus viewed, under the shadows of Levy-Bruhl's Primitive Mentality and Frazer's Golden Bough, it lost its original Bergsonian nuances.

Nevertheless, Tempels did reject certain assumptions of the older writers. He sincerely sought to understand African cosmology by interrogating African phenomena. His methodological approach is, therefore, sound, but his thesis of 'vital-force' is a misunderstanding imported into the African data. It is as such a misrepresentation and a caricature of the African (view of) meaning. Consequently the notion of life, in the form it occurred in his work, is consigned to marginality as the imported concept of "vital force" took the central position. Cf. P. Tempels, Bantu Philosophy (Paris, 1959).

76. There were already noticeable foreign elements in the African Egypt of the earliest part of the Middle Kingdom who arrived through marriage and trade contacts. Nomads like the Hyksos and the Habiru/Israelites roamed in and settled in the delta region until they were expelled. Then, the ramifications of Egyptian Empire laid the country open to more and more foreigners and political refugees. In the sixth century (BC) Cambyses led Persian soldiers and adventurers in. They ruled on and off as the conquered nation fought to free herself from domination. However, it was with the coming of the Greeks in the fourth century, and the Romans in the first, that the culture that civilised 'mankind' began to be deeply and irretrievably undermined. The arrival of the Arabs in the seventh century (AD) completed the transformation. The later pretensions of the Turks, the French, and the British were no longer in a Pharaonic Egypt despite the Coptic continuity.
Diagram 1. THE STRUCTURE OF AFRICAN PERCEPTION OF MEANING.
and southern Africa this notion of life stood and stands in the forefront of social and religious actions. It is the very Interpretation of the world. An attempt to understand its pervasive role, in African societies yields the following results:

(a) The conviction that the meaning of the universe is life itself. In other words, the idea that the meaningfulness of the universe is nothing else if not the meaningfulness of life; (b) the conviction that the goodness of life is only reflected and concretised in society through the philosophy of commensality; (c) the conviction that every existent emits an aura or essence particular to it which can by itself affect life for good or ill; or be manipulated by the medicine man so to do.

The failure to clearly and distinctly comprehend these factors underlying the traditional African world has hitherto brought nothing but confusion as is apparent in the use of such terms as 'animism', 'mana', and 'dynamism'. None of these terms is a result of direct investigations. They are rather a priori concepts tagged on African phenomenological data.

We would presently discuss each of the three categories separately beginning with the category of life.

Life: Life is the central and all-inclusive concept in African cosmology; i.e. the very Interpretation of the world and as such the major frame of the secondary interpretations. Every human society is, of course, con-

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77. The basic premise of African Studies in the West, being true to nature, tends to think that philosophy as an activity of discursive reasoning is a recent phenomenon in Africa; and considers the latter as no more than the doing of Western philosophy in Africa. This way of reasoning applies to almost every other discipline but more pronounced with Literature. But there is a problem which the basic premise did not face; that is, that the philosophers, as in other disciplines, are Africans, thinking consciously or unconsciously, from within the African (view of) meaning. In other words their real continuity is with that (view of) meaning. Discursive reasoning, largely oral, is as old as homo sapiens. No cosmology would be constructed without it. The ordering of a disordered world is also a philosophical act. Cf. K. Wiredu, Philosophy and an African Culture (CUP, London, 1980) pp. 1-50; Chinua Achebe, Morning Yet on Creation Day (London, 1975) pp. 3-18; Wa Thiong'o, Homecoming (London, 1972) see especially pp.144-150.
cerned with life, its maintenance and its salvation. And we have already
shown that the prior datum of both philosophico-existential-question, and
existential-question is, "What is the meaning of life in the world, given
the fact of death?" The rituals, laws, and the various productions of
religions are in a fundamental sense bound up with the answer (the mean­
ing) given to this question. In direct teleological relationship to the
(view of) meaning is the concept of salvation which appears to be the
final assurance given in the face of the pressing question. However, a
prolonged interaction with African phenomenological data leaves one with
the awareness that the concept of life is not only posed as an existential­
question but is also a question posed in the context of the ultimate mean­
ing of phenomena. In this context it is no longer a question seeking an
answer; it is itself the answer to the problems posed by the very exist­
ence of phenomena.

In traditional Africa both religion and society, the divinities and
the ancestors, God and man all answer to the notion that the one certain
reality (the meaning) in the intractable universe is life. It is therefore
not surprising that every serious religious, sociological, or philosophical
work on traditional Africa sooner or later recognises or implies this
central role of the notion of life. 78

This interpretation of the world is by no means a recent phenomenon
in Africa. Historically speaking it already formed the basis of religion
in ancient Egypt. On this point Capart, the Egyptologist, remarked that,

"The concept of LIFE alone allows the Egyptian religion
to be assessed at its worth." 79

The notion of life is so fundamental to Egyptian thinking that the ankh
(means life) sign ( = ) stands to affirm and emphasise it. It informs and
controls living and dying. As a matter of fact in African cosmology, then
as now, the ancestor ideology is, in the final analysis, a dogmatic affir­

78. At any rate for no obvious reasons this recognition never led to a
pinned-down study of the notion. The novelty of Bantu Philosophy was
its attempt to do just that.

mation of this concept of Life. This affirmation, implicit in the
affirmation of ancestorship is such a strong, if uncompromising, feature
that some writers and commentators were misled by it into thinking that
African traditional religion could be defined as "ancestor worship".

We may presently note some demonstrative examples from a field in
Africa; in this case Igboland which occupies large areas on both sides of
the River Niger in southern Nigeria. Among the Igbo **mmadu** denotes homo
sapiens, what the English call "human being". The Igbo term is itself a
combination of two words, **mma** and **ndu** - with the 'n' dropping in the
process. **Mma ndu** literally translates, "The beauty of life". 80 If para-
phrased it means, "The crown or glory of life." Thus to the Igbo the very
generic name of "the only rational animal" is a celebrative affirmation
of life. Hence in the prayer and 'grace' which usually precede commensal
breaking of kola nuts (normally offered as a token sign that a visitor,
man or deity, is welcome) the priest or the officiant would say to those
present and those absent (including the ancestors), "ndu gi", ndu gi".

In paraphrased translation this means, "I affirm your life", "I affirm

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80. I am fully aware that Rev. Fr. Arazu has taken the term, **mmadu** as it
stands and consequently translates it, "let goodness exist". Thus **mma**
= goodness (or beauty; in his context, ethical beauty), **du** = exist (let
exist). Perhaps if Arazu had considered that the original word is **ndu**
(i.e. *du*, with the "n" dropping in the combination of **mma** and **ndu**) he
would have seen that it is not **du** (be or exist) but **ndu** (life). This
dropping of letters in word combinations is common in Igbo language as
in other languages. This is particularly the case in combinations
affecting **Eke, Oye, Afọ, Nkwọ**. These are the primordial deities as well
as the First Ancestors around whom much of the details of Igbo social
organisation revolve.

If, in parenthesis, we concern ourselves with these ancestors we would
observe that because **Eke, Oye, Afọ, Nkwọ** are in fact the very names of
the Igbo four-day week every Igbo man or woman, Christian or non-
Christian, belongs by virtue of day of birth to any of these deities on
whose day he or she was born; and is automatically named after the deity.
Thus a male child born on **Afọ**-day is named **Oke Afọ** (means, Afọ's share or
possession). In the combination of the two words the "e" has drop-
ped, resulting in **Okafo** (or Anglicised Okafor). **Okafo** is, as in Arazu's
treatment of **mmadu**, open to one or more literal translations once the
question of etymology is overlooked. Cf. Raymond Arazu, 'A Cultural
A. Shorter (London, 1978) pp.112-116; on the primordial deities see
M.D.W. Jeffreys, 'Divine Umundri Kings of Igboland', unpublished Ph.D.
Also, among the Igbo list of names are such as Chibundu, Chijindu and Chinwendu. The first translates, "God is life", the second, "God holds life", the third, "God owns life". The theology of these names is that God, the Supreme Being, is the source and the terminus of life. This, of course, implies that the meaning is now theologised, anthropologised and soteriologised. The cases discussed here would easily be paralleled all over traditional Africa in one way or the other.

From what has been said so far it may be understood that in Africa the notion of life encompasses biological, theological and philosophical meanings. It is also the very intentionality of social institutions. But we cannot say that this African primary interpretation of the world is simply biological or theological. Neither can we conclude that it is simply philosophical or sociological. It is more than any of these. It is the that in which they inhere. We must therefore reach back to the depth of our past and take and dust up the important word ank\textcircled{h}, and satisfy ourself by saying that it is an ANKHOLOGICAL view of meaning.

This leads into our next topic, commensality.

81. It seems to me that it is not necessary to multiply demonstrative examples before we could point out that the notion of life is the essence of African world-view. However, see for instance, E.G. Par-rinder, African Traditional Religion (SPCK, London, 1974 ed.) pp.66, 85; Jocelyn Murray (ed.), Cultural Atlas of Africa (Phaidon, Oxford, 1981) pp.31-35.

82. The necessity for African scholarship to free itself from the tyranny of ethnological limitations is, in my opinion, long overdue. The ancestral land of Egypt need no longer be left dangling in no man's land. The West has always had it on record that Egypt is not theirs, despite all the energy being expended by Egyptology to keep black Africa away from the place; as if to prevent something dangerous happening. Naturally 'they' (the West) do end up with Greece, mostly choosing to forget or to deny that the rather very recent civilisation of Greece owe much to the ancient civilisation of Egypt. Egypt equally, as already said in another context, did not belong to the Semitic culture-world. It belongs to the African culture context and escapes comprehension outside it. So far ethnography has badly bemused African scholarship, to the extent that the unity holding the diversity is being ignored at great cost. Cf. such recent book titles as "Towards an African Theology"; "Philosophy and an African Culture". One is compelled to think that theology and philosophy are particularly called upon to grasp the ethnographically overlooked unity.
Commensality: Commensality, one of the two sub-frameworks of African cosmology is, strictly speaking, the one dealing with social organisation; that is, social relationships. In one sense it is a philosophical concept forming the basis of social relationships. In another it is a traditional political ideology answering to the reasons for social political actions. It negates both extreme individualism, considered as destructive to healthy community, and totalitarianism in all its forms, requiring instead consensus - as its basic mode of being.

Commensality by definition means, 'the act of eating together or sharing in a common meal'. However, from what has been said above, it becomes necessary to note its primary and secondary senses. In its primary sense it is the philosophical or ideological criterion for all forms of social or political relationships; a mechanism which militates against social excommunications and tension-ridden rivalries. It makes for peace and social harmony. In its secondary sense it is the possibility and practice of sharing in all forms of common and covenantal meals on family, communal or national levels; or between individuals, between the living and the living-dead, between the community and their divinities or divinities or 

83. Incidentally this thesis of commensality has an enormously beneficial contribution to make to modern Africa. Modern African nations resulted from the colonial and missionary processes which landmark is the Berlin Conference of 1884-5. Consequently an African country is an amalgamation of originally 'independent ethnic nations' (some of them with populations much larger than that of some European countries!) Yet, in the nature of the case, such groupings were never legitimised by commensal ritual rites as would have been the case had tradition dictated the amalgamations. Hence modern political actors and civil servants still operate on ethnic charters and depend on ethnic block-votes and legitimisations for success and promotions inspite of their personal best intentions. The glib-tongued protestations of "tribalism" and nepotism while rightly recognising their destructive-ness to a country nevertheless fails to view effects in the context of their causes. It also fails because of the acceptance of the dangerous assumption, inspired by colonial experience, that modernity implies the death of the Past. If anything is presently needed for the achievement of social cohesion it is the necessity to explore and understand the dynamics of commensality and their application in every sphere of national life and institution. In other words, the living Past must now be called upon to educate the modern present.
Supreme Being. All these need some clarification; but to undertake it here would mean entering the grounds we already covered in a previous work. We must avoid that by quoting a relevant portion from it:

"We must avoid falling into the error of thinking that commensality is no more than a mere act of eating together. We are misled if we think that a whole community is regarded as a commensal group on the ground that they can be said to dine together on the same table... In commensality we are in fact dealing more with an ideology than with an act or acts. The notion expresses an understanding, a societal bond. It is a mechanism that expresses a negation to hostility, a force of social control symbolised in the act of sharing meals or the possibility of so doing. Thus while the actual act of eating on the same table may not be practicable the notion as a possibility is."{84}

(We may point out that the concept of ideology is used in the work quoted above in the sense of "the manner of thinking characteristic of a class or an individual" (in) Shorter Oxford English Dictionary. In other words, in the sense of a collective idea which informs social actions and practice.)

It is also a truism that there are claims of para-historical or supernatural dimensions to individual and social experiences. The African Interpretation in the attempt to perceive and explain this claimed para-historicism, has come up with the second sub-framework of her world-view. This sub-framework is the subject of our next analysis.

Phenomenon-aura: The difficulty with this sub-framework is one of deciding on an appropriate term which would convey as clearly as possible the 'phenomena' it points to. This search for adequate term is extremely important not only for clear communication but also for the necessary task of decoding and demystifying such exotic concepts as mana, animism and dynamism; a task that is long overdue. Our choice for phenomenon-aura is determined by the above considerations.

Collins New English Dictionary defines "phenomenon" as, "anything appearing or observed, especially if having scientific interest". It also defines "aura" as, "a subtle invisible essence or fluid said to

emanate from human and animal bodies, and even from things." Now, we hardly need to emphasise that traditional Africa holds it as axiomatic that every existent, be it animate or inanimate matter, emits a certain essence peculiar to it.\textsuperscript{85} The role of medicine men or sorcerers as traditional Africa understands it would be lost on us if we fail to take this conceptual axiom seriously.

There are two aspects of this concept of phenomenon-aura which are already explicit in the dual word. The first is the physically observed existent. The second is the aura which the existent is said to emit by its very existence. However, it needs to be pointed out and emphasised that African traditional speculations have gone on to postulate that there are also invisible (or non-physical) existents which equally do emit particular essences. We won't concern ourselves with this speculative aspect as they would only introduce muddles into our analysis. Let uscontent ourselves with establishing the following important facts about the scientific existents:

(1) In a world of innumerable singular existents there are bound to be, as a corollary, also innumerable singular essences being emitted into the world in which people are born, in which they experience joy and pain, and in which individuals often die sudden deaths. However, what needs to be presently noted is that every particular aura has its origin in a particular existent. One can even describe a situation engendered by innumerable existents and innumerable essences as, the visible world of existents and the invisible world of auras; but it is certainly highly misleading to describe the "invisible world of auras" in terms of mana, anima, or dynamism. They are terms that could not account either for the origin of what they purport to name nor for its true nature. They stand for what one knows not what it is or whence it comes from. It is neither the Creator

\textsuperscript{85} This sentence assumes that the reader is aware that traditional medicine men collect their 'medicinal' paraphernalia on the basis of this axiom and that traditional Africa accepts their (the medicine men) judgement on the matter.
nor a creature, yet African cosmology insists that entire phenomena are (at least in the final analysis) created by God, the Supreme Being.\(^{86}\)

(2) An existent possesses a neutral aura; or active harmful aura; or active beneficial aura. Again, an existent by its very position in a given place or mixture may thereby be subject to a crossing of essences which in turn give rise to a newly created effect or aura.

(3) We have now arrived at a point at which we may fruitfully bring in the medicine man, the sorcerer, the witch and the herbalist. What these actors actually do has more often than not been clouded in confusion partly because of the privacy they often surround themselves with in traditional Africa, but basically because the sub-framework they operate from has hitherto been clouded and consequently reduced to a mystery with anthropological jargon.

All these actors, with the exception of the herbalist, as long as he (or she) does not manipulate the auras but remains in his scientific role of herbalist, are manipulators of the world of invisible auras. The medicine man is really an umbrella notion. Thus he (or she) may be a herbalist as well as an aura-manipulator concerned with the social work of bringing order to the chaos in the community resulting from natural causes, or from the claimed evil activities\(^{87}\) of the witch and the sorcerer. If he is a wicked medicine man he could be a herbalist as well as a sorcerer. The witch, who is the unfortunate victim of social or individual tension is seen as the evil-doer. The herbalist is one knowledgeable in curative herbs and leaves etc.; he (or she) is a healer of the community's ailments.

Those who manipulate the invisible world of essences are those claiming a familiar knowledge of existents and their essences, and how to manipulate them to produce effects for good or ill. These activities are usually termed 'magic'.

\(^{86}\) The concept of 'High God' put forward (by some anthropologists and historians writing on Africa) to deny African belief in a non-theistic Supreme Being belongs more to the list of missionary propaganda-weapons than to free objective scholarship.

The important critical question to ask on "phenomenon-aura" is whether phenomena actually emit the spiritual essences claimed for them. I am personally inclined to give a negative answer, but our limited space is not the place for expanding this line of criticism.

We have deliberately left out of our discussion matters like Professor Mbiti's aetiological theory of "Concept of Time" and questions similar to Marcel Griaule's report of Dogon Cosmology because we consider them to be concerned with a posteriori cosmological questions as they relate to man and society rather than with a priori questions concerned with uncovering the structures of African primary interpretation (i.e. meaning) of the world.

We have now completed our analyses of three (Asian, Western, African) primary interpretations of the world and came to the conclusion that the Asian dominant (view of) meaning is SUNYATOLGICAL; that the Western dominant (view of) meaning is NOUSOLOGICAL; and that the African dominant (view of) meaning is ANKHOLOGICAL. This 'reduction' of a whole cosmologico-religious tradition to a single a priori notion (or essence) need not be taken as unusual. It is obviously the insistence of our method of uncovering the primary interpretations (more will be said on this point in the next chapter) that the cosmologico-religious traditions discussed were the first to establish the a priori notions. The role of our enquiry is merely that of uncovering and naming the notions (or essences). However, it is possible that our idea of primary interpretation may be regarded as merely theoretical, if by theory we imply "only a generalisation from experience which has been again confirmed by it." But it is certainly not hypothet-
ical if by hypothesis we mean, "merely an unconfirmed opinion" (Evans-Pritchard, op. cit., p.64). It seems obvious that the evidences we pointed at on our way to that conclusion do refute any charge of hypothesis.

At any rate it is not beside the point to note, for instance, that

89. Theoretical does not, of course, mean false; cf. Leslie Stevenson, Seven Theories of Human Nature (OUP, London, 1974), especially ch.4 which treats the Christian concept of salvation as a theory.
Spinoza's Substance, Berkeley's Infinite Mind (who creates phenomena by perceiving them), Hegel's Mind, Schopenhauer's the World as Will and Idea, Husserl's transcendental Ego ('disclosed' by the epoche), and most recently the "phenomenological 'seeing' Eye" ("that carries with it a commitment to the primordial") proposed by Brenneman-Yarian-Olson are in their different ways attempts to offer, in one form or the other, primary interpretations of the world. But what must be noted is that they are, without exception, restatements of either the nousological or the sunyatological theses. They shared in one basic fault: that of assuming that the same dominant (view of) meaning (i.e. their own) applies to all culture-worlds. Perhaps our thesis of simultaneous primary interpretations (as opposed to one primary interpretation) has exposed the simplistic nature of that assumption. In the next chapter we will appraise the implications of this chapter; and then pursue the pressing question of the relation of these various views of meaning (that is, sunyatological, nousological and ankhological standpoints) to religious systems and perceptions of God.

93. Cf. Hegel, Phenomenology of Spirit (OUP, 1977 ed.).
96. Cf. Walter L. Brenneman, Jr., Stanley O. Yarian, and Alan M. Olson, The Seeing Eye - hermeneutical phenomenology in the study of religion (The Pennsylvania State University Press, USA, 1982) p.4. We may indicate that the usage of the concept of the circle in the Seeing Eye (an impressive work, from the standpoint of the present thesis, which came to my notice after much of our thesis has been written) as a mystical, if monistic, symbol (see pp.31-53) needs to be distinguished from our ordinary application of circles in diagrams 1 and 2.
1. The Three Primary Interpretations - an appraisal:

Undertaking this appraisal here rather than in the preceding chapter is determined by two considerations: (a) the previous chapter is mainly concerned with identifying the primary interpretations. (b) the identified meanings have, in character, moved farther from the first chapter and nearer to the second.

So we may now endeavour to ascertain the characteristics of the three meanings. As already stated a primary interpretation (that is, a given view of meaning) of the world answers ultimately to the prior question, "What is the meaning of life in the world given the fact of death?" This basic prior question is, of course, reposed in the idioms of the philosophico-existential-question, and the existential-question. Our claim is that the questions and the answers do pre-date their given religious-systems (for reasons that should become clear as we go on). Thus a given meaning is the given FACT in man's constructions of cosmologies and religious systems.¹ There appears to be two separate types of constructions: the cosmological and the religious. The cosmological construction obtains when the universe in a state of chaos is given meaning, in the course of ordering it, so as to make a tolerable sense of man's existence in it. However, this, though tolerable, is severely limited in fulfilling man's innermost desires - attaining harmony with the 'only' meaning there is. Hence the absolute need for the religious construction. But this latter 'activity' is no longer that of cosmologising the world because that is already achieved. It is an already ordered world that the religious con-

¹ Every religious system is a human construction in the sense that its laws, rituals, and patterns of behaviour are culturally determined. This need not, however, be interpreted to mean that the essence of such a construction could not have been divinely given - revelationally.
struction is called upon to deal with. The religious construction undertakes two major tasks which the cosmological construction could not carry out: Firstly it internalises the meaning as its *raison d'être* by bringing it into the centre of its being. Secondly it takes the most important steps of perceiving the meanings in theological, soteriological and anthropological terms. These perceptions of the meaning are total, in the sense that the nature of God, the nature of human personality and the nature of salvation are, in the final analysis, essentially this meaning. Salvation henceforth would mean the attainment of harmony with the meaning (the question of the place of revelation which our analysis has raised so far will be dealt with within the next few pages).

Thus the distinction between the cosmological and the religious constructions over this question of meaning is very important. For while the religious construction is uncompromising in its insistence that this meaning is God Himself, who created man in his image, man, who must be saved in order to be able to return to his Maker, the cosmological view complacently contend the profaneness and (what we may call) the cosmologico-secularism (to distinguish it from the twentieth-century secularism informed by the scientific spirit) of the meaning and of the world; more on these points in Chapter Seven. The following diagram 2 (p. 63) may throw additional light on the discussion.

The above conclusions clearly mean a rejection of Mircea Eliade's claim that,

"The religious experience of the nonhomogeneity of space is a primordial experience, homologizable to a founding of the world. It is not a matter of theoretical speculation, but of a primary religious experience that precedes all reflection on the world. For it is the break effected in space that allows the world to be constituted, because it reveals the fixed point, the central axis for all future orientation... The manifestation of the sacred ontologically grounds the world."

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2. "The fool (that) says in his heart, 'There is no God!' could only have spoken such language from the cosmological viewpoint. Secularism was not born in the twentieth century Western world. Even Gilgamesh might have been a secular man. Cf. FSS. 14 vs.1, 53 vs.1 (RSV). On Gilgamesh see N.K. Sanders, *op.cit.*, pp.97-107.
Diagram 2. THE RELATION OF COSMOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS-SYSTEM TO MEANING.
Because he assumes that religious belief in the "sacred space" or "sacred time" precedes what might have been a first impulse of anxious existential reflective wonder. Our insistence is that the idea of the "sacred centre" comes after the existentially threatening phenomena has been 'rationally' contained (that is, cosmologised). The 'doctrine' of the "sacred space" therefore is a theological choice made from with an already ordered cosmos.

However, it must be admitted that there are some difficulties, albeit superficial, with our position. These in turn tend to present Eliade's standpoint in clearer relief, which consequently, in the absence of deeper enquiry, appears more convincing! The apparent difficulties with our position are; firstly, the meanings are in fact discovered within religious systems. Secondly, it is also the case that religious systems are the preserves and the guardians of peoples' cosmologies. Thus we could no longer view the meanings and the cosmologies in their pristine independent states. However, we are not left without important clues which enable us to observe them again outside religious systems; an opportunity that goes to establish our position.

The important clues: There are moments when the pre-religious nature of meaning exposes itself to the naked eye. These are, (a) periods of apostasy followed by secular existence; (b) periods of the short-lived gaps between the transference from one faith to another. This gap occurs in the middle of the process usually known as conversion. During these times we behold the subject stand outside all religious systems; naked; without the covering of his faith, or of that of any other. He has returned to the pristine state. He is a 'secular' man; but still, bearing the (now) detheologised, desoteriologised and de-anthropologised meaning. He must either be clothed with a new belief-system (conversion) or remain an apostate; an existence in a mere cosmologised world. Is the latter not Aristotle's position? at least partially; he was once Plato's pupil.

Clash of meanings: However, one thing must be re-emphasised: the
apostate (i.e. the 'secular' man) did not abandon his religious system meaningless. He left with the detheologised, desoteriologised and de-anthropologised meaning. But it is essentially the same meaning which is, of course, theologised, soteriologised, and anthropologised within his former religious system. Therefore he still participates in the same meaning (though, in his case, whittled down) with the believers.

The case of the convert is slightly different. He stepped out of his former religious system and sooner or later entered another one, thus avoiding permanent 'secular' existence. There is little or no problem for him if the two belief-systems (the former and the new) obtain within the sphere of the same dominant primary interpretation of the world. Serious problems arise when the convert is moving from the religious system within the sphere of a given dominant meaning to a religious system within another. As a bearer of his older meaning he joins the system bearing an alien meaning. Struggle then ensues in the centre of his being. In order to bring the crisis to an end, he gives up his older meaning (literally allowing his secure world to disintegrate) for the new. Having thus quelled the torturing turmoil in his soul he would then, like a child thrown into an alien environment, gradually learn to adapt the new system.

The situation is significantly reversed when such conversion becomes a mass conversion. Here the adopters of the new system and its dominant meaning outnumber the traditional bearers of the 'new system' and its primary meaning. As a result the meaning subscribed to by the larger group naturally forces itself into the 'new system', thereby marginalising the 'legitimate' older meaning and planting itself as the presently 'authentic' meaning. Thus the converts' earlier dominant meaning is still their present meaning. Consequently the traditional bearers of the 'new system' and its peripheralised meaning lose out, and may as a result dis-integrate and degenerate. Meanwhile the mass converts may regard them as heretics, and so classify them with a fitting derogatory name.
Classically, this is the fate of the early Jewish Christians. Once their ankhological (view of) meaning was marginalised by the nousological viewpoint their world began gradually to collapse upon them. To the orthodox Church of imperial honour they became Ebionites.

African converts to missionary Christianity: We meet in this case an anomalous situation. Here the mass converts have entered the Church in which they possessed no governing and administrative powers to enable them summon the nousological (view of) meaning subscribed to by the missionaries to vacate its 'illegitimate' position. Owing to the sheer lack of attention to the role of meanings the African missionary Church leaders (though calling for Africanisation) only came in to 'insist' on the status quo. As a result the ankhological meaning of the Church members has remained locked in energy-sapping conflict with the nousological meaning which was given the primacy of place in the very structure of their Church. In this situation the call for Africanisation (or whatever other term is used) becomes all the more confused and lacking in conviction, because the issue is one of meanings and not of cultural details. It is impossible to Africanise or contextualise (in the sense of giving it primacy of place) the nousological standpoint when almost the entire Church members are subscribers to the ankhological standpoint. It is not Africanisation but recognition.

(i) Characteristics of the meanings within Religions: (a) the sunyatological view has already been shown to be an interpretation of the world which deems no-thingness as the meaning of the world. Phenomena are considered an illusion and human birth or rebirth into it is seen as nothing but suffering. The ending of birth and rebirth and the attainment of union with Sunyata is the goal of salvation. This Sunyata (void) notion is sometimes viewed as the Mind. Because salvation is the attainment of a harmonious oneness with the void, through the extinction of individuality, mystical experience is highly recommended. Consequently monastic or mendi-

4. This claim will be dealt with in Part Two.
cant life is valued and followed by many. Sunyatological standpoint is
world-denying.\(^5\) If phenomena are an illusion, and Reality the void then
the highest degree of tolerance and non-harming of life (\textit{ahimsa}) are
highly valued, not out of the fear of \textit{karma}; they are the fruits of true
enlightenment.

(b) the nousological view considers the mind as an active spiritual
reality which constantly emerges from a non-material state (as mind) to a
material state as the world and history. God himself is seen as the uni-
versal Mind "than which no greater can be conceived". Thus It/He is
viewed, on the one hand, as a non-material divine Being and, on the other,
as the material world. Consequently there are two opposing emphases in
the religious and secular history of the West. There is the supernatural/
metaphysical emphasis; and there is the natural/scientific emphasis.\(^6\) The
former held sway during the Middle Ages; the latter in the modern triumph
of materialism. It views salvation either as a mystical union with the
Mind or as a ritualistic eschatological attainment of harmony with the
supernatural/metaphysical Being (that is, a \textit{going} to heaven to be with God

\(^5\) This idea of "world-denying" requires an important qualification.
It is our opinion that Lin Shao-Yang's assessment of it provides
that qualification: "The 'pessimism' of Buddhism, we should remember,
has been worked by Christian writers for rather more than it is
worth. Certainly the philosophical pessimism of Buddhism has never
succeeded in turning Buddhists into practical pessimists. The three
peoples of Asia by whom Buddhism was most willingly accepted - Burma,
Siam, and Japan - are probably the happiest and most cheerful peoples
on the face of the earth"; cf. Lin Shao-Yang, \textit{A Chinese Appeal to

\(^6\) We may observe that these divergent emphases stem from the error of
trying to grasp the Mind in the context of the category of philo-
osophico-existential-question (dealt with earlier). In other words,
posing existential question and scientific question in the same
breath. But philosophico-existential question is not realistically
committed to the scientific intentionalities; and man, the embodi-
ment of life, and the world, man's world, are in a fundamental sense
suspect to it. Historically speaking, this disposition has given
rise to the conflict between supernaturalism and naturalism, Ideal-
ism and materialism, metaphysicism and empiricism, humanism and
theology. In more recent times it has led to the kind of issues
which Michael Talbot dealt with under the title of \textit{Mysticism and
it is the contention (by a minor group of physicists in the area
of Quantum Physics) that Phenomena are nothing but mind.
for ever and ever). This metaphysical orientation in soteriological understanding in turn led to a half-hearted commitment to the world in which man is inserted. The mind is also placed above life. Consequently the destructions of life either in the quest for the martyr's crown or through the many holy and secular wars do often have their ready-made rationalisations.

(c) the ankhological view takes life as the first among all equations, considering it as the context of all else. It is looked upon as the immediate and ultimate meaning. All other activities (including thought activities) exist for life and return to life. At its best it would uphold that without active, creative and productive thinking human life itself would be diminished and destroyed. At its worst it admits life as implying no need for further sustained creative investigations. As a corollary it runs into decadence and loses initiative and power of survival, despite the will to live. Consequently a proper understanding and control of nature would become a postponed affair. The ankhological position is life-affirming. With great energy it continuously invests the living, the dead, animate and inanimate with life through variegated commensal acts. To ankhology salvation is human life affirming its endlessness and its eternity - the dead is not dead! It separates the questions of science and the questions of existence and views science as the

7. Though the Western dominant interpretation is the nousological standpoint it is nevertheless pertinent to bear in mind that there has always been a residuum in society tending towards the ankhological interpretation. It is in this light that we could begin to understand both what is at stake within the movements of Humanism and Existentialism, and the minds of people like Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, etc. despite the fact that they are equally tainted by the philosophico-existential error.

8. On this matter of war Paul Roubiczek points out that, "it is precisely on this point that Christianity failed to convert the European; to be a hero remained a supreme aim even in the Middle Ages when the strange ideal of chivalry combined Christianity (which demands that one must not kill...) with the idealization of battle." Cf.P.Roubiczek, Existentialism - for and against (CUP, London, 1964) p.34; Lin Shao-Yang, op.cit., pp.276-7.

9. This tendency to ankhologise matter (like stones) and dread situations was initially interpreted by some writers as mental backwardness. That interpretation has now been abandoned; but it is yet to be recognised that it is an attitude stemming from the ankhological approach to phenomena.
servant of life and not its lord. It rejects the opposition of nature and
supernature and insists on the unity of experience.

(ii) God and the meanings: The three meanings are understood within
their respective primary religious systems as God Himself or as the Ulti-
mate Reality. Thus He (or It) is the creator of all things, and the mean-
ing of phenomena. The nousological standpoint considers Him/It as Mind.
The ankhological view insists that He is life; while the sunyatological
positions contend that It is Nirvana.

(iii) Revelation and the meanings: Our approach has so far used such
terms as, "primary interpretation", cosmology/cosmological, order/ordered,
chaos, theologised, soteriologised, anthropologised, construction, meaning,
nous/nousological, sunyata/sunyatological, ankh/ankhological and other
similar terms. It is obvious that these terms would not entirely satisfy
Western theological faculties. At the same time it is noticeable that the
important theological term, revelation, has not so far been given promi-
nence. This situation calls, perhaps, for a quick explanation: African
Christian theology does not operate with or from the opposition of the
natural and the supernatural (i.e. the metaphysical other world opposed to
this world) which Western theological methodology, under the influence of
the nousological standpoint (the so-called neo-Platonism; see Chapter 5)
foisted on biblical data. It starts instead from the recognition that the
natural and the supernatural both come within the one human experience.
Consequently it rejects the sharp divide imposed between what is theological
(= supernatural) and what is non-theological (= natural) because it takes
its stand ankhologically on the bible. For the God revealed and spoken
about through its pages is ankhological Being. Thus our usage of words must
not be interpreted to mean that a pre-religious primary interpretation pre-
empts the role of the notion of biblical revelation. To entertain such an
idea would amount to a claim that man's prior interpretation could not
possibly also be God's revelation. Does not religious experience often
teach the man of faith that creaturely prior interpretations of situations
are sometimes validated by divine revelations? Is it not obvious by now that biblical revelation has confirmed and validated the ankhological standpoint? Thus, a primary interpretation need not be judged, with regards to revelation, in Barthian terms.

However, it is absolutely necessary to be clear on this important subject of revelation (because Christian theology stands or falls on it) with regards to our notion of primary interpretation. It is obvious to the man of faith that a 'God' who is merely a product of man's interpretation of the world is not worthy of worship. And Christian theology will be failing in its task if it pretends that such a 'God' is the subject of its activities. Nonetheless it is also clear to the reflective mind that man is not by any means a passive participant in world-cosmologisation; and our thesis is willing to stress this factor. These complex issues make it very necessary for us to clarify our position: God remains the "unknown God" (Acts 17:22-23) until He reveals Himself. He is one God and not many 'Gods'. But there is more than one primary interpretation of the world! A primary interpretation (as distinct from revelation) is a modality by which a culture-world, or an interest-group, or an individual perceives the one unknown God through the process of giving meaning to the otherwise inexplicable phenomena. Paul indicates that this modality is like seeing "in a mirror dimly" (1 Cor. 13:12). There is no certainty that a particular (view of) meaning is seeing clearer until its position is confirmed by divine self-revelation. And it is the contention of our present thesis that the biblical data embodies such a revelation; and they declare in no uncertain terms that God is a living God. The issues dealt with in this paragraph will be taken up again in Chapters Three and Four, and in the Conclusion. Meanwhile (in the next sections of the present chapter) we shall work towards the identification of the basic areas of theological disagreements between the ankhological and the nousological in the African Church.
2. The Missionaries and African Culture:

The first part of this chapter has appraised and defined the characteristics of the notion of meaning. It has also shown that its nature, to the man of faith, is ultimately religious and theological, and that meanings are modalities within which and by which God is known and named. It is also the case that it is with the biblical data that the God of Christian faith is revelationally confirmed as ankhological Being. In fact, we have naturally waited for the moment when our enquiries would reveal this religious and theological nature of meaning. It is also pertinent to point out that the Indian interpretation will no longer play a necessary part in our discussions, and will rarely be mentioned henceforth.

When we speak of the missionaries we ought to bear in mind that we are speaking of the Western bearers of the nousologically understood gospel. When we speak of them with regard to Africa we must equally understand that Africans before and after the coming of the missionaries are predominantly bearers of either the ankhologically oriented traditional religion or the ankhologically perceived Christianity. It is also appropriate to indicate that this chapter works towards identifying the basic areas of "theological disagreements" between traditional religion, African Church, and Western Christianity. Chapter One has, significantly, made that task simpler.

In this section we are concerned with three important questions which we must endeavour to answer as concisely as possible: (a) What form did the christianisation of Europe take given the presence of "paganism"? (b) Why did the Western missionary enterprise in Africa begin and what were its motives through its long history? (c) How did the missionaries adopt and use the patterns in their own christianisation given the fact of African "paganism"? Obtaining clear answers to these questions would be of immense help to the last section of this chapter which deals with the disagreements which, it must be said, obtain primarily within the missionary churches! We will presently take the questions in order.
(a) The question as to what form the christianisation of Europe took given the presence of paganism is clearly answered by European Church history. However, we need to recognise one fundamental weakness which historiography suffers. That is the fact that history, more often than not, is concerned with what happened - empirically. Thus it could not really operate with sufficient attention to sociological and psychological processes. And it must be appreciated that these last two disciplines are comparatively of very recent origins. The implication of this is that no total understanding and account of all the variables that obtained in the trajectory of encounter between European traditional religions and the Gospel would be expected from ancient historical records. A modern researcher must therefore, inevitably, interrogate such materials, when the occasion arises, as to their psychological and sociological presuppositions.

Often in the drama of culture-clash the most important conflicts leading to culture-change do in fact occur in realms that precede the what-happeneds which historiography, true to nature, concerns itself with. The relationship of European 'paganism' and the Gospel cannot realistically be comprehended in the context of the explanatory concept of antagonism between what is pagan and what is christian. When B.H. Streeter says that "Christianity absorbed too much from its environment" we are not in the least surprised by the remark, because, strictly speaking, Christianity as a social organisation is nothing else than the Gospel plus the "christianised" traditional culture of the, now, believ-


ing community. We would understand the phrase, "too much" to be no more than the synthetically rejected aspects of the old culture which still obtained extraneously within the community.

If we stretch our enquiry beyond the historical delimitations we could say that such absorption is fully understood when we grasp that European (view of) meaning actually dictated how things were reshuffled, and synthetically accepted or rejected in the clash between the dynamics of the Gospel and European 'paganism'. This does not, of course, imply that it was a mainly conscious decision as to which aspects of 'pagan' culture were to be christianised and which were to be left behind as is made clear by our use of the explanatory term, synthetically. In other words the thetic traditional culture and the antithetic Gospel of the Nazarene largely resolved the tensions consequent to their clash synthetically.

At any rate the one area where the kind of changes we have been talking about unavoidably took place, first and foremost, was in the area of meaning. Once the score over the questions of meaning was settled much of the traditional cultural details fell into place - they ceased being "pagan" and became "christian". Consequently the debate over the nature of the relation of what is pagan and what is christian in the person of Constantine the Great becomes in a sense irrelevant to the nousological nature of Western Christianity. The debate stems from an erroneous prior assumption of pagan culture and christian culture in place of what is clearly no more than the old traditional culture continuing under a new christian definition. Consequently his conversion, that of the Vandals and Europe in general, the absorption of pagan shrines, rituals, and


calendar; the turning of pagan heroes into Church saints, etc., were mere corollaries.

Thus the European acceptance of the Gospel never meant the annihilation of European cultures; nor did Europe ever consider herself bound to accept the Gospel with its ankholological kernel. Instead what it opted for was an acceptance of the Gospel minus its primary meaning plus the nousological (view of) meaning, with its He/It conception of God. However, the acceptance of the Gospel certainly spelt the end of 'Paganism' as a distinct belief-system. W.E.H. Lecky, writing in the nineteenth century, emphasised the point clearly:

"The victory of Christianity was prompt and decisive; but, in the country paganism still retained its vigour, and defied all the efforts of priests and magistrates to eradicate it. The invasion of the barbarians still further strengthened the pagan element, and at last a kind of compromise was effected. Paganism, as a distinct system, was annihilated, but its different elements continued to exist in a transfigured form, and under new names. Many portions of the system were also absorbed by the new faith. They coalesced with the doctrines to which they bore most resemblance, gave those doctrines an extraordinary prominence in the Christian system, and rendered them peculiarly acceptable and influential."

This historical account of the nature of the relation between European Christianity and European culture was written in the second half of the nineteenth century when the modern missionary movement was already under way.
gaining momentum. However, as we would see, there was no more than a negligible reflection of Lecky's assessments in their activities.

(b) The question of why the consciousness of missionary enterprise emerged in the Western Church when it did and not before, and continued, raising questions of motives, to this day has been asked very often indeed. It is discernible that the approaches to the issues have tended to fall into three main categories: (1) writings which answer and defend such answers apologetically; (2) writings which raise objections and consider the Western missionary activities suspect; and (3) writings which refuse to face the issues and take refuge in emphasising the missionary nature of the Church. The latter usually lean towards the first category. However, it is true to say that, more often than not, it is the proper evaluation of historical data which suffers in the three approaches, though in varying degrees.

We must say at once that there is only one continuous historical matrix which explains why the "unmissionary" minded West developed a sudden explosion of missionary consciousness towards the end of the eighteenth century, and began to pour men, women and money into mainly


20 Western "missionary consciousness" prior to 1800 was a virtue preserved for a few mystics, monks or Popes. It was not part of the collective consciousness of the Churches of the West. On the part of Protestants there were unequivocal teachings that missionary activities ended with the apostles (cf. Fr. P. Charles S.J., op.cit., pp. 95-103). Between 1200-1622 (when Congregation of the Propaganda was founded - 1622) the individual missionaries who went out to non-European lands often did so as Papal envoys to the courts of the 'countries' they went to. Moreover, they often needed to convince the Popes of their time of the value of their missionary journeys. This kind of missionary calling may have embodied a higher measure of the spirit of adventure than the burning desire to rescue pagans from hell-fire. From about 1500-1800 the records show priests and monks who went out more or less as part of the batches of colonial settlers or in the company of trading corps dealing in slaves and other commodities. Missionary consciousness as part of the collective consciousness of the Churches of the West is a post-1800 phenomenon. It began, outside the Churches, with Missionary Societies who in turn converted the Churches to their cause. For this footnote cf. E. Kendall, The End of an Era (London, 1978); E.W. Blyden, op.cit., pp. 25-45; the whole of Fr. P. Charles S.J., op.cit.;
non-Western countries for generations to this day. However, the historical matrix is not immediately concerned with such second order questions as to why the missionaries preached the gospel, built the hospitals for the sick, built schools in which they usually taught this or that European language as the first language for the non-European community, held political posts, and carried out coup d'etat, intimidated or worked for the imprisonments of suspected enemies, and often refused to call a halt to the missionary work even in countries and areas in which they have been told to do so in no uncertain terms.

Before we turn to the matrix we need to point out some of the answers given to the issues of Western missionary enterprise and its possible motives over the years: (1) the claim that the resettlement of ex-slaves, who were mostly Christians, in Freetown and Liberia consequently committed Western Churches to missionary work in the rest of Africa. In fact the birth of modern missionary activities is usually dated to this historical occurrence; (2) the claim that European Churches resolved to do penance for their involvement in slave trade. Thus the penance of missionary work was considered adequate to expiate the guilt.

20. (continued from previous page)


24. For the case of Uganda see R. Oliver, op.cit. (1962) pp.94-162.

25. Missionaries did often have a hand in the imprisonments of many non-missionary Church leaders.


in Western conscience; then, there is the suggestion that the Western Churches were genuinely struck by the realisation of the missionary nature of the Church and as such were truly answering God's call without any ulterior motives; (4) there was the claim that Africa is Europe's "black man's burden"; Europe alone could 'civilise' them and missionary work was the means of doing that; (5) there is the notion that the Revivals of the eighteenth century eventually crystallised into the Western missionary consciousness; (6) there is the suggestion that the Industrial Revolution needed foreign lands to supply its raw materials as well as cultivated tastes for the consumption of its finished products.

The missionary's Bible, and the plough of the African were seen as the means to those goals; (7) there is the contention that the missionaries were fellow-colonialists who participated fully in the advancement of the colonial causes; and (8) there is the suggestion that some missionaries were no more than adventurers and opportunists who saw in the missionary work the only way to accomplish the ambition of putting down in writing their wildest imaginations on the Soul or Mind of "the primitive" towards making a fortune. (9) There is also the case quoted in Lin Shao-Yang's well-researched and well-written work:


29. For (3) cf. R.C. Kendall, ibid.; this view of 'how Africa would be civilised' was universally held by traders, missionaries and writers in the 19th century. Blyden not only shared the view, he went as far as advocating large-scale colonisation of the Continent (provided the end product would be a civilised independent Africa) cf. Blyden, op.cit., pp. 94-112.


32. Cf. J.C. Anene, Southern Nigeria in Transition (Cambridge, 1966) pp. 309-314. The records are clearly on the side of this contention over against the missionaries. However, this kind of cooperation did not start within the missionary fields. Its precedence goes back to the closeness of Church and State in European Church History.
"The importance of foreign missions as a means of protecting the interests of Western civilisation was insisted on by some of the speakers and writers at the World Missionary Conference held at Edinburgh last year. The Scotsman newspaper, after remarking that the Conference promised to be an epoch-making event in the history of Christianity, drew attention to the grave dangers now ahead of Western civilisation and to the active part that missionary Christianity may take in averting such dangers. 'The World Missionary Conference', said The Scotsman, 'is the result of that great revolution which has taken place in the non-Christian nations in recent years. Until a short time ago it was taken for granted that the East should bow down before the West. But suddenly the East has sprung to life. The spectacle of the heathen actually beating a Christian Power has confronted the world with hitherto unhithought-of possibilities. The sudden rise of Japan to the position of a first-class Power; the slow awakening of the millions of China to a consciousness of their latent power; the revival of Mohammedanism in the shape of a reformed Turkey - these have forced on the Christian Churches the question as to whether the future of the world is to be in Christian or in heathen hands. In Africa Mohammedanism, according to the testimony of travellers, is spreading like a prairie fire.... It is the sudden emergence of problems such as this that constituted the necessity for the World Missionary Conference.... It needs the concerted action of all the Churches to meet a menace such as that.'" 33

It is certainly obvious that each of the above-mentioned points has some good historical buttresses behind it. However, it is necessary to stress that there have always been genuinely strong evangelistic sentiments behind much of mission work. Though heeding the advice of Fr. Charles S.J. would be in order in the present context: "In actual fact, missionary activity is NOT directly proportional to religious fervour. It is a kind of zeal which is a special virtue, like patience. But one cannot say that the most fervent are always the most patient, nor that they make better missionaries. A very real and healthy piety like that found in the 'Imitation of Christ' is not characterised by zeal for the conversion of the world, there is not one single word about it in all the four books of the Imitation." 34

We may now take up the historical matrix spoken of earlier. It is

a factor which defines and delimits and in a sense generated and sustained Western missionary activities since the eighteenth century. It is this kind of ascertaining the overall context which much of the work in the field lacks. To send and sustain missionaries requires secure capital. Before the idea of external trade took a universal hold on European nations from the fifteenth century onwards there was no hope or promise of such a secure capital. The trade activities of some City States like Florence, Venice or Genoa did surely fetch some considerable wealth which yield admirable surpluses for architectural and artistic elevation of the city concerned. Beyond this such wealth could not go. Thus before external trade fully consolidated its gains in Industrial Revolution and in *laissez faire*, which soon followed, missionary consciousness did not rise because it could not rise in the context of poverty. The following points are worthy of note:

(i) So many things began to happen in Europe between the fifteenth and the eighteenth century. She began to launch out into the open seas of the world; began to trade in all sorts of goods, the most lucrative being the unpaid but fully exploited African slave labour. There was the renaissance, the Reformation being its most violent aspect though with far-reaching consequences and great promises.

(ii) The Reformation itself gave birth to the Puritan movement as well as sanction the ethics of work. Puritanism in turn had its strength among the European Middle Class, inspiring a deep sense of sin, self-effort, and self-denial toward achievement of wealth or other accomplishments that hold out honour. In character the Puritans are extremists, snobbish, individualistic, with a high sense of self-made wealth, usually made at the expense of others - working class and slaves.


37. See next page.
(iii) The year 1776 witnessed two events of great importance: the publication of *The Wealth of Nations*\(^3\) by Adam Smith, and the American Declaration of Independence.\(^3\) The first laid the theoretical foundation for the overthrow of the self-defeating monopolistic trade practices.\(^4\) The second secured *laissez faire* (free trade) — in actuality.\(^5\) The French Revolution, which followed these events, served to destroy the confidence and the grip of the European ruling class with its novel notions of democracy, freedom and human rights.\(^6\)

(iv) All of these together had far-reaching effects which flowed in all directions. For one thing they served to release the Puritan/Middle Class energy upon the non-European world. They went out under all kinds of names and in differing roles. They were missionaries, traders, explorers, navigators, colonists, and administrators (in the service of the colonial governments). Some were hyper-religious fanatics; some have lost their faith; but they retained their common puritan spirit. There were obvious national peculiarities but they had much more in common.

We may now conclude that European trade, particularly the slave trade and the lucrative slave labour in the Americas, colonial settlements, colonial exploitations, Industrial Revolution secured by the wealth from the slave trade and labour, freedom of movement made possible by sea power and knowledge all served to bring home to the West the kind of wealth, pre-eighteenth century Europe could never have imagined. Therefore, in the eighteenth century, there was a good mannered Revival and

\[\text{\textsuperscript{37. (From previous page)}}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{41. Cf. E. Williams, ibid.}}\]
not a violent Reformation. Missionary consciousness could now be conceived, born and nurtured because the collection baskets passed round the pews were always pregnant with promise. This is the atmosphere in which the sending and the sustaining of missionaries were possible and, perhaps, inevitable. It is therefore within the above historical sketch that the various reasons usually given to the question of why Western missionary programmes began and continued do find their overarching economic context.

(c) Answering the last of our three questions is already much helped by many studies in the field published mainly in the last two decades. As a result our discussion will largely take a summary nature.

The constant use of terms like "annihilation", "destruction", "discomfiture" etc. in describing the end result of Western missionary and political activities in Africa, with regard to African culture, is already, primarily, a statement on the missionary attitude to African culture. This implies, of course, that the missionaries' approach to African culture is the exact opposite of what happened between the Gospel of the Galilean and European culture. Published works on missionary activities in different parts of Africa, which investigated the archival sources on those activities, appear to be unanimous on the view that most missionaries looked upon African culture as a cultural slate upon which devilish paganism was written. I am also inclined to that viewpoint with regard to the records on southeastern Nigeria. Scholars who wrote on (or

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touched on) the area also seem to have more or less agreed with the assessment. At any rate, most missionaries appeared to have thought that all they had to do was to wipe it out at once and write Western christianities in its place.

Two or more references to the records on southeastern Nigeria will make the point clear: \footnote{\textsuperscript{44}} Dods\textsuperscript{5} (of the Primitive Methodist Mission), perhaps the most aggressive of all missionaries who ever worked in this part of Nigeria, viewed traditional culture in these terms:

"February, 1915, when for the third time I arrived at Bende to attempt anew the dredging and purifying of that ugly jungle pool of heathenism with its ooze-life of shocking cruelty, reptilian passions and sprouting evil spreading itself abroad in the shadows amidst the most fruitful land on earth. 'Such is the picture.'"

In 1916 he confessed that, "I am jealous and zealous for the success of the missionary enterprise in Igboland\textsuperscript{46} (of which Bende is one of the important towns).

Earlier missionaries, in their view of traditional culture and the nature of their work, are not different from Dods\textsuperscript{5}. J.C. Taylor of the CMS (though from Sierra Leone and of Igbo extraction) working within the policy and the conviction of his Society insisted in 1868 that,

"The powers of darkness embodied in the heathenism, lawlessness, and fanaticism of Ibo country have been...


For some of the published works on missionary activities in different parts of Africa see the works referred to in footnote 43.

\footnote{45} Cf. MMS, Box 1164, File no.1, 'Bende 1909-1919' SOAS.

\footnote{46} Cf. MMS Box 1164, Dodds to Horton, Balance sheet and report for last quarter, 18 Sept. 1916.
terribly annoyed of late by the combined light of
civilisation, education, and christianity which
has shone upon them with increasing brightness and
that they will ere long support the gospel which
they had determined to extinguish."^7

These lines were written in response to the fury of persecutions which
occasionally descended on the new congregations whenever the people
fought back in defence of traditional culture and religion, which they
felt were beginning to come under the stranglehold of the missionaries:

"They had strictly forbidden me not to baptise fresh
converts, nor administer the Lord's Supper to the
communicants as to preserve them from dying, how
applicable does the Acts of the Apostles to me.
'This fellow persuadeth men to worship God contrary
to the law'."^8

His prayer of January 25, 1863 reveals one of the roots of the perse­
cutions,

"May God still shower down His choicest blessings upon
this congregation, which is now emerging from the
depths of heathenism."^9 (italics mine)

The attitude one observes in these few references is basically that
of the Missionary Societies rather than of particular individuals. It
runs through Africa Steps Out, which K.K. Orchard wrote on behalf of
British Missionary Societies. Speaking of the African continent he
boldly asserted in a colonial fashion,

"It is not primarily the African's or the European's.
In that conviction African and European can be brought
together in a common fight to save the soil, to grow
the food, to beat back starvation and to use the land
so that its fertility will sing the praises of God
its Creator."^10

48. Cf. ibid.
was the minister responsible for the CMS work at Onitsha from its
invention (1857). Bishop Crowther had the overall control. However,
the CMS definition of his sphere of influence compelled him, on the
whole, to play the role of an absent landlord.
p.11. For a fitting background to this relatively recent book cf.
Faith, 41, 1880, pp.226-234; Fr. Borghero to Abbe Flanque (in) Ibid.
24, 1863, pp.5-39. The latter is Borghero's account of his visit to
Dahomey; the former is a missionary 'report' on what went on in the
African communities among whom he worked.
The main assumption of the book is that Africa is now emerging from the depth of heathenism. She is seen as stepping out in repudiation and rejection of her past preferring instead the Western way of life represented by the missionary churches. However, the truth of the matter would seem to be nearer to the observation made by J.C. Taylor, as far back as 25 January, 1863 (that observation has since been confirmed by the call for Africanisation):

"We preach the blessedness of the Christian's portion: none are elated. We declare the judgements of God: none are depressed. And yet we know that the Gospel has done, and is still doing great things...." 51

What both Taylor, and modern writers on the problems of the missionary churches of Africa fail to observe with sufficient clarity is that there are serious areas of theological disagreement between the Christianity preached by the missionaries on the one hand, and the anthropological standpoint of traditional and biblical religions on the other. In the next section we will try to identify the nature and the basic area of that disagreement.

3. African Church and Theological Disagreement:

We may point out immediately that, (a) there are basic disagreements between the Western theological presuppositions and the mostly unarticulated theological assumptions of the African Church, (b) that these disagreements would best be settled by the willingness on the part of both parties to take recourse to the arbitration of the primary sources of Christian theology - biblical data.

The adoption of this course of action would unquestionably commit many if not all African theologians to a change of theological methods. There is at present what one may call a confusion of the study of African traditional religion with the doing of Christian theology proper. One does not have to search hard to discover why this situation arose. The

failure on the part of the missionaries to apply to African christianisation what applied in their own christianisation ultimately led to the pitching of the Gospel of Jesus against African culture. This in turn led to an anomalous situation in which the African christian, who is himself the authoritative bearer of African culture, is reduced to a state of constantly exorcising the very cultural tissues of his being. Obviously if he succeeds he will destroy himself. However, it was an exercise in futility. It is the recognition of this dangerous state of things which consequently drove African theologians to the kind of studies which tend to aim at putting the case of the African culture before the Western missionaries (i.e. Western theologians).

However, there is a noticeable rift in the ranks of African theologians. There are those who are prepared to plead, to a certain extent, the cause of African culture. And there are many who have lost the will to do so because they could no longer look with affection on their culture which had clearly suffered one of the most savage attacks (in the history of culture-contact) in the hands of the mainstream of Western missionaries, writers and commentators. What was lost sight of in the context of the above distractions is the necessity for African theologians to carry out theological activities from where they are as African Christians bearing African culture. Thus neither Christianity nor African culture is extraneous to the beingness of the African Christian and his Christian theology. This is because he, as the bearer of the African culture, has been converted to the biblical world-view which does not view his culture in the way most missionaries did.52

The disagreements, we have been referring to, centre on three basic issues: (1) on the nature of God, (2) on the nature of man, (3) on the nature of salvation. These three factors have always been the core of all

52. It must be pointed out that there were few well-informed missionaries who rejected the pressure to view African culture negatively. One of the greatest of them all is Dr. Edwin W. Smith. See his Knowing the African (London, 1946).
genuine religious concerns. They are essentially concerned with meaning which is the *raison d'être* of religious systems. The disagreement arose because the Western primary interpretation of the world is not the African primary interpretation. In other words, the Western dominant meaning is nousological while the African dominant meaning is ankhological. Thus Western theological activities, in their various methodologies, are largely nousologically oriented, while the unarticulated theological assumptions of African Church members are invariably ankhologically determined.

The above "three basic issues" form the bases of all forms of theologies, Christian or non-Christian. They would certainly constitute the *raison d'être* and the magnetic field of African Christian theology. On these it stands in debate or in discussion with Western historical or present theological assumptions on the one hand, and the claims of African traditional religion on the other. It also applies the same criterion to any other theological or religious system.

This direct and essential relationship of theology and meaning is such that African Christian theology (in its hitherto uncertain self-understanding) may feel justified to be alarmed because of the realisation that the area of conflict is much larger than was originally thought. It was the absence of this realisation which gave room to a preoccupation with the frustrating questions of contextualisation, Africanisation, and even the incarnational conception of the relation of the Gospel to African culture. It is now clear to all that what is at stake is the entire WORLD of phenomena, noumena, human life and death, God and man's salvation, and the relation of man to his world.


54. This identification of the perimeter and the basic doctrinal contours for African Christian theology at once enables it to step outside the realm of anthropological and sociological perspectives to begin to do theology proper. More in this point in Chapters Eight and Nine.
It may be helpful to cast a glance at the nature of the theological standpoints of the three groups who are involved in the disagreements. The groups are, of course, the missionaries, the traditional religionists, and the Church members.

The missionaries: The usual missionary is the bearer of the nousologically understood gospel. His conception of God is not clear on whether God is a He or an It. What is obvious is that 'He' is Mind. Thus as Mind God is not committed to this material world. Consequently our world is suspect; while the other (metaphysical) world is the real world and as such the goal of human existence. These conceptions are clearly nousological (or "neo-Platonic").

Human body (or flesh) is a temporary material tomb. Inside it dwells the intelligible soul. The former is abandoned at death; the latter is then freed to take a flight to the realm of reality. Thus salvation is seen as a timely escape of the soul from the body to be with God for ever and ever. To the mystics it is a final merging with the ALL.

It must be pointed out that the above account does not take into consideration the positions of modern Western theologies. Some of them, in fact, could no longer entertain any para-phenomenal claims. However, the missionaries whom the African encountered usually held the kind of ideas contained in the account.

Traditional religionists: The usual traditional religionist is the bearer of the ankhological conception of meaning. To him God is life which is the very meaning of this intractable world. His stress on life is placed more on the side of man than on the side of God. Thus man's present life in this present world is more valued than any form of after-life. In fact the realm of the ancestors is simply the underside of this world; so they are not far away. There is nothing resembling the "Platonic" conceptions which Western theology operates with.

Salvation means the attainment of the continuity of personal life.
This doctrine is expressed in the notion of ancestorship. The world is the only home where one constantly appears as an ancestor or in reincarnations. Man does not have to abandon the world to go to God (life) because he already participates in life (meaning). What is more important is to possess the means of either avoiding the diminution of life or its enhancement. Man is 'spirit', 'soul' and body.\textsuperscript{55}

The church members: The usual African church member is the bearer of the ankhological conception of meaning just as the traditional religionist. Though his is now the kernel of his Christian belief-system while that of the traditional religionist is with traditional religion. To him God is life while the work of Christ is to give life to the believer abundantly. The most meaningful text in the bible, to him, is, perhaps, the second half of John ch.10 vs.10 (RSV), "I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly." To possess the power of the Holy Spirit is, among other things, to be in a divine position of overcoming all the enemies of life. He is not quite sure whether the stress on life should fall more on the side of man or on the side of God.

However, man is the bearer of life; and his salvation is to be in the presence of God who is life \textit{par excellence}. He does not really understand this whole idea of the soul going out of the body to merge or to be with God conceived as the All-Soul. He could not accept the nouso logical partition of the world because the (view of) meaning with which he operates does not work in such categorisations. His major, if very serious, problem is that the teleological kernel (meaning) of his Christian belief-system has not up till now been theologically understood and articulated. As far as he is aware his Church has no theology.

What may have been clear from the above short accounts, in fact

\textsuperscript{55} John Beattie's attempt to characterise African views on the subject of spirit, soul and body must be read with due caution. He appears to be more concerned with pointing out that the present-day African conception of human personality is akin to that of the European Middle Ages; an exercise in evolutional study. Cf. J. Beattie, 'Review Article: Representations of the Self in Traditional Africa...' (in) \textit{Africa} (JIA1), vol. 50, No. 3, 1980, pp.313-320.
from the whole of Part One of this study, is that religious-systems as well as theological understandings and activities are all committed to achieving a harmonious relationship with Meaning (or at least with meaning, with regard to some species of theological perspectives). It is also clear to African Church members that the power-structures of many of their denominations do constitute a continual negation of their primary ankhological meaning.

However, our discussions so far have been unequivocal in stressing the need to re-assess the biblical sources in the light of the differing conceptions of meaning. All theological presuppositions are, as it were, presently suspended; hermeneutics is left without a given assumption until the basic biblical meaning is established. This is a task which Part Two of our enquiry must take up.
PART TWO

WHOSE MEANING OF THE WORLD?

(The Verdict of Biblical Data)
CHAPTER THREE

THE NOTION OF LIFE IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

It is necessary to make some prefatory points before we approach the next two chapters: (a) one of the basic arguments of the preceding chapters is that a given view of meaning is at once a given definition of God within a given religious system. For instance, God is Mind to the nouso-logical standpoint, Nirvana to the sunyatological position, and Life to the ankholological viewpoint. The term, meaning is also emphasised in those chapters. This is because a primary interpretation (or revelation) is principally concerned with meaning. As already pointed out the very notion, God, to a religious system, is synonymous with meaning. Thus God is God because God is (nothing if not) meaning. The last point would determine our usage of the terms, God, Meaning, and Yahweh in our analysis of the present and the next two chapters, particularly. Thus they will be used interchangeably, in which case the term meaning will be capitalised whenever such interchangeability is intended.

(b) our analysis will pay more attention to the view of God and the world which informs the Old and the New Testaments data rather than to the rituals, rites and worship which follow on that data. Rituals, rites and worship are, of course, very necessary to a proper understanding of both testaments; however, it is obvious by now that our enquiry is particularly concerned with bringing to the surface the cosmologico-theological basis of faith rather than with describing the outer practical details, in spite of the latter's importance.

(c) another matter which needs to be pointed out beforehand is that the results of our study of the Old and the New Testaments maintain that the latter's understanding of God (and therefore their view of the world - given by revelation) is ankholologically determined. This means, of course,
that our approach is, to this extent, a departure from the usual nousological accounts of the OT and the NT studies. This departure is also, to a noticeable extent, reflected in our interpretation of the data of the two Testaments.

1. The (view of) Meaning Behind the Old and the New Testaments:

   It is obviously true to say that all the books dealing with the bible, which are available to the African Church, and to other ankhological-minded readers outside that Church, are, probably without exception nousological in orientation and in perception of biblical realities and intentionalities. Thus the African Church does not yet really know of books on the Israelite religion or on the Christian faith which are undoubtedly written from the ankhological standpoint. Hence most of the works which African Churches (to be specific) are acquainted with are obviously baffling because of their insistence on the correctness of this or that often denominationally understood doctrinal words and concepts all at the expense of the fact that the concern of religion is not religion but life. Some clearly dampen wholly legitimate ankhological tendency to existential optimism with their emphases on the Cross in spite of the Resurrection. Others seem to leave the ankhological-minded wondering at why they encourage martyrdom for its own sake by canonising the martyrs. One is rightly bewildered when some unashamedly talk of "holy wars". We equally fail to understand why creeds, confessional formularies, and doctrinal edifices are constructed at the cost of communal wholeness.

   However, the ankhological-minded feels differently whenever he or she reads the bible on its own. He (or she) may feel in his innermost being that it has not really spoken in its own accents in those works on it. Perhaps the greater problem now will be the inability to come to the bible in a new spirit, free from nousological girdings, to listen with an open mind to its statement of its own case. However, one of the points
the present study is concerned with making is that nothing need any longer be taken for granted on biblical questions by the ankhological viewpoint; at least not the matter of meaning and the nature of biblical data.

Therefore, if we undertake in the next two chapters to examine the bible so as to ascertain its meaning and the orientation of its data we ought to begin by facing the problem of how to view it in the light of its different books and variegated forms. Perhaps the natural thing to do is to simply take it as a one volume Book dictated by God. \(^1\) But this procedure is clearly faced with some serious difficulties which we cannot legitimately ignore. The first of such difficulties is the presence in the bible of dissimilar books, written over the course of hundreds of years, by various personalities with differing degrees of insight and differing aims. Thus we cannot approach the bible as if it is, like Augustine's *The City of God*, the work of one individual. The situation is in a sense heightened by the insistence by modern research that behind the Hexateuch lie the J, E, D, P sources. \(^2\) The assemblage and the re-

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2. The theory of J, E, D, P is in a sense presupposed by the evolutionary view of the development of Old Testament ideas. However, the distinctions are based on clear internal evidences. J code stands for those sources which from the story of creation onwards use the term Yahweh as God's name. The position of modern scholarship is that they were reduced to a written form (J Code) in Judah in the ninth century. Then there are materials which use Elohim (E Code) instead of Yahweh. These were probably put to writing in Israel (i.e. in the North) a little later than the J Code. The two are said to have been combined after the fall of the Northern Kingdom (721 BC). After the time of Josiah the Deteronomic Code (D) was added to the now JE to bring it up to JED. The Priestly Code (P) was added after the Exile, hence the JEDP. It must be emphasised that this analysis remains a theory though one that presently explains most satisfactorily the problems posed by the Pentateuch. Cf. John Bright, *A History of Israel* (SCM, London, 1972 ed.) pp.68-69; R.K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (Tyndale Press, London, 1969) pp.19-61; *The New Bible Commentary* (eds., D. Guthrie and J.A. Motyer, London, 1970) pp.34-40. The last two works lean on one side, on the side of conservative scholarship. For a more balanced view, see *The Jerusalem Bible* (Standard Edition) pp. 5-14; R.J. Daly S.J., *The Origins of the Christian Sacrifice* (London, 1978) pp.11-15; G. Fohrer, *History of Israelite Religion* (tr. D.E. Green, London, 1973) pp.355-357. We may point out that the RSV is used in our study unless otherwise stated.
organisation of these sources imply, of course, some theologically moti-
vated hands which had probably made explicit their own understandings of
what Yahweh was saying or has said. It is also clearly un-objective for
us to fail to observe the differences in approach and aims between the
different Codes. This also applies to the differences in standpoint
between the prophetic corpus, the Wisdom literatures, and the intention
of the apocalyptists. In the case of the New Testament we note how Luke
and Matthew used them in addition to their own materials ("L" and "M" res-
respectively); we also note the Pauline and Johannine materials and their
influences on later letters and books. These various factors make the
idea of viewing the bible as a "one volume book" extremely problematic.

The second difficulty is that of finding a thematic basis of unity
among the various books and approaches of the Old Testament in a way Jesus
provided it for the New Testament. Different (OT) scholars tend to see
the principle of unity in different themes, albeit taken out of the bible.
For instance on such themes as covenant, the idea of one God or the

The Jerusalem Bible (Standard Edition) pp. 9-11. It does not, of
course, mean that such theological intentionalities were not divinely
inspired!

4. It is the value of the recognition of these differences in approach
that B.H. Streeter had in mind when he wrote "We speak of the Bible
as a book. It is a library." He then went on to unravel the differ-


7. Cf. K. Koch, 'Apocalyptic and Eschatology' (in) Jesus in His Time
pp.119-137.


10. Cf. J. Bright, op.cit., p.144ff; H.W. Robinson sees "The Unity within
the Development" in the idea of Yahweh as one God. cf. H.W. Robinson,
He also located the origin of the belief in the events that gave

(continued on next page)
concept of salvation history. Of course, any of them could be useful for classifying and assessing the various biblical strands. But the approach should not be confused with a somewhat similar approach which sees the red line of redemption: running from Genesis to Revelation.

The latter usually leads to the kind of systematic theologies that explain everything in terms of the red line. As a result all aspects of the biblical materials are treated as phases in the onward march of salvation history (understood as "Plan of Salvation") which usually, if expectedly, reaches its climax in the Christ event. The difficulty is, for instance, how to read Jesus out of Genesis or Genesis out of Jesus. It is obvious by now that the idea of a one volume book is a misconception. What we would have advocated at the start is, seeing the books and letters of the bible together. This approach would then free its details for a closer observation with regard to the question of their (view of) meaning. Therefore, to see the books and letters of the bible together is to see such details as the contents of a given religious system. As already indicated, a given system can only exist in the context of and for a given (view of) meaning.

This observation immediately regards as merely secondary the questions rise to the Song of Deborah (Judges, 5). In fact there is nothing surprising in a given semi-nomadic community holding to the idea of one God. It is harder in the setting of an agricultural community. The problem is that El(ohim) was also the name of God and He was sometimes taken for Baal. And Yahweh did not probably become a universal deity until the exilic period. Cf. Jerusalem Bible, pp.1124-1125; J. Bright, op.cit., pp.355-358.


12. John Brown had already (in 1841) grasped the nature of the problems that attend "systematic theologies" when he said, "There can be no doubt, that the importance of humanly-devised systematic views of christian doctrine easily may be, and often have been, greatly over-rated, while their inconveniences and dangers have been too much overlooked and forgotten...." Cf. John Brown, Hints to Students of Divinity (Edinburgh, 1841) p.45. On the question of "Plan of Salvation" F.C. Burkitt warns us: "It was believed that the Plan of Salvation had been extracted from the Bible; in practice, the Bible was interpreted to agree with the Plan of Salvation." Cf. F.C.Burkitt, Christian Beginnings (London, 1924) p. 9.
of the differences between the various strata, books, epistles and approaches on the one hand, and the issue of which is the best adequate theme for ordering the sources on the other. We see them instead as the vehicles of expression and manifestation. Thus their *raison d'etre* is meaning without which they could never be understood. There are, of course, differences between, for instance, the prophets and the priests, between the Priestly Code and the Yahwist Code, between the Epistles and the Gospels, between the immediate concerns of the Old Testament and the New Testament but they exist for and because of one meaning. Admittedly, in the study of the details we cannot do without due regard to dating, authorship, transmission, redaction and form. But it is self-evident that none of such matters seriously arise over the matter of (view of) meaning.

We may now pay a closer attention to the important question of how to indicate precisely though concisely the leading sources that do guide us to the naming of this biblical meaning. The sources at hand are the first Adam and the second Adam motifs. We meet them as far apart as in the book of Genesis and in the Epistles of I Corinthians - Romans. However, we need to deal immediately with the problem of ideas already residing in memory which may quickly rush up to forestall further enlightenment. Thus we need not think first of Adam (the first Man) and Christ (the new Man) because what is first and foremost clearly imaged by the motifs is the notion of life. They also embody the prior existential-question, "What is the meaning of life in the world given the fact of death?" while containing at the same time the answer to the question. That answer, as already indicated, is life.

Therefore, in the motifs of the first Adam and the second Adam we are mainly dealing with the issues of death and life. In Genesis chapters 2 - 3 we are confronted with two trees of particular importance.

13. There are two creation accounts in these opening chapters of Genesis: 1:1 - 2:4 belongs to the P-traditions; 2:4-25 belongs to the J-tradition.
The first is "the tree of life", the second is "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (2: 9). In 3: 3-4 we read that God did in fact forbid Adam and Eve to touch or eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil - "lest you die". In 3:22, having eaten of the forbidden fruit, thereby incurring death for Man, they were driven out of the garden to stop them continuing to partake of "the tree of life" which dead humanity (Adam) can no longer continue to partake of. The evidence that probably confirmed this fate of mankind to the writer(s) of Genesis 2 - 3 was that individual deaths continued to occur even as he wrote.

In the account of Genesis 2 - 3 we are given, in no uncertain terms, the tragic reason why we experience the pains and sorrows of death; the reason behind the negation of human life which is the only reality, the image of God, in what is after all dust and ashes. This affront to life must never be allowed to continue. This is where the New Testament account takes up the Adam motif.

We first (chronologically speaking) meet the motif in Paul:

"Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come.... If, because of one man's trespass death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ" (Rom.5:14 and 17; 1 Cor.15:45).

I Corinthians 15:22 reinforces the understanding when it says, "For in Adam all die so also in Christ shall all be made alive". This is followed by the great song of victory in 15:54-5: "When the perishable

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14. D.F. Hinson rightly observes that "Respect for human life is central to the Old Testament". Cf. D.F. Hinson, Theology of the Old Testament (SPCK, London, 1976) p. 112. However, Hinson does not go on to recognise sufficiently that Yahweh was now and again "erroneously" taken for a war-god who fought the nation's wars by sanctioning the destruction of non-Israelite lives: "Now go and smite Amalek, and utterly destroy all that they have; do not spare them, but kill both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass"! (1 Sam. 15: 3).

15. It is our opinion that the failure to see the teachings of the Bible in the light of its anthological standpoint tends to lead to a one-sided or superficial understanding of passages on, or reflecting, the Adam motifs. For an instance of traditional, though critical, Western exegesis of this passage cf. K.E. Kirk, The Epistle to the Romans (The Clarendon Bible, Oxford, 1937) pp. 54-55.
puts on the imperishable, and the mortal puts on immortality then shall come to pass the saying that is written: 'Death is swallowed up in victory'.

'O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?"'16

Paul went on to confirm the immovability of his position: "Now if Christ is preached as raised from the dead, how can some of you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ has not been raised." (I Cor.15:12-13).

The reader does not, perhaps, need to be reminded that the wholly disproportionate space the accounts of the death and resurrection of Christ do occupy in the Gospels cannot be overemphasised. This is very much pronounced in the Gospel of Mark. The strings of short accounts, well brought out by Form Criticism, 17 appear to serve as an introduction to the account of the death and resurrection. It must be stressed, however, that the elaborate account of the suffering, crucifixion and death of Jesus do not mean much in themselves (though Western theology, with its stress on the Cross, does not seem to understand this fact) except as the necessary context and vehicle for the declaration of the triumph


of Life over death.\(^\text{18}\)

We have, probably, said enough, within the space available to us, to lead any nousological protagonist to the fact that the meaning of the biblical materials is life. On the other hand we may have already felt on our part the sudden awakening of the necessity of an ankhological freeing of the biblical data from the grip of nousological hermeneutics. For it is under the ankhological hermeneutics that the biblical sources would, clearly, speak out their intentionalities in the ankhological accents.

2. Meaning and Revelation in the Bible:

We have already touched on this subject of revelation with respect to the question of what we intend with our use of the concept, "primary interpretation"; so we need not go back to that aspect of it. Nevertheless, the question of revelation is central to the claims of biblical data; and it is also central to Christian theological discussions which have to deal with the claims made for a God that is known only by faith. Consequently it is in order at this juncture to be more precise on the relation of meaning to the personal God of the bible whose prerogative it is to reveal Himself to man.

We will largely presuppose the difficulties and the objections usually raised over this subject of revelation such as the proof of the existence of God, the question, "In what sense is the Bible inspired?", the form and nature of revelation in the light of the results of biblical Higher Criticism, the distinctions between religious experience, and divine revelation on the one hand, and general and special revelations

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\(^{18}\) It may also be pointed out that the creative act of God is properly speaking an ankhological act. The conquest of tohu and bohu (= trackless waste and emptiness), that is to say, chaos usually symbolised in the imageries of "water", "the darkness over the deep", or "Leviathan" is the Genesis way of declaring the triumph of Life over Death (Gen. 1: 2; Job, 41: 1; see also Ezk., 37; Dan., 12; Isaiah, 26: 19 for the ideas of the resurrection in the exilic and post-exilic periods of the Old Testament).
However, what is clear in the context of our use of the term meaning is that revelation begins with the fact that there is something rather than nothing. Thus meaning is by its very nature a disclosure which is perceptually known through phenomena, through historical (everyday) events, or through individual experiences. Therefore, to be a Christian believer implies some degree of commitment to the form and character of the Meaning disclosed in the biblical narratives. In other words, some degree of saying "yes" to the manifestation of Meaning perceived in the historical events in the bible. It is as if the light shines brightest at this point of historical perception. This is what J.H. Cone is getting at when he says,

"In the Bible revelation is inseparable from history and faith. History is the arena in which God's revelation takes place. Unlike many non-Christian religions, the God of the Bible is a God who makes his will and purpose known through his participation in human history. That is why Christianity has been described as a historical religion. It is a religion which affirms that we know who God is by what he does in the historical

events of man. In fact there is no revelation of God without history. The two are inseparable.\(^{20}\)

The Christian, therefore, views the biblical narratives as the exhibition of the struggle between life (and Life) and history. Here life consistently refuses to acquiesce willingly to the anti-life judgements of history, and so continuously works on dissolving and channelling historical events into the bosom of meaning. The Bible is not interested in history for its own sake. It is not amenable to any attempt at turning it into a purely historical record. Instead it is of the nature of biblical meaning to refuse to yield to (or come under) the often heartless judgements of history, hence the latter was distorted at every turn.

In the biblical accounts Meaning is named and shown to be all-powerful, and all-knowing. It is also shown to be everywhere. No one can flee from Yahweh (Ps.139: 7), and beside Him there is no other. Deutero-Isaiah never tires of emphasising this point because he knows experientially the overwhelmingly all-powerfulness of Meaning in the context of the almost indescribable existential chaos of Babylon.\(^{21}\) Just at the moment when death and chaos thought that they had triumphed Meaning emerged and with a great power hitherto unknown to the nation of Israel overwhelmed the enemies while crushing at the same time both the nation's monolatry view of Yahweh and the pretensions of the "gods" of the nations in one complete declaration of salvation and deliverance for the people of God (Isaiah 40-53).\(^{22}\)

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21. See Lamentations (Jerusalem Bible); also Ps. 137.

22. On the problems inherent in Isaiah 40-53 especially that of the identification and the implications of the idea or the person of the ebed Yahweh cf. P.R. Ackroyd, Exile and Restoration (London, 1968) pp.126-128; J. Bright, op.cit., pp. 358-360; H.W. Robinson, op.cit., pp.176-177. There are certain key questions in the problem: (a) Is the Servant an individual, if so who? (b) Is the Servant the nation of Israel, if so why is the servant sometimes spoken of in the first person singular? (c) Where does the idea of the suffering servant, which appeared like a bolt from the blue, come from? There are no simple answers to the question. The poetic nature of the passages has made things doubly difficult. However, the preceding understanding of the prophets, the notion of atonement, and the experience of the sufferings involved in deportation and exilic life are clearly part of the intricate strands in the idea of the ebed Yahweh.
In the biblical narratives we are relieved to learn that Meaning is not a mere creaturely interpretation of phenomena but the revelation of God Himself in His total ankhological nature. Thus the concern of the God revealed through the pages of the bible is for life and not for religion or doctrines for its own sake "for the written code kills, but the Spirit gives life". (2 Cor.3: 6).

3. Life and Covenant in the Old Testament:

Covenant (berit) is, of course, a commensal relationship of a community around a given Deity or deities. In the case of the people of Israel it is a commensal relationship around the person of Yahweh. Theologically speaking the covenant which Yahweh made with the assortments of 'Israelite' nomads, semi-agriculturists and all kinds of straggler elements in the desert of Sinai presupposes "the election of the people" as special to God; not because of any goodness on their part but because according to Deuteronomy (cf. Chapter Seven), God loves them more than the rest of mankind! This is one of the basic tenets in the Deuteronomic school of thought.23 The whole structure of election and covenant is in turn erected on the solid foundation of Yahweh's deliverance of the people from their sufferings (as slaves) in Egypt. It is not our intention to get bogged down with the historical questions of validity.24 For these see the works mentioned in footnote 24 below.

What is theologically relevant in the structure is that Yahweh delivered the people from all the anti-life situations symbolised by servitude in Egypt, the great power impinging on and often bearing down on the individual and communal lives in the desert and in the city States.


of Palestine. He delivered them unto Himself and made a pact of relationship with them. The essence of the pact is that henceforth they would not be left alone to face the threats around them. The condition of the pact is that the people obey and worship Yahweh. The punishment for disobedience is Yahweh Himself allowing what they feared to come upon them (Job 3:25). That is, delivering them into the hands of whichever nation happened to be the 'super-power' among the surrounding nations (at least this is the light in which the classical prophets construed their mission). Albeit after the prophetic warnings and interpretations of such events as famine and pestilence as Yahweh's punishment of their sin of going after other gods have failed to turn them from their evil ways. The religious history of Israel is one long story of this socio-theological understanding.

It is important to emphasise the commensal nature of covenant because it is very necessary to point out the ankhological character of this form of social understanding. E.J. Lipman makes it clear that,

"The Covenant is Judaism's answer to the question of life's purpose. Each person must try to develop himself to the utmost as a partner of the living God in fulfilment of the covenant. Every Jew lives within the fold of the Jewish people, which functions collectively for the same covenanted purpose."

There are three main covenants which the people of Israel insist upon as having been enacted between them and Yahweh, either collectively or through their eponymous ancestors. There is the (rather unnationalistic) claim that God entered into covenant with Noah (Gen., 9:8-17).

26. There are other covenants, the Covenant at Schehem (Joshua, 24:14-28); The Covenant of David (2 Sam., 7: 8-17); 23: 2-5; I Kings 8: 22-26). There are also Covenant renewals in the time of Josiah (2 Kings 23: 1-3), in the time of Ezra/Nehemiah (Ezra chaps. 9 - 10, Nehemiah chaps. 9 - 10; for the difficulties in disentangling the order of events in this period of Israelite history cf. J. Bright, op.cit., pp.374-403. Jeremiah and Ezekiel both talked of a new covenant which Yahweh would make with the nation (Jer., 31:31-34; Jer., 32:37-41 and Ezekiel 36:24-28). On Covenant see E. Jacob, op.cit., pp.209-217.
There is also the claim that He did so with Abraham (Genesis 15:7-21 and 17: 1-27). Then at Sinai Yahweh entered into a covenant with the whole nation (Ex. 19:3-8 and 24: 3-8). This last, by its very communal nature, is the most important because, as already said, it portrays the willingness and the power of Yahweh to save and keep His people in a communal setting in which they are commensally related to one another and to Him. Perhaps, we need to stress that the role of both the "false" and the "true" prophets of Israel cannot be properly understood outside the context of the all-inclusive position of the covenantal idea in Israel.

Thus the ideas of "false prophet", "true prophet" and covenant have, of course, their overarching context in the popular religion, which expresses itself fully in worship - either the worship of Yahweh or the worship of the agricultural deities, which the people's new agricultural way of life made necessary in the pre-exilic period. The temple and the outlying shrines (usually the places of Baal-worship) were the chief centres of prophetic activities. The (law of the) covenant is the basis for the ordering of moral and social life of the individual and the community (Ps. 119) while worship and all the rites and rituals associated with it formed the immediate means of realising the kindness and love of Yahweh in personal and communal lives of the people. In other words, the context of worship is the context in which the emotional, psychological and spiritual crises and needs of life are dealt with and met.

Hence in the Psalms the joy of worship and the feeling of certainty which hold out Yahweh as the Meaning in the midst of His people meet one with full force. As a matter of fact one of the differences between the "false prophets" and the "true prophets" lies in the fact that while the former tended to emphasise this certainty with less attention to the

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28. See for instance Pss. 84, 116, 118, 121, 122, 123, 125 and 150.
contractual nature of this law as a prerequisite to true worship the latter
stressed the fulfilment of this law as a prerequisite to true worship. 29
At any rate to both the false and the true prophets and their audience or
congregation Yahweh is the primary meaning of their world (Ps. 115). This
distinction of the false and the true prophet will be taken up later in
this chapter, when we discuss the prophets.

4. Life and the Old Testament Concept of Salvation:

H.H. Rowley's table of contents in his, The Faith of Israel 30 may be
taken as a good example of how biblical scholars who deal with Old Test­
ament theology tend to break down and classify the biblical data. His
table goes like this: "I Revelation and its media II The Nature of
God III The Nature and Need of Man IV Individual and Community V The
Good Life VI Death and Beyond VII The Day of the LORD." It is already
evident that our present chapter is not inclined to this or similar types
of classification. Our departure from the 'norm' obtained because of our
realisation of the all-inclusive role of meaning in the data, and because
of our concern to call attention to it and its character; and, consequently,
to bring it to the surface of the biblical materials to which it is the
nucleus. Thus our discussions, which would by no means aim to be exhaus­
tive, have followed the order below.

(i) Unity of human experience: The character of the biblical (view
of) meaning is not amenable to the nousological standpoint. The foisting
of such an interpretation of phenomena on it only creates serious distor­
tions. Hence the notion of the soul, separable from the body, and the
conception of God which considers Him as metaphysically outside the his­
torical experiences of man are not biblical. The point we are making is
simply that the ankhological Being of the bible is not of the same char­
acter as the nousological Being of the Platonic - neo-Platonic axis of

thought. Thus the biblical world is unitary\textsuperscript{31} in spite of its three-storey structure of, (a) Sheol/Gehena which lies below; (b) this world in which we presently live and move; (c) the heaven above which is the realm of Yahweh who can quickly be implored to descend with the clouds to act on behalf of His people.

We have probably raised questions, on the soul, on God and the world. At any rate it would be useful for us to follow them up.

(a) The soul: Edmond Jacob defined the Old Testament understanding of the 'soul' in terms that may not be bettered: "To attempt to present the anthropology of the Old Testament with the aid of current concepts and modern speech will lead to certain failure. Opposition between body and soul is not to be found in the Old Testament, nor even a trichotomy (body, soul and spirit). Man is a psycho-physical being and psychical functions are bound so closely to his physical nature that they are all localised in bodily organs which themselves only draw their life from the vital force that animates them."\textsuperscript{32} Therefore the rendering of nephesh chayyah as "living soul" by the Authorised Version translation of the bible (Genesis 2: 7) is clearly a nousologisation of the text. This 'Platonisation' of the verse is of course, part of the overall, if mostly unconscious, Westernisation of the Scriptures which inevitably obtained in the course of its (the West's) translations of the Scriptures for her own use. However, it must be pointed out that the RSV has corrected the error by correctly rendering the words as "living being". Thus: "the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being" and not, "and man became a living soul" as the AV claims.

E. Jacob went on to say that, "The nephesh is the life, not in a

\textsuperscript{31} Perhaps it is necessary to emphasise that the biblical concepts of 'heaven' and 'hell' do obtain within a single total view of human experience. The concepts are akin to saying up, or down from a given perspective; in the present case the perspective of the world.

\textsuperscript{32} Cf. E. Jacob, \textit{op.cit.}, p.157.
theoretical sense but in its external and visible aspect, whilst heart and spirit denote life in its interior and hidden aspect."\(^{33}\) That man is a psycho-somatic being is a view the bible expresses in the words *nephesh* and *ruach* (spirit). In fact the Genesis 2: 7 text could be taken as constituting the biblical definition of the nature and essence of man. This insistence on the unity of individual personality, expressed in the term *nephesh*, can also be seen in Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God. Thus it is not a kingdom of souls but rather a kingdom of men, women and children in commensal togetherness with their heavenly Father. They entered because they believed that Jesus is the messiah. The New Testament understanding of resurrection also stresses this unity of human experience, for the risen are not mere extractions of soul entities but whole though re-created individuals.\(^{34}\)

(b) God and the world: The Genesis account of creation represents the Old Testament and the New Testament view on the nature of the world and how it came to be. God, who is rather perceived as a workman who needed to rest on the seventh day, summoned all things into being by word of mouth and by working directly on the clay in the case of Adam. Consequently the created is totally dependent on the Creator and as a result the world is not a Meaningless phenomenon. The belief that God created the world "out of nothing" is a way of stating that God is wholly committed to the world. In other words, that God cannot be conceptualised as an absentee landlord as the Deists thought. In fact God is known to man through the world through which and in which He manifests Himself. Thus there is no other world known to man to justify the nousological standpoint which tends to negate the present world.

Even the apocalyptists who talked of a cataclysmic ending of this

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\(^{33}\) E. Jacob, *op.cit.*, p.159.

world did so on the understanding that "a new heaven and a new earth"
(that is, a new world free from the shortcomings of the present one) would
replace the old one. In this coming world meaning would rule unopposed.

(ii) **Life, salvation, and the officials:** As already pointed out
man's desire for salvation is a desire to be in loving harmony with God,
or the very meaning of the world. In the case of the biblical world-view
this meaning is anthropologically perceived. In other words the "I AM" of
the Old Testament is nothing else but the "living God" who is wholly
against all the anti-life structures and situations of this world. Thus
in the bible to be saved is to live in the presence of God (Psalm 91)
alongside the people of God, the covenant community (Ps. 133).

The (view of) meaning which has so far primarily determined the
understanding and interpretation of Old Testament data is the nousological
(view of) meaning. This implies, of course, a failure to realise that the
kernel of that data is life. This failure is in turn an obvious weakness
which attends much of the works on the Old Testament. A nousological
approach also means that the roles of the prophets, the priests, and the
king, the place of the Temple, sacrifices, Psalms, and the Law, the positions of Wisdom and Apocalyptic writings can only be superficially under-
stood. Perhaps it needs be more clearly said that our study is, on the
whole, uncompromisingly rejecting the tendency to view "Life" as one among
other possible rubrics under which the Old Testament data could be categor-
ised. Instead our position is that life is in fact the basis for evaluat-
ing all classifications because it is the meaning of the data so classified.
We have to look more closely on, at least, some of the themes mentioned
above in order to make our standpoint clearer.

(a) **The prophets:** We won't concern ourselves with the distinctions
of "cult prophets" and "literary prophets" often regarded as the "eth-

prophet for other prophets is Moses; at least that is the viewpoint
of the Deuteronomist (Deut. 18:15ff; 34:10). 1 Sam. chapters 9 and
(continued on next page)
ical prophets". Usually the tendency in this kind of clear-cut demarca-
tion is to regard the "cult prophets" as "false prophets" and the "ethical
prophets" as "true prophets". Perhaps, what is more important is to rec-
ognise that every prophet speaks from a particular theological assumption.
Some viewed their roles cultically while some perceived the necessity of
change by looking to the past or to the future. These tend to see Mosaic
Yahwism as the norm to which Yahweh is recalling the nation, failing
which there would be judgement. Others favoured the Davidic-Zion/
Temple tradition with its tenets of stressing the controversial idea
that Yahweh has chosen Zion as His permanent dwelling place, and that He
has also made everlasting covenant with David and his descendants.
Because these positions were constantly faced with political and military
threats or upheavals two main ranks appeared among the prophets due to

35. (continued from previous page)

10 indicate that prophecy in its origins had a cultic and communal set-
ting. The passages also emphasise the ecstatic side of the prophetic
phenomenon. On the distinction between nabi (prophet) and ro'eh/hozeh
(seer) see Harrison p.742. See also J.A. Motyer, 'Prophecy, Prophets'
-a balanced study with regard to the controversy between the relation
of the cultic prophet and the canonical/literary prophet; H.L.Ellison,
Men Spake From God (Paternoster Press, 1958 ed.). This is a useful
work but needs to be read with caution as Ellison is perhaps too commit-
ted to the conservative wing of the conflict between Conservatism and
Liberalism in Western Christianity. The danger is that the standpoints
in the conflict, which are clearly alien to the Bible, are read in and
out of the biblical data. Cf. also John Marsh, Amos and Hosea (SCM,

36. Cf. J. Bright, op.cit., 331-339; H. Cunliffe-Jones, Jeremiah (SCM,
London, 1966 ed.).

37. Cf. J. Bright, ibid., pp.292-296. Bright (pp. 2 6-399) contains what
is probably one of the clearest discussions on the contrast between
the Sinaitic covenant (Mosaic Yahwism) theology and Davidic covenant
(Davidic/Zion traditional) theology. Isaiah stressed the Davidic/
Zion position with its everlasting promise from Yahweh. Jeremiah,
however, insisted on the Mosaic Yahwism with its stress on moral
demands rather than on the grace of Yahweh's promises.

38. The claim of Yahweh's promise to David and the choice of Zion (2 Sam.
chaps. 6-7) were rejected by the Northern Kingdom who later founded
their own cult centres of Bethel and Dan; cf. J. Bright, op.cit.,
pp.220-234.

39. This Davidic covenant was the background of the messianic expectation.
divergent reactions to, and interpretations of, events. On the one side were those who emphasised cultic worship and lavish the covenant community with promises of peace and healing (Jer. 5:12,31). On the other side were those who warned that the cultic emphases were being made at the expense of moral uprightness. As a result they held out judgement for the nation (Amos ch. 2f.; Jer. ch. 7).

However, the recognition of the above historical and theological factors, though indispensable, need not constitute a stumbling block to the grasping of the real issue at stake. The prophets need not be seen as the professional seers working singly or in guilds either for money (I Sam. 9: 6-8) or for the cult centres. Nor were the canonical prophets the sworn opponents of the sacrificial system as they were once made out to be. The latter, at least, were certainly the bearers of the words of Meaning who found themselves not in the complacent world of modern professional theologians but in the midst of crises to which they must address themselves and the nation. The essence of their 'condemnation' of the priests, the "false prophets", the Temple and the sacrificial system stems from their understanding that these structures and officials have dangerously stopped uttering the words of Meaning. Their failure was not to realise, as the "ethical prophets" did, that God only becomes an angry God to be propitiated through the sacrificial system when the religious structures stop speaking the words of God. If the priests, the false prophets, the sacrificial system and the Temple itself with its theological undergirdings cease from uttering the words of Meaning so much the

41. R.E. Clement's Prophecy and Covenant (1965) may be regarded as a study dedicated to the refutation of such a view. P.R. Ackroyd equally supports Clement's position cf. op.cit., pp.4-5.
42. The controversy over the relation of the prophets and the sacrificial has an important context which bears directly on the history of Jesus. Thus if the prophets who "spoke the mind of God" had actually rejected the sacrificial approach to God then the sacrificial understanding of the work of Christ is suspect; His interpreters had foisted on his event that which was rejected by God through His spokesmen (the prophets)!
the worse for them - they are good for nothing, and as such are of no use. Beside these they have nothing against the structures. They were part of the covenant community. They also wished healing and peace for their commensal brethren as much as anyone else. They themselves did operate in Temples and sanctuaries (Isa. ch.6; Amos ch. 7) and some of them did emerge from the priestly class.43

The "literary prophets" were ankhologically conscious personalities with greater insight to the Meaning of the politico-religious community. To the critical conditions of the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger they never shirked from addressing the words of God, as they do to the nation in her moments of religious adultery or in times of social emergencies. They often recognised and insisted that the concern of religion is not religion but life. Hence their opposition to any tendency to view the system of worship as the end in itself.

(b) The priests: The importance of the priests in the life of the nation of Israel is rightly emphasised by R.E. Clements when he says that,

"To have abandoned the Israelite cult would have been tantamount to abandoning allegiance to Yahweh...the very foundation of Israelite life was its covenant relationship to Yahweh which was affirmed through certain cultic rites."44

However, the purpose of the "cultic rites" was to relate the Meaning of the religious community to the life-situations of the worshippers, individually and communally. This is where the ethical prophets saw their departure points.

The growth and expansion of the nation by incorporations of peoples and territories involved the adoption of non-Israelite patterns of worship which included whole sanctuaries and cultic rites.45 Those were part of

43. For instance Ezekiel, cf. H.L. Ellison, op.cit., p.98.
44. R.E. Clements, op.cit., p.87; E. Jacob, op.cit., pp.246-250.
45. Cf. G. Fohrer, op.cit., pp.60-65. This process of adopting necessary new religious forms reached its climax in David's making Jerusalem (with its Canaanite religious sanctuary) the capital of Israel and the transfer of the amphyctyonic Ark to the City. Cf. J. Bright, (continued on next page)
the cost of the transition from a semi-nomadic way of life to a settled agricultural life. Growth also meant growth in priestly ideology itself; a movement from simplicity to sophistication. The extent and the sophistication of the priestly work presented to us in the centrality of the Temple, in the importance of the cult (which the Pentateuch stresses again and again), and in the reforming work of Ezra clearly emphasise this question of growth and sophistication. This, as just pointed out, attained its decisive moment in David's foundation of the State of Israel with Jerusalem and its Canaanite cult centres as the capital city. However, what we need to emphasise is that the consequence was the increase and the diversification in the officiating and the teaching tasks of the priest. His official work includes teaching the torah, interceding for the people, mediating between them and God, settling inter-personal tensions between the worshippers, and officiating in worship, and in private and communal sacrificial rites. With the ending of the monarchy and the eclipse of the prophets the priests also took over their roles, as far as possible.

However, the onset of sophistication in religious forms was a phenomenon the priests did not quite contain. The inflow of alien religious forms carried advantages and very serious disadvantages too. Regarding the latter it can be said that not only was the dividing line between

45. (continued from previous page)

op.cit., pp.196ff. Note should be taken at this juncture of K.A. Kitchen's Ancient Orient and Old Testament (IVP, 1966). He appears to erect his wholesale objection to the procedures and results of modern scholarship more on subjective and theological grounds than on the objectivity of the inevitable factors inherent in the existence of a given social group in a new (alien) cultural setting.

46. However, it needs to be pointed out that the Rechabites not only continued to uphold the nomadic way of life but also opposed those to whom it was no longer a valid way of life. Cf. J. Bright, op.cit., pp.246-247; see also Jeremiah ch. 35.


49. Cf. note 45; also Clements, op.cit., p.91ff.

what was of Israel and what was of the surrounding nations began to be blurred to the point of identity but also, more importantly, the rising need to expiate the sins of the people and propitiate Yahweh and the increasing emphases on the torah at the same time all meant the danger of not holding out Meaning to the constantly changing life-situations of the individual and the community.

(c) The Law (torah): The term, torah acquired the legalistic characteristics and force with which we associate it in the Rabbinic writings of Judaism. However, as G. Fohrer points out the idea of the law, in the sense of rules and regulations to guide the community, goes back not just to the beginning of the covenant but to the nomadic period:

"Since early Israelite nomadic law was to a large extent no longer appropriate for the circumstances of the settled regions and did not suffice for the situation there, during this early period in Palestine the Israelites borrowed Canaanite law, which was related to the law of the other Semitic peoples. It was adapted as necessary to the Israelite situation and underwent further development.... But the adoption of Canaanite law began a process that was to lead in later centuries to a religion of legalism."

In terms of form the laws in the Pentateuch fall into two main categories: the apodictic form and the casuistic form. The former's characteristic formula is "thou shalt/shalt not"; the latter's is "if a man - then" or similar formulas. According to John Bright the apodictic belongs more to the covenant ceremony and is expressed by the Decalogue while the casuistic is more related to the ancient codes of the surrounding nations.

These distinctions are not absolutely necessary in the face of the fact that much in the sedentary life of Israel is taken over from the surrounding nations. What needs to be stressed is that any law (borrowed, invented or of natural growth) conceived outside the context of a community's

52. Cf. E. Jacob, op.cit., p.271.
Israel had wisely centred her laws (ethical, ritual and civil) in the person of Moses, the great prophet of God who was not only the spokesman of God but also received the laws from Yahweh! Thus they correctly perceived their laws in the context of their Meaning: "You shall not kill" is a tacit expression of the intentionality of life. This notion of life presents at once a precise criterion for evaluating the success or failure of the legal system. The complaints of the prophets that the people of God had prostituted themselves against Yahweh, that the covenant love (chesed) had fallen into disrespect, and the growth of legalism, which attained its full rigidity in Judaism, are pointers to the tendency to regard religious legal system as an end in itself over and against the concerns of life. This is the background against which Jesus the messiah appeared. It is the background that validated and justified his audacious declaration,

"You have heard that it was said...
But I say to you..." (Matt., ch. 5).

It is the background of his ministerial manifesto:

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord." (Lk., 4: 8)

(d) Wisdom and Apocalyptic: These two camps of understanding confront us as opposing religious forms. However, we are better advised to regard such opposition as superficial because there is no disagreement over the important question of (view of) meaning.

Wisdom is at home in the world; it is open to the wise sayings and ideas from all nations. It is an international school of thought and

56. Cf. G.A.F Knight, Hosea (SCM, London, 1960) pp.14-33; John Macquarrie, Amos and Micah (London, 1959); H. Cunliffe-Jones, op.cit.; H.L. Ellison, Men Spake From God (Paternoster, 1958). However, reading the prophets themselves, especially Amos, Hosea, Isaiah and Jeremiah, is probably more helpful in giving a direct sense of the points we are making.
form of education. However, in Israel Wisdom materials were understood and interpreted as far as was possible, in accordance with the demands of Yahweh. It is this Israelite form of it that we are concerned with here.

Wisdom asked questions about life and was not prepared to sit still upon received traditions and opinions. Hence the problem of retribution and the traditional answers given to it is uppermost in their mind. The traditional thesis is that the wicked is punished in this world while the just is rewarded. This thesis is rejected by Wisdom literature; and Job is the classic expression of that rejection. Thus it is appropriate to say that the basic premise of Wisdom literature is, the good life.

57. Cf. J.F.A. Sawyer, op.cit., pp.72-94; Oesterley and Robinson, op.cit., pp.366-374. The latter point out in their introductory remarks on wisdom literature that, "There is...a fundamental difference in outlook between the Semitic and the Indo-European mind. The latter, in that quest for unity which is the mainspring of all metaphysic, has invariably tended to become pantheistic, reducing all the objects of experience to a single whole, and assuming that every appearance of separate identity, whether of person or of thing, is illusory or transient. The Semitic mind, on the other hand, laid intense stress on personality" (p.366). This quote is the nearest Oesterley and Robinson came to expressing the positions we have defined as nouso-logical and ankhological. However, the other points they also appear to want to make with regard to the ankhological position are that "the Semite feels very strongly...he does not reason consecutively.... The forms of literature most characteristic of the Hebrew genius are the lyric and the short prophetic oracle, instinct with life, throbbing with emotion." (ibid.) The charge of "instinct" and "emotion" contrasted with "reason" need not be followed further in the face of the fact that Aristotle and many other ancient Eastern writers as well as mathematical principles were all made known in the West by the Arabs. Neither do we need to remind the reader that Spinoza, Marx, Freud and Einstein all possessed the so-called 'Semitic mind'. Thus the ankhological position is not a defect of the reasoning faculty. It is rather the realisation that the exercise of 'reason' must be at the service of life because it is its activity. On the relation of Wisdom in Israel to that of the surrounding nations cf. R.D. Barnett, Illustrations of Old Testament (London, 1966) pp.34-36; Jerusalem Bible, pp.931-932; on the role of the Arabs in the rather relatively recent "birth of knowledge in the West" cf. Bertrand Russell, History of Western Philosophy (1961 ed.) pp.413-421. However, Russell appears to want to reduce everything to a Persian factor (that is, the Aryan thesis ) thereby weakening the Arabian case. For a more balanced assessment cf. A. Freemantle, The Age of Belief (1954) on the chapter entitled 'The Arabs', pp.106-111.

58. Cf. Ps. 73; also Job (Jerusalem Bible).

Consequently matters or opinions of life are assessed, accepted or rejected on the basis of the premise. It is moreover the core of the educational curriculum of Wisdom schools. Optimism or pessimism derived from it.

Wisdom literature, like the Apocalyptic, is a post-exilic phenomenon. The post-exilic stress on Temple worship (Ezek., chaps. 40 - 48), the codification of the law (Ezra/Nehemiah), the preservation of the accounts of both the pre-exilic and the exilic prophets, whose prophecies of doom or restoration had been fulfilled by the Babylonian events, had the cumulative effect of turning the mind and the expectations of the restored community away from new prophets and prophecies. The centre of activities had shifted from the latter to the laws and the Psalms centred in the new Temple. Yet, even in these conditions, new channels must be found; the prophetic minded must utter in order to release the pressures of the prophetic fire in his bones. Wisdom literature and the Apocalyptic literature were the new channels.

What the apocalyptic had in common with Wisdom School is a concern for life. However, the apocalyptist did not possess the stability, calmness and the observant nature of the student of Wisdom. He impatiently rejected this world simply because he had had enough of putting up with its 'hopelessness'. His conviction that God had rejected the present world, and that life must, nonetheless, go on, but only in a new world which Yahweh would bring about on a date already set, opened up his worried and restless mind to visions and dreams. Those were his vehicles of prophetic expression. The prophet must speak out, at least for the peace of his own mind. He did; and had left us not only with his message (which unlocked the divine secrets!) but also with bewilder-


Having dealt with our chosen themes we must note that themes like "The Day of the LORD", "the king", "the messianic expectation" and "the remnant" are not discussed, yet they are very important ideas in the overall understanding of the Old Testament view of salvation. Consequently we would, in concluding, touch on the ones immediately relevant to our above discussion of the prophetic.

D.F. Hinson once raised this question, "WHAT DID THE ISRAELITES EXPECT?" The question concerns the essential nature of the Old Testament understanding of salvation. He answered it by saying:

"The Jews were realists: they were fully aware of the discomforts and distresses which are part of life in this world. But they did not suppose that these things would continue for ever. They looked forward to a time when people would be freed from them, and would be able to live complete and wholesome lives." 62

This eschatological goal of "wholesome lives" to which the prophets, priests and people ultimately came to fix their hopes on is described by H.H. Rowley in these terms:

"The good life, then, as it is presented to us in the Old Testament is the life that is lived in harmony with God's will and that expresses itself in daily life in the reflection of the character of God translated into the terms of human experience, that draws its inspiration and its strength from communion with God in the fellowship of his people and in private experience, and that know how to worship and praise him both in public and in the solitude of the heart." 63

A life that is lived in harmony with God is one that is lived in harmony with the ankhological (view of) meaning of the politico-religious community. It is towards the achievement of this harmony that the prophets in particular worked. They proclaimed the words of God and urged the people to believe that Meaning is its own interpreter in midst of


threats, confusions and upheavals. At these moments of trial the people tended to follow their own ideas which were often not the will of Yahweh. Then the prophets warned them to return. Such warnings were now and again buttressed with the warnings of judgement and of the Day of the Lord. When the level of response looked dangerously insignificant the prophet would then sustain faith in the hope of the remnant, and in the coming messiah (king). The prophets were men to whom social change was not a threat, as long as God (the people's meaning) was not undermined. They always looked to the future. In it they saw the dead dry bones receive a new (Genesis type) infusion of life (Ezk. Ch. 37). Some glimpsed the hope of the resurrection and affirmed it (Dan. ch. 12). The constant danger of sin originating in the heart of the people would be stopped when the LORD himself would write the laws of the new covenant in their hearts (Jer. 31:31-34). This conflict between the ritualistic and the prophetic standpoints would be terminated when the ebed Yahweh (servant of the LORD) would become the sacrificer and the sacrificial victim for the total redemption of the people (Isa., ch. 53). This redemption means a peaceful life in a world where the lamb and the lion would dwell together in peace and prosperity; and there would no longer be wars between nations as their swords would be turned into ploughshares (Isa. ch. 65f). This is a world that exhibits a triumph of life.

However, whatever is lacking in this view of salvation (and much is lacking in it) could be supplied by no figure other than Jesus. It is to him we must turn in turning to the New Testament.

CHAPTER FOUR

LIFE - THE MEANING OF THE NEW TESTAMENT

1. Covenant, Qumran and Jesus:

Are the Gospels, books and Letters of the New Testament actually no more than 'theological' accounts bearing on the person and work of Christ, and on the Church resulting from his emergence? If so, then, we would like to possess the untheological history of Jesus of Nazareth. But, nevertheless, we are also interested in the theological history of the risen Christ. The former would tell us about the life of Jesus, what he said and what he did until his death. The latter would inform us on what happened from his burial onwards. Modern New Testament scholarship insists that we do not possess the untheological history of Jesus, in spite of our interest; and that our New Testament is mainly the theological story of the exalted Christ who was formerly the Jesus of history. The New Testament claims, of course, to contain not only the account of the risen Christ but also the history of Jesus of Nazareth. But the account and the history, says modern New Testament scholarship, stemmed from the first century Church concerned with proving her points of view, with regard to the life of Jesus and her own existence, from the post-resurrection standpoint, to very often hostile audiences, who wanted to deny any theological claims relating to Jesus the son of Joseph.

The above points may be taken as a fairly adequate representative summary of the position of New Testament scholarship since Reimarus.  

1. A historically reconstructed portrait of Jesus and his disciples can, of course, be attempted, and is usually done, as a way out of the difficulty, but such reconstructions are achieved at the expense of the theological nature of the NT accounts. Cf. Albert Schweitzer, The Quest of the Historical Jesus (1981 - reissue of 1954 3rd edition).

If the representation is correct then we are bound to point out some erroneous assumptions inherent in it: (a) first the assumption that the first disciples, who lived through the tragic experience of the brutal nature of the death of their master and only overcame the trauma in the joyous "witness of his resurrection", could have been able to produce the kind of disinterested historical accounts which modern scholarship seems to ask for. The history cannot, with any stretch of the imagination, be other than theological history. Therefore, Paul spoke the mind of the first century Church when he says,

"From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once regarded Christ from a human point of view, we regard him thus no longer." (2 Cor. 5:16)

(b) the second is to assume, probably unconsciously, that extra-biblical historical data which throw light on the life and work of Christ could be ignored or rejected as long as they cannot be fitted into the already finished portrait of the Christ. This position is surprising, judging from our initial statement to the effect that modern New Testament scholarship is interested in the history of Jesus. At any rate, this second assumption is the main factor behind the nervousness of Western theologians over the unprecedented light which the Qumran materials\(^3\) shed on the life of Jesus. However, before we may fruitfully take up this

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3. Our use of the materials serves as a historical background introduction to the person and activities of Jesus. Anyhow, our presupposition is that the New Testament accounts were written to inform faith and not to inform modern historiography. Consequently those results reached through reconstructions tend to reflect the religious outlook of the reconstructors rather than the religious outlook of the historical Jesus who, at any rate, remains unknown at the end of the efforts to uncover him. Our opinion is that the total picture of the community of the Scrolls (Qumran) would be of immense value in correcting the reconstructed portraits and in showing us Jesus in his time. On the severe limitations of the reconstructed portraits cf. Ulrich Simon, 'The Multidimensional Picture of Jesus' (in) What About the New Testament, ed. M. Hooker and C. Hickling (1975) pp.116-126.
Qumran question let us try to gain some idea of the Western view of the relation of the Old Testament to the New Testament as it would help us to assess the Qumran controversy more adequately. We would also bring up to date our discussion of the Covenant in the last chapter because the Qumran religious Order can not be understood outside the Covenant context.

A non-Western reader of Western nousologically informed theological and historical studies of the two Testaments may be struck by the extent it has been taken for granted that Jesus and the New Testament could be excluded from the overall Jewish milieu. There are, of course, both historical and cosmological reasons for this unwarranted state of affairs: the historical reason is that the Early Church flourished, suffered, and triumphed under the aegis of Roman emperors, in an imperial colonial setting erected by Rome. The cosmological reason is that the biblical data are studied and accounted for from within the Western primary perception of the world. Hence the theological and historical portraits of Jesus understandably fit into their places in Western Churches while appearing out of place in the Jewish world in general and in the Palestinian Jewish Church in particular.

Consequently efforts are often made to distinguish sharply between the theology of the Old Testament and the theology of the New Testament. Thus in his The Study of Theology Gerhard Ebeling, speaking of the two fields, insists that,

"The fact that it is embedded in the history of the Near East easily gives the study of the Old Testament the character of a special discipline in the philosophical faculty, namely, oriental studies. What people customarily designate as the theology of the Old Testament presents much more difficult methodological problems than the corresponding New Testament."

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4. It may be pointed out, however, that some writers upset by the claims of divinity made for Jesus tend to try to refute such by making Jesus a man of his time and the NT accounts the literature of its Jewish milieu. Cf. A. Schweitzer, op.cit.; W.G. Kümmel, op.cit.; see also Ernest Renan, Life of Jesus (1863); C.J. Cadoux, The Life of Jesus (1948).
Testament field. If the latter poses the problem of whether it succeeds in going beyond a history of early Christian theology, in the Old Testament it is intensified to the question of whether a person must be satisfied with merely an Israelite history of religion. Already to use the concept of theology for the phenomena of the Old Testament, and thus, to characterise the mode of conceptualisation and thought expressed in it, appears to be an anachronism in contrast to the situation within the New Testament."^5

Without following up the questions raised by Ebeling we must point out that J.F.A. Sawyer has certainly done the unitary world of the two Testaments a great service when he emphasised some points we may be allowed to quote in full:

"On the one hand, the Old Testament is more central to Christian tradition than is often realized; on the other hand the New Testament is more Jewish, and to that extent more closely related to the Old Testament, than is sometimes admitted. Two misconceptions which tend to divert attention from the Jewishness of the New Testament are still fairly widespread. The first is that because the New Testament is in Greek, it is de facto less Jewish than the Old Testament...The mere fact that a Jew in the time of Christ spoke Greek does not necessarily mean that he was 'less Jewish' than a Jew who spoke any other language. The second misconception about the New Testament concerns the apostle Paul...it is a complete misunderstanding of Paul's character and sympathies to suggest that he was 'anti-Jewish'. One only has to consider his use of the Jewish Bible and the rabbinic methods he so skilfully employs in his teaching, and the agony of Romans 9-11, to appreciate his deep love for his people and his conviction that his religion is their religion too, if they could only see it as he has now, by the grace of God, seen it."

Sawyer rightly grasped that the data that obtain in the period "from Moses to Patmos" (the title of his book!) belong to one tradition. H.H. Rowley, on the other hand, seems to think that "the Old Testament is not to be read as a Christian book"^7 and yet he comes up with an analogy which is fully acceptable to us (though it is difficult to see its place in his endeavour to divide, and keep apart, the one tradition of the two Testaments which as a matter of fact grew from the Old to the New): "There is a unity in

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the life of an individual; yet it is impossible from the most careful
study of the child to know the future course of his life. The unity of
the Bible is of this latter kind. It is the unity of growth, and not a
static unity." Consequently the claim that the Old Testament is not
to be read as a Christian book becomes, to say the least, superfluous.

It is evidently in order for us to reject the tendency to divide
(and oppose one against the other) the one tradition of the two Testa-
ments; with the consequence of heightening the view of Moses as the
beginning and the centre of the Old Testament tradition with John the
Baptist as its tail-end, and the idea of Jesus as the beginning and the
centre of the New Testament tradition with the apostle Paul as its climax
and tail-ending. The greatest and the immediate refutation of such a
division of the tradition is the fact that life is the (view of) meaning
of the Two Testaments. This does not, of course, imply that the Old
Testament's grasp and expression of God is on the same level of depth and
quality with the grasp and expression of Him by Jesus. We have in fact
shown in the last chapter that the literary prophets had an upper hand in
this matter over the Priests and the legalists. However, it is necessary
to resist the Marcionite\(^9\) approach to the two Testaments which Western
scholars are prone to.

On the subject of the Covenant we may point out that it is very
important, in fact indispensable, to approach the New Testament corpus
with the Old Testament understanding. To be sure the growth of legalism
which is commensurate with the growth of Judaism had tended to put a

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Church to A.D.461} (6th ed., 1914) pp.137-141. Marcion argued that the
God of the OT is a different God from that of the NT in his Antithesis.
He also tried to show that the OT is in opposition to the NT. See
IV} (1979 reprint).
legalistic understanding of the Covenant in place of its commensal understanding which the prophets characterised as a loving and caring relationship between all members of the covenant. These legalistic emphases on the need to meet the demands of the constantly expanding Torah were usually exacerbated by critical moments in the life of the nation. The dreadful persecution of the Jews in the second century by Antiochus Epiphanes was one of such moments. They responded in various ways to the persecution. Some thought it wiser to meet the Hellenistic demands of the oppressor; some took to arms and guerilla warfare against the enemy. Tracts were written to console the victims and to encourage hope (e.g. the book of Daniel). Many reasoned that the catastrophe was able to find its way to the people because of their sins. That is to say, their failure to observe the laws assembled around the name of Moses. From this group the more guilt-stricken ones like the Pharisees and those led by the Teacher of Righteousness (of the Qumran Community) resolved with vengeance to observe to its minutest details the Law of the Covenant. It is in this state of mind that we meet both the Pharisees of Jesus' time and the religious Order of which the Qumran 'sect' is a branch. The Order elected that its members should lead secluded lives wherever they were,

13. Cf. 1 Maccabees (JB) 6:11-13: "But now I remember the wrong I did in Jerusalem when I seized all the vessels of silver and gold there, and ordered the extermination of the inhabitants of Judah for no reason at all. This, I am convinced, is why these misfortunes have overtaken me, and why I am dying of melancholy in a foreign land" vss.12-13.
in cities, villages or desert places. Their goal was to fulfil the "New Covenant" (as opposed to the original Covenant now broken by the sinful nation). Thus the idea of the Covenant as a politico-religious concept lived on from its Old Testament conception through the New Covenant of the Qumran politico-religious Order to the New Testament politico-religious concept of the Kingdom of God or the New Israel.

_Qumran religious Order:_ We speak of Qumran because it was from its ruins that the "Dead Sea Scrolls" were recovered from 1947 A.D. onwards. Khirbet (means, "ruin" in Arabic) Qumran, situated about eight miles south of Jericho, on the western shore of the Dead Sea, was once the centre of this Jewish sect who took to this part of the Wilderness of Judaea probably to really reside in an atmosphere conducive to the life of obedience to the Covenant. The Essenes, John the Baptist (Mk. 1:1-9; Matt. 3:1-12; Lk. 3:1-20), Jesus of Nazareth (Mk. 1:12; Matt. 4:1-12; Lk. 4:1-13), and a host of others, known and unknown to history, had at one time or the other sought to know and fulfil the will of God from this Wilderness.

We are today in a position to talk about the "sect of the Scrolls" because the group occupying it at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem (it has been occupied on and off since the time of Antiochus Epiphanes) in A.D.70 were able to stow away their precious library in the nearby caves (hoping to return, of course) as the might of the Roman Army descended on the area. They may have fled or been killed. At any rate, they never returned to recover their stowed away library! But we are reminded of the fate of the nine hundred and sixty Jews who decided to commit suicide within the nearby fortress of Masada instead of surrendering to the Roman

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15. Cf. Josephus, Jewish Wars Bk.11, Ch. VIII; Antiquities, XVII, 1, 5 F.V. Filson, _op.cit._, pp.53-54.
16. Cf. G. Vermes, _op.cit._, pp.53-58. All quotations are taken from this particular translation (i.e. G. Vermes, The Dead Sea Scrolls in English) unless otherwise stated.
Army. Of this incident Edmund Wilson says,

"The Romans had also to deal with the precipitous fort
ness of Masada.... This had been captured in 66 by the
Jews, who had slaughtered the Roman garrison and who suc-
ceeded in holding it till April of 73.... There was only
one point that was vulnerable, and this the Romans finally
breached with a battering ram, but then found themselves
confronted with a bulwark, which the occupants had just
put up; this the besiegers eventually burned. Inside they
found alive only two women and five children. All the rest
of this stubborn remnant of nine hundred and sixty Jews
had been induced by their leader to kill themselves. He had
reminded them, according to Josephus, that they had long
ago resolved never to be servants of the Romans, nor to
any other than God himself." 17

The scrolls began to come to light from 1947. As soon as their con-
tents were made known Western Christian theology began to show signs of
nerves. The same was the case on the side of Jewish scholars. Thus the
Dead Sea Scrolls appeared to pose a two-pronged threat. Firstly the Wes-
tern portrait of Jesus and its overall Westernisation of the New Testament
felt threatened. Secondly the Jews felt that the scrolls constituted a
threat to the Masoretic text. In other words the scrolls which are older
than the Masoretic texts (now regarded as sacrosanct) contained significant
variants to the later Masoretic texts. However, we are basically concerned
with the threat posed to Western Christian theology. 18 The Synoptic and
the Johannine accounts of the activities of Jesus and his disciples could
clearly be seen to belong to the same religious climate as the Dead Sea
Scrolls' account of the activities of the religious Order founded by the
Teacher of righteousness. Suddenly Jesus appears to belong more to this
Jewish world than to the Middle Class world of Western theological and
religious text books dealing with the Old and the New Testaments.

The response to this new state of affairs by Western Christian theo-
logians was one of undermining and underrating, directly or indirectly,
the positive value of the Scrolls to a non-Western 19 understanding of Jesus.

18. On this whole question of the Jewish and Western response to the Dead
Sea Scrolls see E. Wilson, ibid., especially pp.77-111.
19. See for instance H.H.Rowley (1957); F.V.Filson, op.cit., pp.55-56;
(continued on next page)
It is, however, obvious that the nousological portraits of him in Western text books are not in accord with Qumran evidence. Wilson himself, who has devoted many chapters in his book to the study of this Western response, has this to say,

"New Testament scholars, it seems, have almost without exception boycotted the whole subject of the scrolls. The situation in this field is peculiar. It is precisely the more 'liberal' scholars in Britain and the United States who have been most reluctant to deal with the scrolls for the reason that these liberals tend to assume that the doctrines known as Christian were not really formulated until several generations after Jesus' death."\(^{20}\)

In other words, the New Testament belongs not only to the same religious climate of thought as the Dead Sea Scrolls, which predate it (we do not accept the, rather subjective, post-New Testament dating), but also does contain some identical religious terminologies (though unchristological) like "Light", "Life", "Holy Spirit", rite of baptism, rite of holy meal, the idea of twelve leaders,\(^{21}\) the messianic expectation of the return of the founder sometime after his death (cf. Damascus Rule B.11) etc. However, it is more true to say that New Testament scholars tend to be dismissive\(^{22}\) in their approach to the question of the Scrolls than that they boycotted the whole subject.

19. (continued from previous page)

R.K. Harrison (1970) pp.134-143; H.G.G. Herklots, How the Bible Came to Us (1959) pp.125-135. On this question of Western images of Jesus Ulrich Simon (op.cit.) points out that "Even the finds from Qumran ... failed to dictate a noticeable change of tone" (p.117).


21. Cf. "In the Council of the Community there shall be twelve men and three Priests" (C. Rule, VIII, p. 85; italics mine).

22. Katherine Folliot is a good example of a minority of scholars who cannot be accused of boycotting the materials or of being dismissive. In fact she is probably over-enthusiastic in that she systematically reduced both the Gospel accounts and the contents of the Scrolls to the same level though according Jesus a greater insight. Cf. K. Folliot, Jesus Before He was God (1978). See also the more restrained article by Herbert Braun, 'The Qumran Community' (in) Jesus in His Time (1971) pp.66-74.
The concomitant of the above discussion is our intention to suggest (on the ground of the Qumran evidence and such New Testament passages as Mk. 1:1-5; Matt. chps. 3-4; Lk. chps. 3-4:30; Jn. 1:19-51), that Jesus of Nazareth had, most likely, belonged to one or more branches of this widely distributed Order; he most probably came to a point, in his life with them, where he had to free himself and the world' from the exclusive and the isolationist mentality (D.Rule XIII, p.115f.) of the Order. Under a prophetic urge, of course; and because of his supreme ankho logical awareness. (The notion of prophetic urge is not used with the idea of mere prophetic calling, which would make Jesus one among the prophets. We are using it in a special sense; it extends backwards, as it were; in the sense that it includes the belief of God's incarnation in Jesus - what we will also express in terms of "God was in Christ"). Perhaps it is true that much in the beliefs and teachings of Jesus is already implicit in the pages of the Scrolls, albeit heavily laden and suppressed with the weight of Judaic legalism. It is these unessentials that Jesus swept away, with his Father's authority, on his way to revealing himself as the greatest expresser of the ankho logical meaning. Christian theology has nothing to lose but everything to gain by accepting our present approach to the Scrolls. However, we do not think that a healthy African Christian theology (or any other Christian theology for that matter) operating from within the ankho logical intentionality of the two Testaments can legitimately take a dismissive approach to the Qumran corpus.

We will next pay attention to the texts of the Scrolls because our position requires supportive evidence from them for it to be clearly distanced from any charge of "wishful thinking". As already pointed out,

23. Cf. G. Vermes (op.cit.) p.16: "Its communities were distributed throughout the towns and villages of the land as well as in the desert places such as Qumran". Though, "The 'assemblies of the towns' ...i.e. those members who lived an urban life, were subject to other rules and were separated somewhat less rigorously from the fellow Jews, but their hopes and ideals were identical with those of their desert brethren" (p.17).
the Community of the Scrolls came into being as a consequence of the decision of a group under the prophetic guidance of a certain Teacher of Righteousness to "enter the New Covenant in the land of Damascus"\textsuperscript{24} (D. Rule VIII, p.106). The "land of Damascus" may be no more than a code word standing for the various communities founded under the basic principles taught by the Teacher of Righteousness. Or the phrase simply describes the city of origin of the Teacher himself. Another possibility is, that the prototype community originally began somewhere in northern Palestine or in Damascus which means that "land of Damascus" was meant to designate that geographical factor. However, we must bear in mind that writings of this period normally avoid being specific on personal names and particular events.\textsuperscript{25}

The Order laid emphasis on the hierarchical running of its communities. There are Priests, Guardians and what G. Vermes calls "Bursar of the Congregation". Of course, in a self-contained religious community such hierarchical organisation would be indispensable to its smooth working. The Order also seems to be unique in its messianic conceptions. It expects (probably) \textbf{three} messianic figures instead of \textbf{one}. This last number is obviously more natural to both the expectations of Judaism and Christianity. The three figures are: the Prophet, the Messiah of Aaron, and the Messiah of Israel (C. Rule IX, p.87). However, the concepts are familiar to both Judaism and Christianity. For instance, the Prophet is

\textsuperscript{24} The historical figure masked with the description, Teacher of Righteousness is still unidentified, cf. G. Vermes, \textit{op. cit.}, pp.67-68.

\textsuperscript{25} The apocalyptists published their works under pseudonyms; for instance the book of Daniel, the book of Enoch, the book of Job (the latter comes under Wisdom literature) etc. In the book of Daniel itself terms like "the king of the north", "the king of the south", "Kittim" are all code names referring to the Ptolemaic, the Seleucid, and the Roman invaders. In the Dead Sea Scrolls we meet such pseudonyms as "Teacher of Righteousness", "Wicked Priest" and "Chief of the Kings of Greece". On the relation of Greece and the East since Alexander the Great cf. Cyril E. Robinson, \textit{A History of Greece} (9th ed.) pp.386-415. On the Romans' overthrow of the Seleucid kings cf. Cyril E. Robinson, \textit{A History of Rome} (1935) pp.164-173.
in both a forerunner. The Messiah of Aaron represents the Priesthood
which exercised considerable influence in post-exilic Judaism. However,
in the Community of the Scrolls both the forerunner and the Aaronic Priest
are not merely important figures; they are also Messiahs!

The ideas of election, covenant, and salvation do define, as in the
Old Testament, the raison d'être and the expectations of the Order. This
is, of course, also the case with the New Testament. Another way of
putting it is to say that they believed themselves to have been elected
into the New Covenant to fulfil the Law of Moses by practising "truth,
righteousness, and justice upon earth and no longer stubbornly follow a
sinful heart and lustful eyes committing all manner of evil" (C. Rule 1,
p.72) as they looked forward to the coming of the End. This is expected
to take place forty years after the death of the Teacher (D. Rule B II,
p.106)\textsuperscript{26} then salvation for the elect would dawn. Meanwhile "The Master
shall instruct all the sons of light and shall teach them the nature of
all the children of men according to the kind of spirit which they possess,
the signs identifying their works during their lifetime, their visitation
for chastisement, and the time of their reward." (C. Rule III, p.75).

Therefore whoever comes to join the Community must "undertake by a
binding oath to return with all his heart and soul to every commandment
of the Law of Moses... And he shall undertake by the Covenant to separate
from all the men of falsehood who walk in the way of wickedness" (C. Rule
V, p.79). The doctrinal teachings of the Order must be listened to and
obeyed because "Those born of truth spring from a fountain of light, but
those born of falsehood spring from a source of darkness. All the child-
ren of righteousness are ruled by the Prince of Light and walk in the
ways of light, but all the children of falsehood are ruled by the Angel
of darkness and work in the ways of darkness" (C. Rule III, p.75f.). In
fact the work of the Guardian is to,

\textsuperscript{26} See G. Vermes, \textit{op.cit.}, p.48, for the discussion of this text.
"Instruct the Congregation in the works of God. He shall cause them to consider His mighty deeds and shall recount all the happenings of eternity to them.... He shall love them as a father loves his children and shall carry them in all their distress like a shepherd his sheep. He shall loosen all the fetters which bind them that in his congregation there may be none that are oppressed or broken" (D. Rule XIII, p.115).

The sinful world outside the New Covenant may, expectedly, deride the sure revelations coming from the Teacher. But the initiated should not be upset by the deriders who are after all "not reckoned in His Covenant ...and matters revealed they have treated with insolence" (C. Rule V, p.79).

The reward of those who were steadfast with the New Covenant requirements "shall be healing, great peace in a long life, and fruitfulness, together with everlasting blessing and eternal joy in life without end, a crown of glory and a garment of majesty in unending light" (C. Rule IV, p.76). The reward of the wicked shall be "eternal torment and endless disgrace together with shameful extinction in the fire of the dark regions" (C. Rule IV, p.77).

This note of the punishment of the wicked introduces us to the stringent life of the Community of the Scrolls which, in our judgement, may have provided the departure point for Jesus. There are two main areas in which the ankhologically unacceptable faces of the Order are more clearly exposed. The first is on the unrelenting enforcement of the rule of the community. The second is on the community's view of the world outside the New Covenant's register of names.

Taking the first point: anyone who joined "the Covenant and the Pact - the New Covenant - which they made in the land of Damascus" (D. Rule B. II, p.106f.) and failed to abide by any of the rules and regulations was immediately placed outside the community's commensal life:

"And thus shall it be for every man who enters the congregation of men of perfect holiness but faints in performing the duties of the upright. He is a man who has melted in the furnace...when his deeds are revealed he shall be expelled from the congregation as though his
The Scrolls give a sense of severity on almost every issue. The Law remorselessly rides over life in nearly all circumstances: "Let no man, even at the price of death, annul any binding oath by which he has sworn to keep a commandment of the Law" (D. Rule XVI, p.109). And "No madman, or lunatic, or simpleton, or fool, no blind man, or maimed, or lame, or deaf man, and no minor, shall enter into the Community, for the Angels of Holiness are with them..." (D. Rule XV, p.109).

It is true, however, that the Order came into being in the first place in order to keep the Law of the Covenant which, in their opinion, the rest of the theocratic nation have woefully failed to keep. But Covenant is more than rules and regulations. It is essentially a context of meaning - understood as life. Therefore, the Community had fallen into the error of seeing the Law as an end in itself. That is precisely the fundamental mistake of Judaism.

On the second point: the Community's view of the outside world was basically defined by its own sense of sin and salvation. God was conceived as a war-god with respect to His relation to sinners, in the sense that he was viewed as their destroyer. Consequently, the enemies of the Order, that is to say, those lying outside the Community of salvation, were to all intents and purposes taken to be in fact the very enemies of God. They were under "Satan and all the host of his kingdom" and as such shall be utterly destroyed. This is the burden and the refrain of "The War Rule" (pp.122-148). Again, part of the ritual recitations on the occasions of the admission of new members is the cursing of the men of the lot of Satan:

"And the Levites shall curse all the men of the lot of Satan, saying: 'Be cursed because of all your guilty wickedness! May He deliver you up for torture at the hands of the vengeful Avengers! May He visit you with destruction by the hands of all the Wreakers of Revenge!"
Be cursed without mercy because of the darkness of your deeds! Be damned in the shadowy place of everlasting fire! May God not heed when you call on Him, nor pardon you by blotting out your sin! May He raise His angry face towards you for vengeance! May there be no 'Peace' for you in the mouth of those who hold fast to the Fathers!' And after the blessing and the cursing, all those entering the Covenant shall say, 'Amen, Amen!'" (C. Rule II, p.73).

If our conviction that Jesus emerged from one of the branches of the Order is right then one would already begin to see in the above another of the reasons why he had to leave – to preach forgiveness.

A study of the Gospels (the synoptics do not have an upper hand in the present context) and the Scrolls shows that the picture of Jesus and his disciples presented in the Gospels has much in common with the world of the Teacher of Righteousness and his disciples. This has already been pointed out (see p.126f). However, this is not the most striking thing. What is most striking is the nature of the difference of Jesus' teachings from those of the Teacher. The sense of this striking dissimilarity is quickly gained by reading through the Gospels and G. Vermes' *The Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. At any rate, we will point out some of the outstanding, though, familiar, cases.

The first is on whether the Law is above the Covenant love, and vice versa. The Order equates the Covenant with keeping the Law of Moses; Jesus equates the Law with doing good. This is best illustrated with Jesus' attitude to the sabbath (Mk. 2:23-28; Matt. 12: 1-8; Lk. 6: 1-5). His premise is that "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath" (Mk. 2:28). Consequently he healed and saved lives on sabbath days. The Order vehemently adopted a contrary stance to that of Jesus (D. Rule XI, p.112f.) by giving a priority of place to the laws of the sabbath over the 'situational' needs of life.

Jesus preached love for the enemy and rejected war; the statement: "Jesus then said, 'Put your sword back, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword..." (Jerusalem Bible) is an ankhological pronouncement
against "The War Rule" (Vermes, pp.122-148). Jesus' ankhological sensitivity and openness to the conditions of the deprived and the unfortunate members of society like the poor, the outcast, the blind, the lame, the lunatic, etc. (cf. the Gospels) contrast sharply with the attitude of the Order towards them (D. Rule XV, p.109).

In fact the collection of rules and regulations in Matthew chapters 5 - 7, arranged into a kind of Five Books of Jesus against Mosaism, to which the birth/infancy stories and the passion/resurrection narratives are prologue and epilogue respectively, does look like a conscious attempt to provide a corrective teaching for Jesus' alternative religious Community, in view of the Rules still obtaining among the disciples of the Teacher of Righteousness (cf. for instance, D. Rule and C. Rule). Thus with this collection and the Pentateuchal organisation of his materials Matthew probably aimed at making clear to Judaism and to the members of the Community of the Scrolls the ankhologically determined otherness of Jesus' own Community.

In concluding this section we may underline what we said earlier which is that the severity of life in the Order did with time prove itself to be ankhologically deficient in the judgement of Jesus. This was probably a burden to his sensitive heart for a long time until the prophetic urge led him to John the Baptist and his disciples. He was baptised by John whose own approach, though 'universalistically' a step above the exclusive mentality of the Order, still fell short of what we have described as his "supreme ankhological awareness". He must leave John. And he did. That was the beginning of the story of Palestinian Jewish Christianity - in fact the beginning of the story of Christianity in general.

We have probably succeeded in our aim to point out that the Qumran Scrolls are necessary to the proper understanding and appreciation of the ankhologically oriented life and work of Jesus. We may have also
succeeded in emphasising the historical importance of the Scrolls to the post-Easter nature of the New Testament data. In the next sections we will concern ourselves with the main features in the teaching of that data.

2. Resurrection and the Ankhological (View of) Meaning - the Foundation of the Church:

As already pointed out the New Testament data are basically christological materials written from the post-Easter point of view. It is in fact a truism to say that the theology of the New Testament actually begins with the "risen Christ" and not with the "historical Jesus". This is the proper starting point for us because it is also the very point at which the ankhological meaning of the New Testament stands out most prominently to define the nature of the concept of salvation. Starting at this point entails, admittedly, that the usual question of the historical Jesus becomes a question almost placed outside the New Testament by the very christological and theological nature of its materials. At any rate, history as a secular discipline has nothing to fear or lose by taking that position for it is only thereby enabled to freely investigate the materials, as an unavoidable exercise imposed by the pressure of the necessity of historical knowledge; even if sure results are minimised in advance.

However, as a body of narratives the passion/resurrection account appears to have assumed a stereotyped form from very early in the period of "Oral Tradition". Its early importance can also be deduced from the copious space the account occupies in each of the Synoptic Gospels (cf. Mk. chaps. 14-16; Matt. chaps. 26-28; Lk. chaps. 22-24). The

impression one gets from these factors is that the death/resurrection of Jesus formed the basic kerygmatic theme in the proclamations of the earliest evangelists (Acts 2:22-24). Paul also insisted that death/resurrection motif is one of the traditions he received when he joined the fold of the Early Church:

"For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures" (1 Cor. 15: 3-4).

He insisted because the motif is the core of his view of Jesus.

However, it is necessary for us to recognise the distinction between the Cross and the Resurrection. In a sense it has always been recognised not only by the biblical sources themselves but also by Western theology. Thus the real issue is that of recognising the indisputable importance of the Resurrection over the Cross. Western theology, with its background of a strong belief in Fate, bequeathed by European traditional

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28. Cf. C.F. Evans, op.cit., pp.178-217; R. Bultmann, op.cit., pp.42-43. The importance of the death/resurrection to the meaning-awareness of the community of Jesus needs to be stressed. The disciples, some of whom might have left the Community of the Scrolls sooner or later for Jesus' alternative Kingdom of God, saw in the event the very point of the complete triumph of Life.

29. There are two crucial terms here: Received (ταχέλαδον) and delivered (ταχέλεσκον). The problem is over whether Paul is using the technical terms historically or revelationally. The acuteness of this issue may be grasped from Paul's own insistence that: "The gospel which was preached by me is not man's gospel. For I did not receive it from man, nor was I taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ" (Gal. 1:11-12). Usually arguments that Paul used the terms to refer to the historical traditions he received and handed over actually want to stress the historical continuity between the teaching of Jesus and that of Paul. On the other hand those arguing that the terms do refer to Christ's revelation to Paul are often those who hold that Paul's teachings on the Messiah (risen Christ) do constitute a set of the theology of the Christ scarcely relating to the intentions of historical Jesus. On these issues cf. C.K. Barrett (1968) pp.264-266; C.K. Barrett (1967) pp. 1-13; F.F. Bruce (1977) especially pp.37-50; W.J. Sparrow Simpson (1915) pp.211-226. We must point out, however, that our ankhological approach sees a continuity of (view of) meaning between the teachings of Jesus of history and the Pauline position on the risen and exalted Lord. Thus there is a historical continuity but the history is one already 'distorted' for the sake of meaning.
religions, has often, naturally, stopped short at the Cross. This theological disposition of understanding the Christ event in terms of the Cross clearly embodies a grave misunderstanding of the New Testament data. All these follow from the fact that the ankhalogical presupposition and intentionality of the data were not taken note of.

If we try to put this matter differently we would say that none of the writings in the New Testament ever looked at the passion from outside the resurrection experience. This is such that Paul sometimes speaks of the "resurrection" in the idiom of the "death". This seems to be the case in I Corinthians 11:26: "For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." To Paul the proclamation of the Lord's death is another form of proclaiming the resurrection kerygma. Yet, E. Kilseman could write in his defence of the Cross-theology that, "The God of the Cross is our only God; but he is the God whom the world can never accept unless it has been

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31. Paul laid stress on the death in proclaiming the resurrection. The Gospel writers on the other hand emphasised the resurrection by stressing the empty tomb and the apparitions of the risen Lord. Our stance (which is in fact the biblical position) of seeing the death through the eyes of the resurrection does raise some additional questions over the already question-ridden accounts of the Last Supper. Thus if the NT data are so charged by the resurrection convictions why did some understand the eating of the bread and the drinking of the cup as a form of proclaiming the Lord's death until he comes; is this really a form of proclaiming the resurrection? (note that C.K. Barrett in his The First... Corinthians, see on 11:26, failed to appreciate the resurrectional nature of this text even though he noted that "Later eucharistic liturgies speedily incorporated the theme of resurrection"!)

The answer to the above question is that I Cor. 11:26 is Paul's own commentary on the received tradition on the Last Supper of vss.23-25. None of the other versions of the tradition, Mk.14:22-25; Matt.26:26-29; Lk22:15-20, contain that Pauline commentary. They are instead taken up with the intense memory of the last meal Jesus had with them (i.e. the apostles) before his death as they looked forward to the resumption of that communal act in the coming Kingdom of God. On the discussion of the different accounts of the Last Supper and the attendant problems cf. M. Dibelius, op.cit., 211-224; C.F. Evans, op.cit., see pp.34-49 entitled, 'The Passion of Mark and the Passion of Luke'. On similar communal meals in the Community of the Scrolls cf. 'Messianic Rule' 1, pp.118-119; G. Vermes. For an uninhibited acceptance of the resurrectional nature of NT data cf. A.M. Hunter (1957) pp.52-61.
converted. Any one who limits the significance of the cross for Christianity and the world obscures God's truth and the offence that attaches to grace. He inevitably falls into the realm of superstition, even if he is supporting a theology of resurrection.32

He goes on to claim, "The point is that the resurrection is one aspect of the message of the Cross"! (p.68) (italics mine). He points out that, "The Reformation aimed at pursuing a theology of the Cross in contrast to the theology of glory" (p.68). However, this theological idiosyncrasy of the Reformers is not the definitive criterion for us as it appears to be for Kähseemann. For us the New Testament is the primary authority on the question of the cross and the resurrection.

It is one of the theses of our study that this failure to understand the New Testament stems from the basic failure to view its data in the context of their ankhological (view of) meaning. The death/resurrection motif is that point at which the existential questions, 'why did all these happen to our good Lord?' 'what is the meaning of life in this world given the context of this abject wickedness?' received their decisive answer: the resurrection motif is at once God's own proclamation of the unstoppable triumph of life over death. The moment of the resurrection is the moment when the ankhological meaning took its position astride the entire biblical data to declare once and for all that God is life. Thus the New Testament resurrection motif is in a sense the correction and the rewriting of the cross motif. The Church was founded by this correction and rewriting. The Cross never founded the Church; it could only leave Jesus in the grave. However, there is no conflict between the two motifs as is made clear in Paul's "Jesus Christ and him crucified" who is no other than the "crucified...Lord of glory"! (I Cor. 2: 2,8). Christ has risen hence the light of the resurrection shines in every aspect of New Testament data, even in the very phrase "crucified...Lord of glory" (italics mine).

3. The Kingdom of God:

The post-Easter nature of the New Testament materials amounts, in the view of some modern scholars, to a distortion of history. That, however, has to be the case once faith has the task of dissolving the history of Jesus into the bosom of the ankhological (view of) meaning. Thus the gospels which contain the 'history' of the life and work of Jesus Christ do not in themselves embody the kind of history modern historians are looking for.

It appears that originally (before the Gospels were written down) the various stories about Jesus, his sayings and outstanding acts were preserved and handed down in small oral units of, for instance, "miracle stories", "sayings of Jesus", "parabolic teachings" etc. which could easily be remembered and recalled. Especially in moments of controversial encounters between the believers and the unbelieving world - "particularly the Jews"! Such units would also be handy for the early evangelists, church leaders and teachers, etc. (Eph. 4:5; Rom. 12:6-8). The units were in turn put together in short written forms like "Q". Then as the apostles and the first generation eye-witnesses began to die out our four Gospels were each editorially reduced to its present form. The consensus opinion among scholars, over the Synoptic Problem, is that Mark was used by both Matthew and Luke in writing their own Gospels. This means, of course, that Mark has the place of precedence among our

33. The charge of this distortion is usually laid at the door of St. Paul as its initiator. Cf. W.J. Sparrow Simpson, op.cit., pp.184-210. This charge is the assumption of F.F. Bruce, Paul and Jesus, (1977), see also A.R.C. Leaney (1963) pp. 15-27. The role of St.Paul would, probably not have been over-stressed had the role of primary interpretations in religions been duly noted. However, Sparrow Simpson is right in pointing out that "S. Paul's doctrine of the Resurrection...is, of course, the doctrine of the entire New Testament" (p.295).

The extant Gospels. The implication of this literary analysis is that we ought, chronologically speaking, to begin with Mark on questions relating to the Kingdom of God.

Modern discussions on the subject have, not without reason, tended to concern themselves with the matter of eschatology, laying particular stress on apocalypticism. Hence Mark 1:14-15 have come to constitute the hub of the subject. The two verses do raise the question of what Jesus meant (we do not accept that verse 15 was put in his mouth) by the Greek term, ὑπάκουεν. They read:

"Now after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, 'The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent, and believe in the gospel'" (vs. 14-15, RSV).

The crucial term, ὑπάκουεν, is here translated "is at hand". The Jerusalem Bible opts for "is close at hand", while the New English Bible has "is upon you". What is in dispute is the determination of whether Jesus is really saying that "the kingdom has come" or that "the kingdom is about to come". At any rate, in either case the position of certain

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35. However, see Jerusalem Bible, pp. 5-10 (NT section) for a view favouring Matthew's precedence. It carries much less weight of conviction, in my opinion, than the Markan theory.

36. There is obviously a strong apocalyptic background to the New Testament as is clear from the book of Daniel, 11 Esdras (in RSV Common Bible), The Book of Enoch (R.H.Charles, 1980), etc. It is also true that the New Testament time schema is considerably constructed from the building materials of apocalypticism as is clear from the so-called Little Apocalypse of Mark ch.13, the book of Revelation, and the rather intense expectation of the nearness of the End running through the entire New Testament (John's Gospel excepted). In fact A.Schweitzer judged the success or failure of Jesus' ministry solely on how right or wrong Jesus was with his apocalyptic expectation of the End, cf. his important, The Mystery of the Kingdom of God. Ernst Küsemüller went so far as to say that "apocalyptic was the mother of Christian theology" quoted in Sophie Laws, 'Can Apocalyptic be Relevant?', op. cit, pp.89-102. We must advise some caution over this question of apocalypticism and the Gospels: this world and the world to come practically belong to the same unitary world of man's experience. The 'new heaven and the new earth' is different only in the sense that meaning would be completely actualised in it. Thus as the Kingdom of God it is a context of meaning. No behaviour is right within it unless it exhibits the ankhological intentionality of God! The nouso-logical conception of two worlds is ruled out.
scholars\textsuperscript{37} is that Jesus got his kingdom of God prediction wrong. In the sense that the kind of kingdom long expected by Judaism, including the apocalyptists and Jesus, did not come after all; at least not within the time span envisaged in "is at hand", "is close at hand", or "is upon you". This, if true, would certainly affect our solid appreciation of Jesus' entire ministry of the kingdom. More than that it could diminish our high evaluation of his personality.

But, on the other hand, the thesis of realised eschatology of which C.H. Dodd is probably the best known exponent\textsuperscript{38} has laid emphasis on the idea that the kingdom of God "has come" in the sense of has come and now is. This latter position obviously undercuts the pressure put on faith by opinions which speak of Jesus' mistaken expectation of the kingdom and which consider his ethics as "interim ethics."\textsuperscript{39}

The apocalyptic approach to the subject of the kingdom of God adopted by modern New Testament scholarship and by Western theology in general is not the approach which an ankhological approach could, in our opinion, regard as adequate, given the ankhological intentionality of the data. What determines the ankhological approach more precisely is, of course Jesus' "supreme ankhological awareness", which at once puts him in a category of his own in a world that includes the Community of the Scrolls, the apocalyptists, the Pharisees and Judaism's legalism. To the ankhological criterion the kingdom of God began its coming in the person of Jesus. Consequently it is in him that the ankhological nature of salvation is fully defined by the very character of his ministerial activities.\textsuperscript{40}


\textsuperscript{38} Cf. C.H.Dodd (1935). For an objection to the conclusions of modern research on the parables see, I.H.Marshall (1963), pp.3-46. In Marshall's own words his study represents "The conservative standpoint" (p.5).

\textsuperscript{39} See for instance Schweitzer, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.76-77.

\textsuperscript{40} Cf. Albert Nolan, (1977) pp.20-72; F.Warburton Lewis (1954); A.O.Armstrong, \textit{The Tales.Christ Told} (All Saints, USA, date?). These works, like others referred to in similar circumstances, do not necessarily represent the ankhological orientation (which we have been insisting upon) but they do come near to its tenets.
Thus operating within the three Old Testament concepts of election, covenant, and salvation he declared and acted out the ankhological nature of the kingdom of God. He protested against false fear and false worship of God for which the Pharisees were known (Mk. 7:1-23; Matt. 15:1-20; Lk. 11:38-44). He rebuked the religious power-structures which have become burdensome to individual and social lives (Mk.12:1-12; Matt. 23:1-36; Lk.11.37-54). Turning to Beelzebub he bound and expelled him from the kingdom which has become God's. His host of demons, who were oppressing the weak and the sick, were ordered out of their habitats (Mk.3:22-30; Matt.12:21-32; Lk.11:14-22; Mk.5:1-20; Matt.8:28-34; Lk.8:26-39) while the sick were healed (Mk.5:21-43; Matt.8:1-17; Lk.7:1-17) and the dead raised (Matt.8:5-13, 9:18-26; Lk.7:11-17); the hungry also shared in the messianic meals (Mk.6:30-44/8:1-10; Matt.14:13-21; Lk.9:10-17). He rehabilitated the outcasts (Mk.2:15-17; Lk.7:36-50; Matt.18:12-14) and held the Law of Moses in check; it was that Law which cast them out in the first place (Matt. chaps. 5-7; Lk.6.20-45; Mk.11:15-19).

To the messengers sent by John the Baptist he made it clear that his actions are in fact the credentials of the presence of the long awaited kingdom of God which has at last dawned in his person (Lk.7:18-27). However, this dawning of the kingdom carried urgent notes in its wake: there is a call for decision (Mk.6:7-13; Matt.10:1-16; Lk.4:16-30); if the invited would not come then the realm would nevertheless be filled with people drawn from the highways and the byways (Matt.22:1-14; Lk.14:15-24). The kingdom is after all God's gift of great worth (Matt.13:44-46) though it may presently present itself in a form comparable to a small mustard seed but it will grow to become a place of rest for many (Mk.4:26-32). However, people must be ever ready for this climax (Matt.24:37-44; 25:1-13; Lk.12:35-48). All these prove that the kingdom has begun its coming in the very fact that the (ankhological) will of God has begun to
assert itself. 

Perhaps John's Gospel could only be properly understood within this note of ankhological (view of) meaning. Clement of Alexandria called it, "The spiritual Gospel"; and not without reason for every aspect of its account is a veritable vehicle of the Logos epiphany. In John the sayings of Jesus are no longer short sayings as in the Synoptic Gospels; they are instead long reflective discourses. In some cases a discourse would actually merge into one body of narrative with the speech of the writer himself as is the case in chapter three. The Synoptic messianic secret has disappeared as the identity of the divine Word (\( \phi\gamma\omicron\omicron\omicron\)) was made clear with the opening verse of the Gospel. The Synoptic "miracle" is no longer miracle in John. It is "sign"! Without going into all the issues that combined to make necessary the placing of John's Gospel in a category of its own, in contradistinction from the Synoptic Gospels,

41. It may be emphasised at this point that our practice of refraining from any attempt at exhaustive discussion of all questions arising from, or already obtaining in, the different aspects of our study has been determined by the need to keep close to the question of salvation (understood as the concern of theology) within the context of (view of) meaning; in our present case the context of life with regard to the biblical perception of the world: Life, as the centripetal and the centrifugal concern of Christian theology is obviously a case that needs to be stated first as a prelude to its full and detailed theological appropriation. It is in such context that all the critical questions which we are presently compelled to leave out could be taken up. These apologetic points are clearly most applicable to our inability to follow up all the critical questions that do arise on the subject of the kingdom of God.

42. It is difficult to be certain as to where the words of Jesus end and those of the Evangelist begin in this chapter. See Vincent Taylor, op.cit., pp.95-97. The whole of pp. 84-109 contains a very clear discussion of the kind of problems inherent in John's Gospel. Cf. particularly, C.K. Barrett, ...John, 1955, pp.3-119; also R.H. Strachan, The Fourth Gospel, 1941, pp.1-89; R.V.G. Tasker, ...John, 1960; D. Guthrie, op.cit., pp.237-335. These last two works do reflect the Evangelical approach to the issues in John's Gospel; Donald Coggan, Five Mac\(\omicron\omicro...
let us say at once that the advantage of hindsight, in the sense that it is later than the other Gospels, has probably enabled it to identify the essence of Jesus' ministry of the kingdom of God with greater precision. Hence the very idea of the latter is confidently replaced by the concept of eternal life \( \xi\omega\nu\alpha\iota\omicron \nu \). Thus the entire life and work of Christ are viewed and understood from the standpoint of the ankhological meaning. A.M. Hunter is therefore right when he says that,

"John's Gospel is pre-eminently the Gospel of Life. Its key word is 'life' or 'eternal life'. If as Sabatier said, 'all religion is a prayer of life', it is John's claim that in him who 'came that men may have life and have it more abundantly' (10.10), that prayer is answered. For the blessing par excellence which Christ offers during his earthly life and makes effectual by his death and resurrection is life that is life indeed...life which, because it is God's own life, is everlasting."47

Perhaps Hunter's apt observations can be taken as another way of saying that christological, theological, and religious questions have, in John's Gospel, come within the notion of life as the ultimate meaning of man's existence on the one hand, and of his religious experience on the other.

4. Salvation in the New Testament:

The resurrection is an event which left a tremendous impact on the disciples' view not only of themselves but also on their view of Jesus, God, the Old Testament scriptures, and the world. Let us follow further some of these factors:

(a) Jesus: the resurrection event is, on the New Testament evidence, the event which led the disciples to understand the ankhological activities which attended Jesus' inauguration of the kingdom of God christologically. It transformed the former preachers of the kingdom of


God into the Church representatives preaching the crucified/risen Lord. That is to say, the person of Jesus Christ began to be directly preached in place of the kingdom of God. As a result, to be saved came to be more and more seen as a belief in "Christ Jesus" (Pauline) or a belief that "Jesus is the Messiah" (stance of Jewish Palestinian Christianity). This transition from preaching the kingdom to preaching Jesus Christ is not totally a misrepresentation of the intention of Jesus of history: to the disciples Jesus was a source of meaning. His resurrection placed him so close to the Father to make the preaching of his person the same as the preaching of the Meaning which he bore. The modern contentious attitude over the role of words and terms, as if this word or that term can by itself be the meaning, is obviously not inspired by the bible. What mattered to the earliest disciples is meaning and not the term kingdom of God. Jesus brought (the ankhological) God into their lives and became the manifestation of that meaning in his status as the Christ. Hence he who has seen Jesus has seen the Father (Jn.14:9); and he and the Father are one (Jn. chap.14). However, this does not diminish the fact, fully known to them, that Jesus is the servant of God. At any rate the conception of Jesus as a source of the ankhological meaning is the one factor which redefined as well as bring into one package his birth, his life and work, his position, death and resurrection, and his ascension and parousia. All these are the new contents of the message now preached by the Church which succeeded Him. Together they constitute a reformulation and a reinterpretation of the Old Testament themes of "election, 48. See the preaching-content of the missionary activities of the disciples: Matt.10: 1-16; Lk.10. 1-20; Mk.6: 7-13. Mark appears to be solely concerned with the exorcism of the demonic forces. On this and other issues peculiar to the Evangelist cf. J.M. Robinson, The Problem of History in Mark (London, 1957).

49. On this transition from preaching the kingdom to preaching the Christ see Kuhn,op.cit.,pp.79-87. Note: "Jesus the preacher becomes Jesus the preached, the bearer of the message becomes the central substance of the message" (p.80); R.Bultmann,op.cit.,vol.1,pp.33-37. On christological developments from the ancient models of Teacher, Servant, etc. to the divine Lord or John's Logos cf. John Knox (1967) see esp. pp.1-18. These issues are more fully worked out in in R.H.Fuller (1969), see esp. pp.102ff.; also I.H.Marshall (1967), pp. 2-18.
(b) The resurrection also dissolved the religious structure of the Old Testament in which the religious words, ideas and concepts inhere. The data became, as it were, a heap of words, ideas and concepts to which the disciples could no longer owe the same allegiance with the rest of Judaism, but from which they can 'pick and choose' proof-texts for the adornment of the new structure built on Jesus, the new source of meaning. The Old Testament Yahweh remains, of course, the God of the New; though in the latter the understanding of His characters has altered to the point that enabled Marcion to speak of two Gods: the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament. This continuity of meaning, in the person of the risen Lord, enabled the free flow of such terms as, Servant, rabbi, Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah (Christ), sacrificial notions like High Priest, lamb of God, redemption, ransom, reconciliation, 'propitiation', etc. Their new target was the person and work of Christ. In other words, they were transferred and re-rooted.

50. On Marcion and his views see above, p. 123, note 9. Karl Barth points out that, "Marcion may have been a heretic in detail, but he was undoubtedly a genius in general apprehension", cf. Karl Barth (Church Dogmatics, vol. 3, part 2) p.473.

51. These notions are dealt with in Oscar Cullmann, op.cit. However, see F.H. Borsch (1967) for a thematic study of the idea of the Son of Man. One of the major problems inherent in the idea of Jesus as the Son of Man is that of reconciling the Jewish traditional understanding of Son of Man in terms of a Victor over the contrary powers of the world with the view of Jesus as a suffering Son of Man (Borsch, ibid.,p.329ff). C.F. Evans clearly accentuates the difficulties when he says, "The Son of man expressed...the agent of God par excellence and of his ultimate purposes for mankind in judgment and deliverance, then to say that the Son of Man suffers, and that this particular agent becomes patient, is to state in these terms the extreme to which theological paradox can go." (op.cit., p.38). The problems are considerably reduced when we take seriously the effect of the resurrection on the Old Testament.


52. Did Jesus actually speak of himself as the son of Man? A.Schweitzer says "Yes" but on the understanding that Jesus believes that he would come back (in the parousia) as the Son of Man to judge the (continued on next page)
in the new context of meaning. However, the emphasis is not placed on them. It falls on the (view of) Meaning. Thus the mistake of Western Theology is its failure to realise the secondary nature of these concepts and ideas. Hence doctrinal edifices were built on every one of them by earlier theologians only to be found wanting by modern ones. But the latter tend to do so by Westernising Jesus at the expense of the Old Testament. Hence the concepts in modern theological works are more often than not biblical words carrying (non-biblical) Western ideas.

The christological truth is that the transferred concepts and ideas are meant to express the ankholological meaning of the work of Christ. Outside this Christ/ankholological foundation they lose their New Testament usefulness because the New Testament itself stands immovably on it. Thus Gustaf Aulén's view that Jesus is seen by the New Testament as a Christus Victor may be taken as very near to the truth; in the sense that the expression could belong to the ankholological vocabulary. However, it needs to be emphasised that Christ, as the source of the ankholological view of God, is much more than a mere divine warrior invading the strongholds of the devils, demons and spirits of the first century Palestinian myth-world. His concern is for life. It is only in this sense that he is an eternal enemy to anything working against it. It is also because of this outlook that such forces as the Law, Sin, wrath of God, Death, principalities and powers in high places were among the list of enemies.

52. (continued from previous page)

world (cf. The Mystery of the Kingdom..., pp.190-193ff.). Borsch on the other hand contends that "Jesus believed himself to be active as the Son of Man on earth, but how precisely he related to the glorious Son of Man he did not know, while he realised that the relationship was there" (op.cit., p.360, italics mine). One must not over-press terms and concepts, taken over by the Christ Event from the outside, so as to yield exclusive christological results. However, it is not impossible that Jesus definitely referred to himself as the Son of Man. Thus we are rejecting Bultmann's tendency to leave the Son of Man sayings at the door of the Church (cf. Theology..., vol. 1, pp.26-32). Our position on the Son of Man concept may also apply to the other concepts.

to be overthrown.  

Yet the Western soteriological view of the New Testament in terms of atonement largely sees or shall we say used largely to see its teaching on salvation in terms of "satisfaction", and the "imputation of Christ's righteousness". Speaking on these points Alan Richardson says,

"Satisfaction' is a concept which has figured prominently in discussions of the Atonement in Western theology, but the word does not occur in the NT. Most of the distortions and dissensions which have vexed the Church, where these have touched theological understanding, have arisen through the insistence of sects or sections of the Christian community upon using words which are not found in the NT; and this is nowhere more than in the matter of atonement theories."

However, the crucial mistake running through much of Western theories of the 'atonement' is that of conceiving the New Testament teaching on salvation in legalistic terms. This is clearly Judaistic in that the concept of Law and the fulfilling of the Law do define the basis of understanding. A case can, of course, be made for such a position from some aspects of the data of the New Testament, but only after their insertedness in the ankhological (view of) meaning has been overlooked. Once the centrality of the ankhological standpoint is grasped then legalism (i.e. law) would be rightly seen as an enemy to be overthrown.

The above points would be more clearly understood if we take the following analysis into account: If one's righteousness will not save one - that is, if one will not achieve one's redemption through one's own good works and self-effort - then it becomes a misunderstanding to say that the good works of the man Jesus achieve it for one. The point at issue here is that once "good works and self-effort", exercised by man

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55. Cf. P.L. Snowden, The Atonement and Ourselves. This work was probably written because of his conviction that "the fear and the love of God have been dying out in the world" (p.xi); J.A. Chapman, (1933); F.R. Barry (1968). These last two are modern studies of the subject. The term, atonement, is in fact not a biblical term though it purports to deal with such biblical ideas as "expiation", "propitiation", "redemption" etc. See also Friedrich Buechsen (in) Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, vol. III, pp.318-323
as the condition of his salvation, are seen to misrepresent God's grace then it becomes self-contradictory to accept it as the definition of the soteriological work of Christ; even if such achievement is on behalf of man. However, "law" and "merit" are enemies to be overcome in order that man would be reconciled\(^57\) to God (Romans chaps. 1-8).

The New Testament view of salvation is not legalistic. In fact a proper understanding of the concepts of "election, covenant, and salvation" in the Old Testament would certainly show that its view of salvation is not legalistically based either (see above, Chapter Three). The thrust of the New Testament is towards knowing God as one's everlasting Father; towards understanding that Jesus has come that all may have life in a cosmic reconciliation of all things in God through Christ (II Cor. 5:18f.). Therefore to turn to Christ is to turn to God and thus obtain the long awaited chance of participating in the destruction of the illusion of death and all the other anti-life forces like sin, hate, lack of love for God and neighbour, enforced individualism or totalitarianism (that is to say, absence of commensality) and selfishness etc. It is to accept every human life as sacred to God who is life. It is to see in the resurrection event the very moment of the revelation of the divine quality of life, and thus know that as the first Adam brought death so the second Adam has brought life.

5. Palestinian Jewish Christianity and Paul:

Palestinian Jewish Christianity represented by the earliest Church in Jerusalem appeared to have insisted on retaining the confinement of primary meaning in the person of the LORD, as had always been the case in the past. They did so by simply regarding Jesus as the Servant, the Teacher, the Son of God (though by adoption) etc. as opposed to concep-
tions similar to the Pauline "Christ Jesus" and the Johannine "Logos tabernacled among us".\(^5\) To these two conceptions Jesus is divine in a way he is not in the Teacher or the Servant conception. Thus they appear to have withheld assent to the Pauline tendency to centre the Community's Meaning in the very nature of Christ by viewing him more or less as the chief actor in the drama of salvation (I Cor. 2:2). They probably would prefer to regard Jesus as the crucified Servant (of God) raised from the dead and who will come again in the parousia as the Messiah. Here the LORD remains the sole actor (Acts 3:12-26). In fact, Paul's insistence (which is also the position of Hellenistic Jewish Christianity) on setting the Christ event free from the Palestinian Jewish religious idiosyncrasy did not come about without some controversy (cf. Acts 9:26-30; Ch. 15; Gal. 1:11-2; 21) which both the Tübingen school and their opponents have misunderstood to some degree; in the sense that both sides failed to identify the real underlying cause of the conflict.\(^5\)


In our opinion the controversy was over where the community's (ankhological perception of) Meaning is, since the resurrection, immediately focused. Paul, making the maximum use of his death/resurrection christology, maintains that Christ (being the image of God in whom dwells the fullness of the Godhead, Col. 1:15-20, 2:9, notwithstanding the self-emptying Phil. 2:6-11) is now the immediate source and focuser of God (the community's meaning). The Jewish Church on the other hand wanted to keep close to their age-long monotheistic tradition of seeing the LORD God as the meaning and its immediate source, and the son of God as the one who as Jesus has uttered and lived out the will of God; who as the coming Son of Man will reign as the LORD's Messiah in the kingdom he inaugurated before his exaltation (Mk. 14:62).

It is therefore our view that it was Paul's conception of Christ as the immediate source and focuser of Meaning which enabled him to take a universalistic view of Christianity and to emphasise "Christ Jesus" over against the Judaising tendencies of the Jewish Christians.\(^60\) It is, however, important to take Paul's own insistence that he is as much Jew as anyone else seriously indeed (II Cor. 11:22f.; Phil. 3:4-6; Rom. 11:1).

Precisely because he accepted and held fast to the ankhlologica Meaning

\[59.\] (continued from previous page)

Pauline - Hellenistic - Gentile Christianity the antithesis while the resultant catholic Christianity of the second century is the synthesis. Then Acts 15 is part of Luke's overall endeavour to present a united front. Johannes Munk's Paul and the Salvation of Mankind (1959) is probably one of the best studies aimed at refuting Baur's thesis. In fact the phrase "salvation of mankind" which occurred in p.252 of Baur's work may have suggested the title of Munk's study. He propounded a thesis which rejects any conflict between Paul and the Jerusalem Church. He also insists that the Judaisers whom we meet in Paul's Epistles are merely enthusiastic Gentile members of those Churches!

\[60.\] Of course we do not accept Munk's thesis of Gentile Judaisers (cf. p.93, 120-122, 129ff., 132ff., 232-244f, 278-281). The evidence of New Testament data could not really go with a theory which absolves the Jewish Christians of Judaistic tendencies, which would be natural, only to charge the Gentile Christians, to whom it would be unnatural, with such dispositions. At any rate, it is unlikely in the context of the noustological (view of) meaning that the Judaisers should be the (largely Hellenised) Gentile members of the Churches of this period.
as any other Jew. As just pointed out above his contention appears to be that God, in raising Christ Jesus from the dead, has made him Lord and the immediate source of Meaning. While the Palestinian Jewish Christians on their side seem to have refused to depart from the older understanding; this made them insist on Gentile Christians keeping close to the Mosaic Law. Consequently they tended to express themselves, unguardedly, along the lines of: "that you abstain from what has been sacrificed to idols and from blood and from what is strangled and from unchastity" (Acts 15:29).  

The above observations are absolutely important because, as we will see in the next chapter, both the Palestinian Jewish Christianity and the Pauline (Hellenistic Jewish) Christianity would in the coming centuries lose the very important ankhological criterion of their Christian religious system to the nousological standpoint.

It may be helpful to have a distilled summary of this chapter in front of us. That will be as follows:

1. The likely background and context of the emergence and work of Jesus of Nazareth is the Community of the Scrolls with its branches in the cities, villages and desert places of Palestine. Jesus might have terminated his membership of the religious Order because of his supreme

61. Acts chapter 15 is well known for its many thorny problems. But most revolve around its historicity in the face of Paul's own evidence in Galatians chaps. 1-2: Why did Paul not seem to know about this Decree which after all dealt with the relation of the kind of Gospel he preaches and that preached by the Jerusalem Church? If Galatians was already written before Acts 15 why was the Decree never noticed in the Corinthian Epistles which were certainly written later than the Decree? Can the Pauline visits to Jerusalem be squared with the accounts of such visits in Acts (9:26-30, 11:30; 15)? These questions are usually answered with regard to whether one accepts the historicity (in fact the veracity of Luke as a historian) of Acts 15 as is clear from critical works on Galatians, Acts, or on the relation of Paul to non-Hellenistic Jewish Christianity; cf. works mentioned in note 59 above. There are also textual questions on the Decree itself while Greek MSS and African and Greek fathers like Origen and Clement lay stress on "ceremonial restrictions" the Bezan texts, the Latin versions, and fathers like Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Cyprian understandably emphasised the legal aspect of it. Cf. particularly Η ΚΑΙΝΗ ΑΙΑΩΗΧΧ (2nd ed. The British and Foreign Bible Society, 1958) see the variants under 15:29; also A.W.F.Blunt, Acts, pp.203-204; Jerusalem Bible, see note on 15:29.
ankhological awareness. His position contrasted with the Order's fanatic
ical legalism which tended to superimpose on individual and commensal
lives of the theocratic community. Nevertheless, the concepts of election,
covenant and salvation, understood in terms of life of obedience to God
who is life, are some of the ideas Jesus continued to have in common with
the Order, with Judaism, and with the older Hebrew religion.

2. The theological and christological nature of the New Testament writ-
ings, which do express the ankhological (view of) meaning, meant that the
effort to build the picture of the historical Jesus out of them cannot
really succeed. Certainly not to the point of meeting the demands of
modern historiography. However, the religious picture of Jesus' time
presented in the Community of the Scrolls has, in our opinion, largely
compensated the need to satisfy the wholly legitimate desire to know the
history of Jesus and his time. If so then the New Testament data may now
be seen more in the context of meaning than of history.

3. That being the case we may now be inclined to accept the Christ event
for what it mainly is: the ankhologically theologised and christologised
history. This implies that Christian theology and christology, if true
to nature, would be ankhologically defined.

4. Salvation in the New Testament when properly understood aims at the
reconciliation of individual and communal lives with the Divine life
through Christ, towards a cosmic redemption of all things. The notions
of "satisfaction" and "the imputation of Christ's merits on the sinner"
may be taken as the misrepresentations of the true state of the case.
This understandably obtained because of the Western tendency to emphasise
words, concepts and ideas, transferred from the Old to the New Testament,
without sufficient notice of the ankhological (view of) meaning behind
them.

5. The disagreement between the Palestinian Jewish Christianity and
the (Pauline) Hellenistic Jewish Christianity was basically over the
question of who, since the resurrection, is the immediate focuser of meaning: the LORD God, or His Christ?

6. Both the Palestinian and the Hellenistic Jewish christians would in the end suffer the marginalisation of their common ankhological (view of) meaning, because the Western Gentile christians, primarily operating under the nousological (view of) meaning, soon outnumbered them.

6. Whose Meaning of the World? The moment of decision:

We may begin by recalling the central arguments we have pursued from the Introduction to the present: (a) Introduction: This puts forward, essentially, the reasons why our enquiry is called for. Its criticism of theological methodologies and constructions hinges on our insistence that the concern of religion (and therefore the concern of theology) is not religion but life.

(b) Chapter One starts on the premise that a primary interpretation of the world (or a divinely given revelation as in the biblical case) is in fact a prerequisite of any given religious system which is truly worth the title of religion. Thus this (perception of) meaning is at once the meaning of the world for the community concerned as well as the essence of their given religious system. It is also the very definition of their soteriological expectations. These points were, of course, partly arrived at (and supported) by the isolation and discussion of the Indian, Western and African perceptions of meaning. The chapter also stressed that it is actually the problem of inauthenticity, which is presently attending African missionary christianity, that led to our enquiry. Emphasis is put on the realisation that the crisis of inauthenticity stems from the fact that the African primary meaning, subscribed to by the majority of the African converts, and the Western primary meaning, which came with the missionary Church, are still locked in disagreement over which (perception of) meaning should form the authentic context of the African Christian religious system.
(c) Chapter Two in the main concludes, after the appraisal of the three primary interpretations, that it is only the ascertainment of the primary meaning subscribed to by the biblical world (data) which would decide which perception of meaning ought to be the criterion of both the Christian religious system and Christian theology. It is also pointed out in this chapter that a primary interpretation is primarily the result of a (primary/primordial) modal perception of the world which may or may not be completely confirmed by Divine self-revelation (a complete confirmation which the bible claims for standpoint). It is the acceptance of this biblical 'arbitration' which led immediately to our study of the biblical data.

(d) Chapters Three and Four therefore undertook the investigation of the biblical materials in order to identify the (notion of) meaning which holds them together. This identification would then decide the proper and authentic criterion for Christian (if biblically based) theological activities. The result of this investigation, deriving completely from the evidence of the biblical sources, is that the primary meaning in which the biblical world/data is inserted is life.

This notion of life as the dominant meaning of both the biblical and the African worlds, and consequently of the individual and communal lives, is already concretised in the word ankh. The main justification for adopting that African (Egyptian, to be more specific) word to name the almost identical realities obtaining in the biblical primary meaning is that the word stands for an already established concept in Africa, for at least a couple of thousand years, before some of the various bands of nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, who eventually constituted themselves into the Israelite nation, began to filter into Egypt as refugees, adventurers, etc. They were usually settled in the delta region of the Nile by the Egyptian authorities. (Gen.39 - Exod. 15).

It is therefore not a totally unexpected suggestion to make if we say that the later Israelite dominant (understanding of the) meaning of the world as life, a perception amply made evident by the very character of the biblical materials, had its antecedence in Africa. This does not, of course, imply that the understandings possessed by the biblical world on the notion remained the same with the understanding possessed of 'it' by the African traditional religion. In fact the revelations received by Moses on 'Mount Sinai' did not only confirm that this meaning of the world is God himself but also named Him as Yahweh. Even the Old Testament knowledge of Him would eventually be shown to be limited by Jesus' teaching. It is Jesus who called Him Father and taught his disciples to so regard Him henceforth.

Thus the sum total of the biblical revelations of God does present us with many ideas of God which are absent in the African view of Him. However, they both agree that whatever else is said of God is only an addition to the decisive perception (or revelation) that God is life. At any rate while African religiosity has tended to stress life in its man-ward direction the biblical revelation of God appears to emphasise the God-ward understanding. It is a Creatorial emphasis as contrasted with the African creaturely stress. This distinction is fundamental albeit subtle, because African traditional religiosity could justifiably protest that it has always agreed with the God-ward emphasis. However, the truth of the matter is that while it has always admitted that God is life it tends at the same time to place the emphasis on the man-ward side. It is also subtle because even the biblical position (when properly understood) does agree with the man-ward orientation by insisting that the life of man derives from the life of God (Gen. 2: 7). It may in fact turn out under the theological working out of these issues that we actually only come to know God truly in knowing man truly. However, African Christian theology must insist that the African traditional religion's
(primary) ankhological conception of meaning is theologically not exactly the same as the Christian (primary) ankhological conception of meaning. The difference is christologically defined.

When we turn to the West's dominant nousological conception of meaning the first question to ask is whether it is really legitimate for us to criticise its Christianity, which is primarily informed by that meaning, from the ankhological standpoint? We may recall that this is exactly what we did in the later part of the Introduction. Perhaps the only excuse for that critical approach is that christian commitment must first and foremost be a commitment to the dominant ankhological standpoint of the New Testament (and the Old Testament). Anything less than that is bound to be theologically and christologically questionable. Hence we are compelled to conclude that the understanding of the bible by much of Western Christianity is ankhologically, and therefore biblically speaking, an unsatisfactory understanding.

The discussions of the remaining chapters of our present thesis will also give further reasons for the conclusions of the above paragraph. However, it is this moment that we are called upon (to put it in a biblical idiom) to decide for the ankhological approach to the questions of Christian theology and hermeneutics.

63. We say "much of Western Christianity" because as we will see, in Chapter Seven, the protestation of Humanism, in spite of its atheistic claims, does embody some ankhological intentions.
CHAPTER FIVE

HELENISM AND THE EARLY CHURCH

1. Ebionitism and the Nousological (view of) Meaning

In section 5 of the last chapter we insisted on three basic points:
(i) that Pauline (Hellenistic Jewish) Christianity was prepared to (and
did) detach to a considerable degree the Christ event from its Jewish
context. It effectively did so by viewing the risen Lord as the immediate
source and focuser of God; (ii) that the Jerusalem (Palestinian Jewish)
Christianity tended to remain within the perimeter of the Jewish tradit­
ional world. They tended to do so by largely continuing to see the LORD
as the meaning, its immediate source, and its focuser. This position was
reinforced by its tendency to take an adoptionist view of Jesus; (iii)
that the differences between both sides stemmed from this (post-Easter
inspired) alteration in the usual pattern of evaluating the immediate
source of meaning. It is clear, however, that the ankhological definition
of God remained the same for both sides and was neither altered nor in
dispute.

The thesis of these three points clearly rejects as inadequate the
often historical and theological characterisation of their differences
in purely Hellenistic and Judaistic tendencies by emphasising their com-
mon insertedness in the ankhological (understanding of) meaning. It also
exposes the failure of that historical characterisation to convincingly
explain why the two sides in the conflict together became "heretical" as
soon as Gentiles began to turn to Christianity in massive numbers;
this last point does recall our appraisal of the nature of meaning in
Chapter Two.

However, what we ought to do presently is to bear in mind that the
notion of meaning as it is used in the present study does include, mean
or convey, at least the following existential factors: (a) the very meaning of the world in its cosmic and cosmological dimensions; (b) the very reason for the coming into being of religious systems; (c) the very perception of the nature of God; (d) the very definition of what salvation is, and the goal of soteriological conceptions; (e) the very compass that directs and the anchor that holds a given community's existence in an otherwise inexplicable world. Thus to grasp this all-inclusive nature of meaning is in a fundamental sense to begin to understand what the writer of the book of Acts is getting at with his theological point that, "after all, he is not far from any one of us; it is in him that we live, and move, and have our being..." (Acts 17:27-28, Knox Version). We may therefore say, in parenthesis, that a total appreciation of the implications of the notion of meaning includes the important realisation that a given (view of) meaning is at once the given common ground of all the activities of the community inhering in that meaning; activities like religion, theology, philosophy, the arts, and sciences; in either their rudimentary or advanced forms. It is the common ground where the secular and the sacred realise their unity. Meaning is therefore the original synthesis that precedes the analyses; and the latter must always return to the former in conclusion or else be degraded into meaninglessness. These claims are obviously validated by the theocratic nature of the organisation of the nation of Israel; hence the necessity of an inter-disciplinary approach to theology.

The above recapitulation is intended to place us in the right frame of mind as we take up the assessment of the politico-cultural and theological processes which eventually led to the characterisation of both the Pauline and the Palestinian Jewish Christianities as heretical, by the "orthodox Church" of the Roman empire. This later charge of heresy would have been initially unthinkable. Then both Paul and Jerusalem practically defined what was the right or the wrong christianity. At
that point in time such could be the case because the Christian Jews of Jerusalem and the diaspora, backed by the God-fearers who were instructed in the synagogues, practically held the hegemony over the purely Gentile converts who were mainly from the background of a non-biblical (notion of) meaning. We may point out at this juncture that the usual idea that "heresy" is simply a deviation from the "orthodox" doctrinal position is, in our judgement, superficial. In our view the cause of "heresy" is more often than not either (a) when a given belief-system happens to include adherents who are still loyal to divergent perceptions of meaning, with one section insisting on the determination of what would be the correct doctrines in the light of its own perception of meaning. This situation is then maintained by regarding the other side as heretical. Or (b) when some within the same matrix of meaning insist on interpreting the system in the context of amalgamated principles from (otherwise) divergent perceptions of meaning. The cases of "Ebionism" and "Gnosticism" will later be discussed with these points in mind. Meanwhile let us follow up the politico-cultural matter mentioned earlier.

(i) Politico-cultural background: The historical process by which Gentile Christianity came to regard the Pauline and the Palestinian Jewish Christians as Ebionite heretics did not begin with the confrontation between Jesus and Pilate; it did not even begin with their apparently irreconcilable views on what truth is (cf. Jn.18:37-38). It began with Alexander the Great's invasion of Asia Minor, Syria, Palestine, Egypt and Persia, down to the regions around the Indus river. The entire conquest, with its enormous ravaging and destruction of human lives, took place between 334 (BC), when he crossed into Asia Minor, and 323 when he died in Babylon, probably of high fever.\(^2\)

It was not only Alexander and his Greek and Macedonian soldiers who went East; civilians from the home 'country' also followed behind with the intention to settle and exploit. Robinson informs us that,

"In fact, the general outcome of Alexander's conquests was undoubtedly to lay the East at the mercy of the exploitation of the West; and it was a rich harvest."  

At any rate, it was not long after the conquests when new cities, intent on the Greek way of life, began to spring up in different strategic parts of the conquered territories. The death of Alexander speeded up the process; in the sense that his leading generals proceeded to carve up the empire among themselves. The best known of these new kingdoms are the Ptolemaic kingdom set over Egypt and the Seleucid kingdom with its capital in Syria. Of more importance to us, however, is the point made by Robinson that, "a...host of settlers began to flow out East, and to people the new cities." 

It is of importance to us in the sense that the mass settlement of the Greeks in non-Greek East was naturally accompanied by the nousological (view of) meaning which was in turn secured and buttressed by its Greek-group context.

The overall cultural resultant of this mass settlement of Greeks among the Easterners and the Africans is the cultural situation described as Hellenism; a natural synthesis of the Greek and the non-Greek ways of life. But it must be noted that more than two, in fact more than three! primary perceptions of the world continued, in spite of the synthesis, to co-habit, albeit in conflict, within the 'one' world of Hellenistic culture. We said more than three primary interpretations because the world of the Ancient Near East had for long known of the Persian primary

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5. We use the term, Persian, to represent that primary interpretation of the world specifically internalised in the Zoroastrian religious system. It becomes the fourth perception of meaning to be met with in the area covered by our study because it cannot be reduced to either the ankhological standpoint, or to the nousological viewpoint; and it is not the same as the sunyatological (view of) meaning. On (continued on next page)
interpretation which perceived the meaning of the world in terms of conflict between Light and Darkness. In other words, conflict between Ohrmazd (the uncreated spirit of Good) and Ahriman (the uncreated spirit of Evil). We will say more on this fourth meaning to be uncovered by our study, when we come to section 3 of this chapter. Then there was the sunyatological meaning, marginally included by the extent of Alexander's conquests; and, of course, the ankhological and the nousological meanings. The question that arises in the present context is that of why the process of synthesis appears to have been powerless over these primary interpretations (or revelation). The answer is, in a sense, already suggested by our previous discussions on the subject of culture contact. However, the situation obtained because a primary interpretation is not easily disbanded basically because it is the very heart of a culture-world. It therefore lives on as long as there is a resilient culture-group or religious system still ordering its life from under its aegis. The culture-group or the religious system would, of course, deteriorate if their meaning is undermined against their will; that is, of course, the same as bringing their world to an end. Then the meaning might disintegrate, in turn.

The political power of the Greeks in the East did not survive into the present era (AD) because of the military devastations of Pompey which began in the area in 66 BC. By 63 he had marched down from the regions of Syria into Jerusalem. A siege was put up against him by those Jews who were prepared to fight. But as Robinson informs us,

"At the end of three months the walls were breached and many priests were massacred around the temple altar. Pompey, though forbearing to touch the sacred treasure,

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insisted on entering the Holy of Holies."\(^7\)

It is certainly important to note that Palestine was geographically condemned to sit on the path of every military adventurer, from Tlgath-pil-eser III (745-727 BC) of Assyria to Pompey of Rome, whoever wanted to march upwards from Egypt or downwards towards or into Egypt. Such was the fate of a buffer-state in the many wars of this area. As a result, the Jews had to suffer many times over; but they survived it all because of their God who is the ever present meaning in their ever so troubled world.

Despite the ending of Greek political power and rule in the area, by the entrance of Rome, the Hellenic culture continued, nonetheless, under the Roman imperialism. Robinson again observes that "the culture of the new towns - as of the old - remained essentially Greek".\(^8\) The manifestation of this cultural situation on the part of the Jews is clearly evident in the translation of the Hebrew Old Testament into Greek (that is, the Septuagint = LXX), in such Jewish writings as the book of Wisdom, the book of Ecclesiasticus, the works of Philo, the New Testament in Koînê Greek, etc. All these bear linguistic and other cultural marks of Hellenism. However, as already pointed out above (p. 122) for one to be a Greek speaking Jew did not make one less of a Jew than other Jews. Thus most Jews who spoke Greek, nevertheless, remained the bearers of the anchro-logical (view of) meaning just as those who might not have understood a word of Greek.

At any rate the Jews, regarding themselves as obligated to be under the rule of God alone, never stopped protesting against the Roman presence. But one of such protests that began in the second half of the sixties (AD) only brought about the brutal wars that led in the end to the destruction

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7. Cf. ibid., p.172.
of the Temple (AD 70). The Christians in Jerusalem had already fled the city, during the insurrection, to Pella,\textsuperscript{10} beyond Jordan, and to other places, before it was destroyed by the Roman Army. Blunt says that "After A.D. 70 Jerusalem lay a desert for sixty years"!\textsuperscript{11}

The revolt of AD 132 under Bar Cochba was to be the last one because Hadrian, the Roman general, did not want to be satisfied with just the defeat of the Jews and the destruction of Jerusalem; he also proceeded to found a "pagan" city on the very site of the ruined capital. He named it Aelia Capitolina, and strictly barred circumcised Jews from entering it. Christians may enter; but, only if they gave up Judaism!\textsuperscript{12} It is clear, however, that the Church of Aelia Capitolina could by no means be the kind of Church that obtained before the foundation of the non-Jewish city. It is in fact more true to say that the Jerusalem Jewish Church, with whom Paul dealt, left the city when they left for Pella and other places.

These grave conditions clearly placed the ankhological (notion of) meaning, which had hitherto primarily informed both the Jewish world and the Jewish Church (Pauline and Palestinian), under severe strain. There were only two places left under which it could continue to survive: under the synagogue and under purely, or nearly so, Jewish Christian communities. However, to the Jewish Christians the Christ event had already placed the synagogue outside what they could consider as capable of effecting meaning in its undiminished form; hence the organisation of Jewish Christian Churches in Gentile lands.\textsuperscript{13} And it is understandable that these Churches

\textsuperscript{10} Note, however, that Georg Strecker rejects this tradition of flight to Pella as "a legend without historical value"; cf. his 'Appendix' to W. Bauer's Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity (London, 1972 ed.) p.242 note 3.


\textsuperscript{12} Cf. ibid., p.206; F.C. Burkitt, op.cit., p.61: he speaks of a "Gentile Christian community of Aelia Capitolina, a community discontinuous both in race and language from that over which Jesus himself presided."

\textsuperscript{13} On these Churches cf. F.C. Burkitt, op.cit., pp.71-75; Blunt, op.cit., (Acts) p.206; C.H. Rendall, The Epistle of St James and Judaic Christianity (London, 1927) pp.110-132. Rendall seems to me, on the whole, (continued on next page)
would designate themselves, or be designated by others, as "the poor ones" \(^{14}\) ('ebionim in Hebrew) bearing in mind their "existential predicament."

Unfortunately they were minority groups in the empire. And the synagogues were clearly very much better placed in facing the new situation created by the ending of the Jewish State because they had existed in Gentile lands much longer than the Churches. Their relationship with the Gentile world had therefore been well defined and understood. Compared with them the Churches were in a hostile environment; threatened by both the synagogue (who rejected their faith in Jesus as the Messiah who would come again in the parousia) and by the Gentile world and Gentile Church. The last two viewed them with misgivings. Blunt points out that,

"Christian opinion at that time treats these as men who can pass for Christians and no more. The churches have become overwhelmingly Gentile, and Jewish Christianity has mainly been driven into the ranks of the Ebionite heresy ... which regards the law as obligatory and rejects Paul." \(^{15}\)

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13. (continued from previous page)

to have cast James more in the role of a moderate Anglican bishop, intent on reconciling the left and the right theological factions in his diocese, to the point of blurring the true nature of the Jewish Christianity of this period.

14. It is important to note, however, that it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine the concrete situation in which this term as a designation arose. Paul, in his epistles (Rom. 15:26, Gal. 2:10), does use the word "poor" in referring to the Jerusalem Church, or at least to a section within it, but in connection with collections; this sense is hardly applicable to the Jewish situation after the fall of Jerusalem. When Irenaeus first used the term Ebionaioi in its heretical sense (AH 1, 26, 2) it seemed probable, judging from the context, that it was already a fixed term. But it is equally obvious that Irenaeus could not associate it with the Pauline sense of the word "poor". G. Strecker's view that "the name was originally applied to a specific Jewish Christian group which felt especially obligated to uphold the Jewish ideal of poverty. Later the title was transformed by the heresiologists into a general designation for 'sectarian' Jewish Christianity" seems nearer to the truth. However, we need to push Strecker's view towards recognising that a "Jewish ideal of poverty" after the sack of Jerusalem needs to be seen in the context of the nation's predicament. On the quote cf. W. Bauer, op.cit., pp.272-273.

We must advise caution over this term, "heresy", because it tends to serve as the legitimiser of a failure or the refusal to listen to, and at least try to understand, what the other is actually saying. Thus historiography and theology have, it seems to me, failed to grasp the seriousness of the threat to the ankhological dimension, and the consequences, within Jewish Christian communities after A.D.70. Equally the claim of their rejection of Paul needs to be put in its proper perspective. It is clear that these issues are so important as to require immediate attention. Therefore we must undertake to deal with them in the next section on theological processes.

(ii) Theological processes: Paul and the Ebionites: It may be admitted at this point that once the Jewish Christians felt themselves threatened on all sides they responded by moving more and more into themselves. They also began to view Pauline writings, with their apparent concessions to the Gentiles who made no effort at understanding them, with the kind of suspicion which only increased with time. And it is obvious that the situation had worsened (that is, their view of the more Hellenistic side of Paul’s writings and life) by the time the earliest strata of the pseudo-Clementines were written. However, the more the

16. I think that it is very true to say that the early Gentile Church’s view of the "Ebionites" was invariably along heresiological lines. We may therefore accept Strecker’s thesis which, following Bauer’s line of thought, maintains that Jewish Christianity was the original manifestation of Christianity in the Syrian area. This rejects, of course, the heresiological position which viewed them in terms of deviation from the "orthodox" position, cf. G. Strecker, op. cit., p.271f.

17. The Pseudo-Clementines is a composite work incorporating materials that come from between about 200 (Strecker, in Bauer, op. cit., p.260) and the 5th century - cf. J. Irmscher, 'The Pseudo-Clementines' (in) E. Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, vol. 11 (London, 1965) pp.532-535. On the separation and discussion of the various materials cf. W. Schneemelcher, 'The Keryg mata Petrou' (in) Hennecke, op. cit., pp. 94-98; also G. Strecker, 'The Keryg mata Petrou' (in) ibid., pp.102-111. What needs to be pointed out, however, is that Keryg mata Petrou is a Jewish Christian work; and that it is basic to the Pseudo-Clementine corpus. To it belongs the anti-Paulinism (= Simon Magus) polemics: Strecker has rightly stressed this point (cf. Hennecke, p.108). The opposers of Paul are James and Peter (see the Texts, op. cit, pp.111-127 = Keryg mata Petrou, also Pseudo-Clementine Texts, op. cit, pp.536-570). The importance of the Pseudo-Clementines must be (continued on next page)
Gentile Christian world undermined the ankhological meaning from the nousological standpoint the more the Jewish (side of) Paul moved nearer them at the expense of the Hellenistic "Paul" who made concessions to the Gentile oppressors. As a result the conflict that obtained earlier between Hellenistic Jewish Christianity and the Palestinian Jewish Christianity appeared to have narrowed down to the point of insignificance. This new situation is wholly in order within the expectations of their common ankhological meaning. Of course, the corollary of this reconciliation, thanks to the nousological pressure manifesting itself in various forms of Hellenism, is that Jewish Paulinism and Jerusalem Jewish Christianity were now on the same side over against "Paul" - the notorious Simon Magus, who now seemed to represent the position of the Gentile Christianity and its version of Scriptures.  

However, the basis of this reconciled understanding among the

17. (continued from previous page)

seen in the context of F.C. Bauer's (later Tübingen school) use of it. He saw in it a good evidence of the later reconciliation of Paulinism and Palestinian Jewish Christianity; that is, the catholic synthesis of the Petrine thesis and the Pauline antithesis. He fully stated his position in pp.276-241 of his, Paul His Life and Works (1876). Bauer did not, of course, realise the composite nature of the material; which means that the material would not have been put to the use he put it to had he done so.


19. The dating of this reconciliation in Acts (ch. 15) to the time before the fall of Jerusalem is not supported by Pauline Epistles (cf. above, Chapter 4, note 61; Jerusalem Bible note (a) on 1 Cor. 8). J. Munk, on the other hand, seems more keen on denying any conflict between Paul and Jerusalem (cf. op.cit., p.93,129,132ff.,,278); we have already rejected that view (cf. Chapter 4, note 6O). Baur; who, on the other hand, oversharpened the nature of the conflict with his Hegelian concepts of thesis and antithesis made his dating of it too dependent on the Pseudo-Clementines (cf. op.cit., pp.218ff.). However, as he did not reach his conclusions on the basis of the composite nature of the material it means that the kind of reconciliation he read out of it was not really there. It is our view that the reconciliation, which brought the two sides of Jewish Christianity on the same side, was mainly, if gradually, effected by external pressures which increased with the fall of Jerusalem.
different doctrinal groups within Jewish Christianity had always been there and is clearly witnessed to by Christian literature including the Epistles of Paul himself and the *Dialogue With Trypho* by Justin (d.165). We will later go on to point out (a) that the outlook of Origen (c.185-254) on Jewish Christianity was not yet fully heresiologically fixed, for he was still prepared to notice the doctrinal differences that obtained among them; (b) that the stereotyped heresiological-levelled view of them was started by Western writers - specifically by Irenaeus ('Asian' bishop of Lyon, c.130-c.200) followed by Hippolytus (c.160-235) of Rome. Meanwhile let us discuss Paul's viewpoint.

In following up Paul's position in this matter, which was still Justin's much later, we must emphasise that Paul's quarrel with Palestinian Jewish Christianity was over whether Gentile converts should be made to live like Jews (cf. Gal. 2-3; I Cor. 8-9). His position is, uncompromisingly, that they should not be so made. For, to his christology, that would amount to Gentile converts being compelled not to view Christ Jesus as the immediate source and focuser of God (that is, Meaning). Thus the Jewish tendency to stress the humanity of Jesus at the expense of his divinity was what Paul was mainly rejecting (cf. Acts 2:23-4; 5:31; 9:22; 10:26-43; Rom. 1:4f.; Phil. 2:5-11) in rejecting the Judaisers. Beside these Paul fully accepted that his brethren were as much Christian as himself (Gal. 2:11-21; Rom. 9-11). He could never have called them heretics as the Gentile heresiologists did later. Romans 9-11 show beyond doubt that Paul's attitude to all his Jewish Christian brethren (even to his non-christian brethren!) could never have taken the side of the later Gentile Christianity on the question of "orthodoxy". Paul's position is understandable because he and his brethren did inhere in a common ankhological approach to faith and religion.

20. This basis was the common acceptance that both Hellenistic Jewish Christianity and Palestinian Jewish Christianity were alike "genuine Christians" cf. Gal.2 with Justin's *Dialogue With Trypho*, ch.47. References to the Church Fathers refer to *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* and *The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* publications unless otherwise stated.
Thus, on the positive side, Paul's evangelistic labours toward his brethren (Christian and non-Christian) were aimed at bringing them into the new christologically defined context which sees in Jesus the immediate source of meaning. He is fully convinced that to so perceive the Christ event carries with it the grace that leads to the realisation of a harmonious oneness with the ankhological Lord (I Cor. 2:9; II Cor. 3:17f.; Phil. 1:20-25; Eph. 2:20-23; Gal. 2:20). 21

We may now turn to the attitude of Western writers to Jewish Christianity. We want to point out that this attitude is crucially important because it clearly underlines the point that the dominant nousological (view of) meaning which was operative in European Christianity was by no means the same as the ankhological standpoint which was operative in Jewish Christianity - Pauline or non-Pauline. The mass movement of the Europeans into the Christian Church had meant that they could no longer be made to accept the Christian religious system with its own dominant (view of) meaning. Thus once their nousological standpoint had taken its position in their new belief-system they felt the necessity to employ terms like "orthodoxy", "heresy", "catholic", "apostolic" etc. in waging 'war' against all non-nousological perceptions of the Christian faith. Thus the 'Western' Gentile world did not feel itself bound to accept the gospel, preached by Paul and other Jews, with its ankhological kernel; neither was it prepared to live side by side with Manichaeanism - a Church informed by the Persian meaning. At any rate, the triumph of the nousological view of the Christian Faith quickly necessitated the proscription of Jewish Christianity.

(iii) Theological processes: Ebionitism as a heretical term:

G. Strecker in his very candid study of the early Jewish Christianity

21. Another important feature of Paul's christology is his commensal awareness. This point needs to be taken together with his universalism. Pauline Jesus is necessarily a commensal being on a universal and cosmic scale (I Cor. 12-13; Gal. 2:11-14; Eph. 2:11-22; Rom. 8:18-25).
emphasises the point that,

"Jewish Christianity, according to the witness of
the New Testament, stands at the beginning of the
development of church history, so that it is not the
gentile Christian "ecclesiastical doctrine" that rep­
resents what is primary, but rather a Jewish Christian
theology."\textsuperscript{22}

Strecker's study is in fact intended as a supplement to W. Bauer's
important work on the notions of "orthodoxy" and "heresy" in earliest
Christianity. The latter's major conclusion is that those Christian
traditions usually regarded as "heretical" by the Roman-inspired and
Roman-supported "orthodox" Church leaders and writers were in fact the
normal earliest manifestations of Christianity in their respective regions.
Thus Bauer's point is that in earliest Christianity the concept of "orth­
odoxy" was no more than an ecclesiastical weapon used by the Roman see to
compel other Christian sees to toe the line set by her. The Church of
Rome is, of course, the Church of the empire's capital city. Of more
immediate importance to us, however, is his judgement on the nature of
the relation between the Gentile Church of the empire and Jewish Christ­
ianity. Speaking of the latter he says,

"Because of their inability to relate to a development
that took place on hellenized gentile soil, the Judaists
soon became a heresy, rejected with conviction by the
gentile Christians.\textsuperscript{23} (italics mine).

Our uncovering of the role of primary interpretations (or revelation) in
religious systems has certainly prepared us to understand the origin of,
and the strength behind, that conviction; however, what we must note is
that the Church which now rejects the Jewish Christianity with conviction
was the Church originally founded by that Jewish Christianity.

As already pointed out the term \textit{Ebioni\ae\i} (= poor ones), which prob­
ably originated in a concrete situation, was to become a sectarian term

\textsuperscript{22} Cf. G. Strecker, \textit{op.cit.} (Bauer) p.241; see also A.C.McGiffert's
commentary on the \textit{Ebionites} (in) \textit{Eusebius, The Church History}, 3:27,
notes 1 and 2 - \textit{The Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers}.

\textsuperscript{23} Cf. Walter Bauer, \textit{op.cit.}, p.236.
designating the entire Jewish Christianity irrespective of the differences that obtain within it. In fact the situation was already such by the time Irenaeus (c.130-c.200) wrote of them, since he was able to classify them with Cerinthus and Carpocrates as "heretics"; now depicted as somewhat alien to what is taken to be the true nature of the Church:

"Those who are called Ebionites agree that the world was made by God; but their opinions with respect to the Lord are similar to those of Cerinthus and Carpocrates. They use the Gospel according to Matthew only, and repudiate the Apostle Paul, maintaining that he was an apostate from the law. As to the prophetic writings, they endeavour to expound them in a somewhat singular manner: they practise circumcision, persevere in the observance of those customs which are enjoyed by the law, and are so Judaic in their style of life, that they even adore Jerusalem as if it were the house of God." 24

In these heresiological characterisations of Jewish Christianity the Gentile Christian world could clearly be seen to have moved away from both Jerusalem and Paul. However, the "Paul" it insisted on was more or less that aspect of his teaching which views Christ Jesus as the immediate source and focuser of Meaning; that is to say, the divinity of Jesus.

G. Strecker may be right with his insistence that it was in fact Irenaeus who in many ways set the pattern which later writers emulated; 25 because it is clearly obvious that Justin Martyr did still regard the Jewish Christians of his time, who did not insist on Gentiles adopting the Jewish way of life, as saved. 26 He also still recognised varieties within Jewish Christianity. Origen equally recognised these varieties. 27 The importance of this recognition is that it points out that there were in fact "Paulinism" and "Palestinism" still within the Jewish Christianity

25. Cf. G. Strecker, op.cit. (Bauer) p.282. We must admit that our constant reference to Strecker's work does, in a sense betray our high appreciation of his approach to the study of the Jewish-Gentile Christianity of the earliest period. The same can be said to apply to our view of Bauer's work.
28. Cf. Origen, De Principiis, 4,1,3 and 8, see especially the latter.
which Irenaeus and others had come to categorise under the heretical term "Ebionitism".

Under these heresiological pressures, brought about by conflicting views of meaning, they "died" out, with the heretical tag still on them, in the fourth century. It marked the triumph of the nousological standpoint over the ankhological one. But, more seriously, it means that the indispensable ankhological content of the Christ event was at this moment primarily set aside. We must bear this conclusion in mind as we deal with questions of theological understandings in the next section.

2. Nousological Meaning and Theological Understanding:

It may no longer come as a surprise, in the light of the preceding discussions, if we state at this point that a primary question to ask as one confronts or encounters a given belief-system is, "which primary interpretation of the world is operative here?" To fail to ask this question, and insist on ascertaining the answer to it, would only lead to two deficient positions: (a) a position in which one is left to observe and deal with only the superficial matters like rituals, rites and doctrinal formularies of the system. These in themselves are severely limited and are notorious for their ability to generate intractable theological and liturgical controversies. (b) a position in which one is unable to determine the nature and the intensity of the soteriological expectations of the adherents of the system; because such a determination is only possible from the knowledge of the very (view of) meaning informing the system.

29. On the position of Hippolytus, Tertullian, Eusebius, etc. cf. Strecker op.cit. (Bauer) pp.276-285. The essence of the section is that heresiologists since Irenaeus had tended to subsume the varieties within the umbrella term "Jewish Christianity" under the levelling term, "Ebionitism".

30. Cf. A.W.F.Blunt, op.cit (Acts) p.205: "The Ebionite heresy, of which we hear in Cyprus, Asia Minor, Rome, and Syria ... this heresy only died out in the fourth century."
The necessity to pose this question of "which primary interpretation?" as one encounters the phenomenon called the early Gentile Church is not in the least diminished by the fact that the traditions of both the Old and the New Testaments, including the 'extraneous' apocryphal works, are found with 'her'. For it is obvious from the evidence of the period that the biblical data were called upon to respond to basically uncongenial rhythms. However, the question as to which (view of) meaning was primarily operative within the world of the early Gentile Church is already answered in the previous section. There it is stated that it was the nousological meaning.

The entrance of this view of the world into the centre of the Christian religious data is evident in the sudden transformation of all aspects of the life of the early Gentile Church compared with the kind of changes that obtained over the centuries of the biblical traditional history. The transformation is undeniably recognised by scholars in the field but it is usually accounted for in terms of Platonism and neo-Platonism and understood as the Church putting on the ready-made dress sewn by the Greek philosophers. Such account is certainly near the truth considering the whole-hearted welcome seat, despite the protestations of Tertullian, given to 'Plato' and 'Plotinus' in the writings of the Church Fathers. However, the truth of the matter is that the transformation was brought about not by this or that philosopher as such but by the mass

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32. Tertullian protested against the influence of philosophy on the Christian faith only to accept the concept of the Logos as a proper christological concept! cf. on Tertullian nos. 151 and 144 (in) A New Eusebius (ed. J. Stevenson, London, 1974 reprint). Harnack also observes that his protestation is superficial, A. Harnack, op. cit, p.196.
acceptance of the biblical tradition by the primary bearers of the nousological (view of) meaning. Thus, both the Greek philosophers, on the one hand, and the Church Fathers on the other, all operated from a world which was primarily informed by the nousological meaning. However, the only things new to both sides were the religious materials furnished by the Old Testament and the Christ event.

Perhaps the strongest features in this 'new' nousological situation are in the areas of the early Gentile Church's view of the nature of (a) God, of (b) man, and of (c) salvation: (a) the ankhological understanding of God as life, and the view of Him as one who acts in history and is known through it clearly underwent an almost unrecognisable change. To the nousological standpoint He became for all intents and purposes an "unknowable" Being who is at the same time "impassible". These understandings do clearly contradict the ankhological teaching of the bible on the nature of God. Hence the need for the resolution of the contradiction. However, the solution could only be a compromise; it came in the nature of a strong emphasis on the incarnation of the Logos (i.e. reason or word) of God. Those who did not favour the compromise went on to insist on the docetic nature of the incarnation. But they paid the price for taking that position in coming under the strongest weapon in the hands of the Early Church - excommunication. Even those who rejected the docetic "heresy", nevertheless, tended to stress the divine nature of Jesus over against his human nature. This is particularly the tenet

33. Note, however (cf. Chps. 1 and 2) that one may reject this nousological view of the world, for instance Aristotle who 'rejected' the nousological viewpoints of Plato, his teacher; but, usually, one seldom retreats beyond the original cosmological, if 'secular', definition of the same meaning.

34. Note, however, that Justin, for instance, was prepared to deny that these were entirely new - Greek philosophers and the Old Testament personages were also christians before Christ! cf. The First Apology of Justin, ch.XLVI.

of the Alexandrian orbit of thought. The Antiochene school, owing, probably, to its proximity to the biblical thought world, tried hard to insist on the "human nature" of Jesus. The Council of Chalcedon (451) 'succeeded' in settling the differences by combining the basic tenets in the differing emphases, though making sure that the winner is the divinity standpoint. (On the contents of this paragraph, see also Chapter Nine).

(b) The ankhological understanding of man as a unitary being did not quite survive the impact of the nousological reappraisal of the biblical materials. Instead, man's body was interpreted as a temporary house inhabited by his immortal soul. The latter was more or less viewed as existing in the wrong place as long as it is in the body; only death could set it free for a homeward journey to the realm of the Divine. But such a waiting, for what could turn out to be a long period, was probably part of the reasons behind the various forms of self-punishment (penance) practised in the Early Church. It is certainly part of the reasons behind the kind of intense desire for martyrdom which we read in the Ignatian Epistle to the Roman Church. It is surely not of the ankhological spirit to plunge into death in order to achieve a cause that could be achieved otherwise: "I am yearning for death with all the passion of a lover... in me there is left no spark of desire for mundane things...I want no more of what men call life." Again, 

"How I look forward to the real lions that have been got ready for me! All I pray is that I may find them swift. I am going to make overtures to them, so that, unlike some other wretches whom they have been too spiritless to touch, they may devour me with all speed. And if they are still reluctant, I shall use force to them... This is the first stage of my discipleship.... Fire, cross, beast-fighting, hacking and quartering, splintering of bone and mangling of limb, even the pulverizing of my entire body - let every horrid and diabolical torment come upon me, provided only that I can win my way to Jesus Christ!" (p.105)

(c) There was also a change in the biblical view of salvation. Its view of salvation mainly in terms of God's concrete blessing of the individual or the community in this life was sharply contrasted with the Church's new metaphysical orientation. To this latter nousological position what is stressed is the salvation of man's soul. Apparently over against the ankhological stress on the salvation of the whole man and of his social world, with its proven cultural and political structures, as the first necessary taste of the blessings of God who fills heaven and earth.

These and other differences between the predominant nousological criterion of the Western Gentile Church and the ankhological standpoint of the biblical tradition accepted by that Church are perhaps the major sources of most of the theological, christological, and ecclesiastical controversies which bedevilled the life of the Early Church. However, it is clear from the records of this period that the central focus of the controversies is the question of the relation of Jesus to the Father; this draws in, of course, the other question of the relation of the Spirit to the Father-Son relationship. It is with these matters that we will concern ourselves next; for the Father-Son-Spirit factor was not only the starting point of worship in the Early Church, it was also the point at which faith started the theological search for understanding; even though Cyril of Jerusalem did wish that theological questions had not arisen to confuse the Church's understanding of salvation:

"There is but one salvation, one power, one faith; there
is one Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. Let us be content with this knowledge and not busy ourselves with questions about nature or hypostasis. I would have spoken of that had it been contained in Scripture...it suffices for our salvation to know that there is Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit."41

"Father, Son, and Holy Spirit": We have already pointed out that the aspect of the Pauline teaching that was unquestionably taken over by the Gentile Church was the aspect that emphasised the role of Christ as the immediate source and focuser of Meaning (cf. Ch. 4, section 5). This involves, of course, the view of Christ as a divine being. It can, admittedly, be possibly shown that the Gentile world probably, in this case, only took back what they arguably furnished Paul with, in the first place, by perhaps pointing out that his view of the "son of Joseph" as a divine being apparently stemmed from a Hellenistic influence.42 The force of this view of the divinity of Jesus is undeniably buttressed by the fact that Jewish tradition is uncompromisingly monotheistic. It is in fact the acceptance of the main points of the above statements that led to the insistence by the main stream in modern New Testament scholarship that Jesus never regarded himself as a divine being. This, undoubtedly, is what sparked off the Son of God/Son of Man controversy.43

However, the uncovering of the role of meaning in religious systems, by our present study, has in a sense put both the proponents and the opponents of the divinity of Jesus into one category by regarding either side as sharing in the error of not realising that the concern of religion is not religion but (ankhological) meaning. Thus, what sense does it

42. Cf. the contributions in The Myth of God Incarnate (ed. J. Hick, London, 1977) especially those of M. Goulder, E. Hick and F. Young. See, however, The Truth of God Incarnate (London, 1977) which is a later publication designed to refute the apparent denial of the divinity of Jesus by The Myth of God Incarnate.
make to say that the son of Joseph of Nazareth "is divine" or that he "is not divine" if either claim is on close scrutiny found to be bereft of meaning? Obviously it is mythological to say that man is God; but it is equally mythological to say that Jesus of Nazareth is not God if it can be shown that he is in fact God's greatest (and in that sense unique) bearer and focuser of (ankhological) meaning. Perhaps we have said enough towards a defence of the divinity of Jesus.

The Church came into being because of God's particular action at a particular time in history. That particular action was originally centred on the person of Jesus. But his death for a time threatened to wipe out the achievements of his life's ministry and terminate its further promises. Hence God had to step in again to raise him from the dead. Then, the descent of the Holy Spirit to confirm the reality of his resurrection effectively sealed the foundation of the Church (Acts 2-3). Henceforth the Church would insist that "the Father, and Son, and Holy Spirit" were and are the main actors in her life. 44 It seems that their relationship to one another and to the Church was conceived by Palestinian Christianity as functional. 45 This means that it was the entrance of the nousological notion of meaning into the Christian Scriptures which generated the metaphysical need and necessity to view the three "persons" as One, in essence. We may recall that the nousological standpoint conceives meaning as One, and the One as Mind. We may also recall that the One is perceived in multiplicity and multiplicity in the One (cf. Ch. One, section 4).

Thus to the nousological position there is no conceptual difficulty or contradiction in saying that the Father + the Son + the Holy Spirit = the One; or that the One = the Father + the Son + the Holy Spirit. The usual

44. Note the centrality of the formula "Father...Son...Holy Spirit" in the Church's evangelistic and ritual activities, cf. Matt.20:19-20; see also the 'Didache', part 2.7 (in) Early Christian Writing....

charge of contradiction in terms, brought by mainly modern Western scholars, most of whom have rightly rejected the nousological tendency to confuse scientific questions and faith-questions, stems from the failure to note the existence, the role, and the nature of the nousological primary interpretation or to realise the existence of any other perception of meaning for that matter.

However, the view that Jesus is God and of the same essence with God appears to have come as a gradual revelation. He first had to pass from being mere man to being divine, then God.\textsuperscript{46} He fully attained the last status in the context of the nousological reformulation of the biblical perception of the nature of God. Once this situation obtained the Church's clearly unequivocal acceptance of Jewish monotheism\textsuperscript{47} began to call for explanation. This was not provided by the Apostolic Fathers who were still closer to the biblical functional view of the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. The task fell to the Apologists who, also faced with the claims of Gnosticism, had to explain the dyadic-triadic formula which had long become common in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church. They have no difficulty in carrying out that task; they simply resorted to the nousological notion of the ingenerate (\textgamma\nu\nu\tau\omicron\sigma) One. While the emergence of Jesus was accounted for in terms of the generation of the Logos\textsuperscript{49} by the Father (i.e. the One).

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46} Cf. J. Knox, \textit{op.cit.}; R.H. Fuller, \textit{op.cit.;} see also the 'kenotic' hymn in Phil.2:6-77; also Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:2-4; John's Gospel 1:1-18 (it is obviously important to read these scriptural passages not only in the context of the Christ event but also in the context of the nousological tenets of Hellenism); note also Ignatius, 'Epistle to the Magnesians', ch.8 (in) Ante Nicene Fathers, vol. 1; see D.M. Baillie's \textit{God Was in Christ} (London, 1956) for a fuller discussion of questions on the relation of Jesus and the Father. Baillie himself appears to lean towards the kenotic position (cf. pp.147-151).
\item \textsuperscript{48} Cf. Kelly, \textit{op.cit.}, p.95.
\item \textsuperscript{49} This nousological doctrine is ably expounded by Theophilus of Antioch, \textit{Ad Autolycum} (1970), see 11:10, also Kelly, \textit{op.cit.}, pp.99-101.
\end{itemize}
for the purposes of creation, revelation and redemption. It was neces-
sary that these claims of 'ingenerate' and 'generate' be scripturally
upheld; hence such passages as Prov. 8:22, 27-29; Gen. 1:1 etc. were
lifted out of their proper contexts and pressed into service.\(^50\) The theo-
phanies in the Old Testament were also viewed as the manifestations of
the Logos.\(^51\) The Holy Spirit was usually understood as the one who
invariably inspired the prophets; or as the Wisdom of God.\(^52\) It was in
connection with the latter that Theophilus became the first man to apply
the term 'triad' to the Godhead.\(^53\) What is important for us to stress,
however, is that the Father is the One from whom the Son and the Holy
Spirit issued forth.

The stress put on "the triadic nature of God" was felt by some to be
a threat to His monadic definition (as the One). Names like Noëtus (of
Smyrna), Praxeas\(^54\) (means "busybody"; it may have been no more than a
nickname given to Noëtus or to a follower of his by those opposed to
their theology), and Sabellius were associated with the vigorous attempt
to defend "monotheism".\(^55\) However, neither the position of the modal-
ists nor that of those stressing the separateness of the Father, the Son
and the Spirit was free from some serious theological difficulties. The
modalists were forced by their own teaching which maintained that it was

\(^{50}\) Cf. Kelly, op.cit., p.100ff.
\(^{51}\) Cf. Kelly, ibid.
\(^{52}\) Cf. Theophilus, op.cit., 11:10.
\(^{53}\) Cf. Kelly, op.cit., p.102, see, however, Theophilus, op.cit., 11:15:
(Τριάδος). F. Jackson is not entirely right in saying, "Theophilus
is the first writer to use the term Τριάδος or Trinity" (op.cit.,
p.161) because as R.M. Grant has pointed out "This 'triad' is not
precisely the Trinity, since in Theophilus' mind man can be added
to it" cf. Ad Autolycum p.53 note 3.
\(^{54}\) On Praxeas cf. Tertullian's account of him in The Ante-Nicene
Fathers, vol. I, pp.597-627; or the extract in J. Stevenson,
op.cit., no. 152, see footnote also. On Noëtus, see no. 133 in
op.cit.
\(^{55}\) Cf. J.N.D. Kelly, op.cit., pp.119-123.
the one God who revealed himself at different times as Father, as Son, and as Holy Spirit, to the position of having to accept that it was the Father who suffered and was crucified! This is technically known as Patripassianism. The 'orthodox' position which, on the other hand, insisted on three distinct personalities in the Godhead clearly laid itself open to the charge of tritheism. What must not be lost on us, however, is that these problems arose because of the need to reconcile the biblical materials to the nousological standpoint.

Origen, the great and certainly one of the least inhibited African thinkers, who undeniably led the theological field in the Early Church, soon brought his energy to bear on this question of tri-theism. He advanced the theory of the eternal generation of the Son, using the analogy of the Sun and its rays (this analogy has been in vogue since the time of Justin) to affirm his position. It must be emphasised, however, that Origen, as a theologian in the Early Church, can never be properly understood outside the nousological (view of) meaning; it is not enough to say that he is a Christian Platonist for both the Christian and pagan Platonists, which includes the "Plato-Plotinus axis of thought", were all informed by the nousological (perception of)

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56. The seriousness of the possibility of such a change may be fully felt when we remember that the strongest, if most effective, charge which the earliest christians brought against the non-christian world was that of polytheism: see for instance, Tertullian, 'The Shows or De Spectaculis' (in) The Ante-Nicene Fathers, vol. Ill. Tertullian's attacks against "pagan" games were more or less based on the fact that such games were usually connected with pagan deities, see chapters VI-VIII in op.cit.;'The Epistle to Diognetus' Early Christian Writings; Theophilus, Ad Autolycum, 11:2-3, 35; in fact the entire work may be read as a christian reaction to "paganism".


59. See above, page
meaning.

Origen's scheme of thought on the relationship of the Father, the Son and the Spirit is linear. This has, in fact, been the case hitherto, since the Father is seen as the fount of the Godhead. Thus hierarchically disposed he maintained that the Father is the God (ὁ Θεός), that is to say, the ingenerate Monad as opposed to the Son who is merely 'God' (Θεός). In other words, that Christ is a secondary God (in his words δευτεροθεός). The Spirit is likewise generated from the ingenerate Father; however, the person of the Spirit was not really, up till now, the subject agitating the mind of the Church. It is the historicity of the man Jesus which posed the nousologico-theological problem.

At any rate, the things that are absolutely necessary to note about Origen's teaching are: (a) that the Father, as the absolute Monad existing outside time, generated the Son (and the Spirit) eternally. (b) That the Father and the Son (and the Spirit) are of the same essence or substance (ὁμοούσιος). (c) That the Father and the Son and the Spirit are distinct persons (ὁμογενεῖς) despite the eternal generation. Noting these points is necessary because Origen was to become the authoritative primary source of reference to the two sides in a conflict that erupted in Egypt at the turn of the fourth century. The best known names in the controversy are Arius (presbyter of Alexandria, d.335) and Athanasius (later bishop of Alexandria, c.295-373).

Before we go further it may be pointed out that the Roman orbit of thought within the Early Church, as opposed to the Antiochene and the Alexandrian orbits of thought, was mainly concerned with safeguarding the monarchy of the Father and the divine unity of the Father, the Son and the Spirit. The so-called Platonic modes of thought were not often the channel of expression employed; that had to wait till the emergence

60. Cf. Origen Against Celsus (i.e. Contra Celsus) 5, ch. XXXIX.
of Augustine in the second half of the fourth century. Before him the legal mode of expression seems to have been naturally adopted. This legal factor can be clearly seen in the writings of Tertullian. The disposition is fully understandable when we take into account the precedence of the legally oriented imperial administrative system of which Rome was the architect.

However, it would be wrong to think that this Roman orbit of thought ever lay outside the nousological primary interpretation. It is in fact the very writings of Tertullian which would deny such a viewpoint. For it was Stoicism which offered him the platform from which he argued the unity of the three Persons (persona) of the 'Trinity'. Stoicism itself inheres in the nousological meaning; it views salvation pantheistically. However, such philosophico-theological terms as hypostasis (= the Platonic ousia), and Logos were taken over from Stoicism; and Tertullian freely used them.

As we turn to the fourth century with its Arius, and Athanasius, the Councils of Nicaea (325) and Constantinople (381) we begin to feel that the nousological criterion has seriously distorted the ankhological intentionality of the Scriptures. We sense that it would have been better had the early Gentile Church been converted not merely to Christianity but, more importantly, to the ankhological meaning which underlies the Scriptures and informed the Christ event. Thus the fourth century is that point in the history of the Church at which we are convinced beyond any shadow of doubt that the Church ought to have gone back to the Scriptures to be inserted in this biblical first principle - the ankhological meaning. It seemed obvious that to proceed into the future centuries without this ankhological insertion would only increasingly

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63. C. Anderson Scott in his Romanism and the Gospel (Edinburgh, 1937) thinks that "the need" for a reformation to recover the "basic principles of Divine truth" made known in "the New Testament" is in fact patent even before the second century, and only went on increasing in the centuries which followed" (p.15). He is of course arguing the case of the Reformation while we are concerned with the ankhological case.
tend towards a steady diminishing of the ankhological light. It can be
said now, in hindsight, that the Gentile Church chose to proceed forward,
hoping to solve its problems in that future. It can also be said from
our present position in history that the need to go back to the Scrip-
tures and be inserted in this ankhological standpoint has never been
greater, considering the kind of threats which presently surround human
life.

The theological crisis that engulfed the Church in the fourth cen-
tury was set in motion by Arius in 318 when he began to teach and to
insist on the "monotheistic" nature of God. He rejected the idea of
homoousion declaring that "there was when he was not" (i.e. Jesus). He
uncompromisingly stated this theological concern in the letter he sent
to his bishop, Alexander of Alexandria (Arius was his presbyter):

"We acknowledge one God, Who is alone ingenerate..., alone eternal, alone without beginning..., alone true, alone possessing immortality, alone wise, alone good, alone sovereign, alone judge of all etc."64

His position is that the unique essence of the Godhead (= God the Father)
cannot be shared or communicated. Standing on this premise he rejected
all those doctrines that speak of the Son or the Spirit being of the same
essence with the Father. As a consequence the Son was reduced to the
status of a creature, hence the slogan, "there was when he was not". Thus the Son has a beginning whereas the Father has no beginning. To be
sure he accepted that the Son was "born" outside time prior to Creation;
after all he was still the Word of God that brought creation into being.
Bishop Alexander stood for the viewpoint which not only contrasted with
Arius' position but also opposed it vehemently. His insistence was on
both the unity of the Triad and its trinitarian distinction. Arius
wasted no time in charging him with Sabellianism. It is obvious that
his position could easily, if pressed, tend towards the Sabellian teach-

64. Quoted in J.N.D. Kelly, op.cit., p.227; however, for the fuller
text of this important letter cf. no. 294 (in) J. Stevenson, op.cit.
ing; for the defence of the unity of the Triad involved emphasis on the Monad.

However before the controversy could threaten the peace and the unity of the empire Constantine, the new "Christian emperor", stepped in to order the convening of the Council of Nicaea. It met in 325; and ratified Alexander's position against Arius; though with the inclusion of the non-scriptural term, homousion. Thus the creed of the Council, which Church leaders in the empire were expected to sign as evidence of loyalty to the "orthodox" position, reads in part as follows:

"We believe in one God, the Father almighty, the Son of God, only begotten, that is, from the substance of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father..."

The word translated "of one substance" is the metaphysical term, homousion (ὁμοοὐσία). Many, in fact for a time most, Church leaders from the Eastern sector of the empire suspected the term of Sabellianism.

This led to anti-homousion bias which rallied itself around the term, homoioussion (= "of like substance"). This meant a very serious rift within the ranks of the "catholic orthodoxy"; a rift fuelled, if not caused, by the term 'imposed' on the Church by the emperor. What followed is well described by Kelly who also quoted Socrates:

"The historian Socrates (c.380-c.450), writing some generations later, has left a vivid description of the astonishing failure of the two sides to comprehend each other. 'The situation', he remarked, 'was exactly like a battle by night, for both parties seemed to be in the dark about the grounds on which they were hurling abuse at each other. Those who objected to the word homousios imagined that its adherents were bringing in the doctrine of Sabellius and Montanus. So they called them blasphemers on the ground that they were undermining the personal subsistence of the Son of God. On the other hand, the protagonists of homousios concluded that their opponents were introducing polytheism, and steered clear of them as importers of paganism.... Thus, while both affirmed the personality and subsistence of

the Son of God, and confessed that there was one God in three hypostases they were somehow incapable of reaching agreement, and for this reason could not bear to lay down arms".66

It was not until the Council of Constantinople (381) that the different combatants within the "orthodox" fold were able to mend the rift by reaffirming the ban and the anathema placed on those outside their fold since the Council of 325. On the whole it is obvious that the basis for deciding who was a heretic and who was not was the nousological mode of thought rather than the religion of Christ. If people were anathematised because of their divergent opinions on terms like homoousion, hypostasis, persona, Monad, Triad etc. then one can only stand back and conclude that these operations were not really informed by the biblical Meaning.

After Constantinople the writings of the Cappadocian Fathers67 and that of St. Augustine68 served to consolidate and to clarify the positions of Nicaea and Constantinople. Consequently the linear view of the Triad, with its emphasis on subordinationism, was effectively removed by the notion of one God in three Persons - at least within the 'orthodox' circles. However, doctrinal conflicts had to shift to the question of the relation of the human and the divine natures in Christ. This led to the ecumenical Councils which met at Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451) to settle this yet another bitter dispute caused by the process of bringing the Scriptures within the nousological terms of reference.

We have tried to point out in this section that the doctrinal controversies of the Early Church obtained mainly because of the nousological meaning's entrance into the centre of the biblical materials;

68. Cf. M. Wiles, op.cit., pp.49-52; Kelly, op.cit., pp.271-279; it was left for the Quicunque Vult to affirm with the greatest confidence yet that, "The Father is God; the Son is God; and the Holy Spirit is God. And yet they are not three Gods, but one God" (fifth century) cf. Alan Richardson, Creeds in the Making (London, 1941) p.121.
an entrance that also meant the marginalisation of their original and congenial ankhological criterion. We concentrated on the main aspects of the question of the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; as indicated earlier Cyril of Jerusalem seems to have hoped that this question of relationship had not become one of essential re- lationship; on the ground that the concern of the 'Three' is for man's salvation and not for "hypostasis and nature". However, this hope could only have arisen in the context of a failure to realise that the need to unify the Three, essentially, was an absolute necessity given the centrality of the nousological (view of) meaning in the life of the Early Church. However, while it is certainly true that a concentration on the question of the "Trinity" would inevitably fail to deal with the other issues in the life of the Early Church it has nevertheless given us a clue to understanding them. At any rate, it will be helpful to touch on the theme of salvation in this period; so it is to that that we will turn next. The other question of the relationship of the human and the divine in the person of Jesus will be taken up in Chapter Nine.

3. The Concept of Salvation in the Early Church in the Light of the Nousological (view of) Meaning:

We begin this section by prefacing it with the following important remarks: (1) the externals (that is, the details, given the notion of meaning which takes the central position) of a belief-system have meaning only within the context of their (perception of) meaning. As already made clear (see Chapter Two and sections 1 and 2 above) the given view of meaning of a given system can be marginalised and undermined; such a marginalisation may, of course, lead to its disintegration. Equally it has all the power to reject any redundant element within the details or to take on alien element(s) useful to its continual need for self-expression.

(2) The notions of salvation in the Early Church may not be
properly understood without first noting that there are basically three divergent views of meaning current, at least for a time, in this period: the ankhological, the nousological, and the Persian meanings. The salient characteristics of the latter are its dualistic view of the world in terms of conflict between Light and Darkness, and its wish to be on the side of the former in the ongoing struggle to destroy the latter (uncreated Evil principle in the world). It may be recalled that every religious system is in one form or the other concerned with salvation, and that a given notion of salvation is wholly or partly dealing with the problem of life in the world, given the fact of death. Zoroastrianism is no exception to this common concern for life; and to be on the side of Light is to be on the side of life (Dabu, op.cit., p.10f.). However, man's existential life may also be undermined with a rigid notion of his ideal metaphysical life (or soul). This sharp dualism between the physical and the metaphysical is what the ankhological position has avoided.

We pointed out previously that the sunyatological standpoint is in a sense in a marginal position to our area, and is as such not a force to be reckoned with as far as the geographical context of the Early Church is concerned. This of course means that we do not accept the view that Buddhism contributed much to the Gnostic ideas in the Early Church. Neither do we favour the idea that the monastic (ascetic) life of the Early Church stemmed somehow, partly or wholly, from the Indian religious tradition. We certainly agree with F.F. Bruce that,

"There is no evidence of a direct connexion between Buddhist influences and the appearance of ascetic movements in the Middle East around the beginning of the Christian era" (op.cit., 1958, p.342).

69. Cf. F. F. Bruce, op. cit., pp.126-127. We are, however, aware of early contacts between India and Egypt. Note the information given by C.H. Roberts, "in A.D. 72/3 out of 143 males registered in one quarter of the town of Arsinoe three were resident in Rome and one in India". Cf. Colin H. Roberts, Manuscript, Society and Belief in Early Christian Egypt, The Schweich Lectures 1977 (London, 1979) p.4 footnote 3.
And that "Christian monasticism, properly so called, makes its appearance about the middle of the third century A.D. It may be said to take its beginning with Antony, a native of Upper Egypt" (ibid., p.343).

(3) We have also dealt with the processes which brought about the transition from the ankhological criterion to the nousological standpoint; but that was not the whole story. There was in fact the case of the apparent disintegration of a given primary interpretation, in this case the Persian one. We may say that the fragments went in all directions because we meet with them at various places as will be made clearer in subsequent discussion which will take the following order: "Gnostics", "orthodox Catholics", "Ebionites", and "Manichaean".

(i) Gnostics: The Gnostics got their name from their emphasis on knowledge (γνώσις = Gnosis), with regard to salvation. However, this point is immediately put in its proper perspective by the fact that "Eastern Christianity" tends generally to emphasise knowledge on matters of salvation. Clement of Alexandria even regarded Christianity as a form of gnosis. In fact before Clement the teaching of Christ was already taken, in some orthodox quarters, to be a system of knowledge given in revelation to guide one towards salvation.

Our view is that the peculiarity of Gnosticism was rather determined by their freer tendency to employ ideas from any available source. Thus Gnosticism in its various forms appears to be basically informed by a conglomeration of ideas taken over from the Persian primary interpretation of the world and the religious systems built around it and

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70. We speak of "disintegration" only in the sense that the tenets of this (view of) meaning are met as fragments of ideas among communities who clearly did not regard the Persian meaning as their original standpoint. Thus it is only when we come to Zoroastrianism that we meet it with a home of its own. The Manichaean attempt to offer it a Christian home did not succeed for long as will be made clear later.


72. Note the emphasis on "knowledge" in John's Gospel.
from the tenets of the nousological (view of) meaning. We must remember
that the latter has the (Christian) bible as its sole means of self-
expression once it became the dominant (view of) meaning in the early
Gentile Christian religious system. Consequently it is averse to any
radical attempt at undermining the historical orientation of that bible;
except that of understanding it nousologically, of course. Gnosticism
on the other hand did not have much regard for the historical orientation
of the Scriptures. The reason for this is that it appears to have con-
ceived the nature and the mode of man's salvation in terms of such
nousological tenets as mind, metaphysical knowledge and redemption, and
general orientation to the World of Forms, as opposed to this world. The
World of Forms has, of course, been identified with heaven. Again, on
the "Persian" side, it seems to have been contented with simply taking
over its concept of conflict between Light and Darkness, and aspects of
its extremely complicated myths, of course. These borrowings are not
historical materials. Gnosticism is in a sense a distrust of history
and a determined refusal to take it seriously.

This brings us to the important, if problematic, question of the
origin of Gnostic thought. It is a problematic question in the sense
that the syncretic nature of Gnosticism has probably made a clear and
indisputable answer to that question almost impossible. However, it
may be noted that Gnosticism arose, mainly, in areas of the world where
there are reasons to believe that primary notions of meaning were at the
brink of collapse. For instance in the Near East where we have noted
the apparent disintegration of the Persian meaning, and the enormous
pressure consequent on the exactions of Hellenism in Egypt, where the

73. On the nature of Gnostic understanding of salvation cf. Hans Jones,
The Gnostic Religion (Boston, 1963) see esp. pp. 194-197, p. 236f.,
also the references in note 75 below.
74. For the characteristics of the Zarathushrian mythology cf. D.K.S.
Dabu, op. cit., p. 10f.; Mary Boyce, op. cit., p. 16.
Rudolf Schnackenburg, 'Early Gnosticism' (in) Jesus in His Time,
pp. 132-141; G.H. Rendall, op. cit., pp. 132-140; F. Jackson, op. cit.,
aging national culture had for long groaned under its (i.e. Hellenism) feet. Under these conditions, in which history had been nothing but consistently brutal, Gnosticism may be clearly seen to be partly a censure of history. 76

Hence in the Gnostic mythological ways of expression, we are put back in the kind of world that generated the apocalyptists; a world where fantastic (and sometimes "nonsensical" to the outsider) mythological imag- eries were employed as weapons against the heartlessness of history. Is it not normal that Gnosticism would be the original form in which Christianity manifested itself in Egypt? To argue otherwise 77 would be to fail to take seriously the fact that Egyptian culture was not in control of her destiny when Christianity came to her. The enormous strength of Gnosticism in Egypt, in this early period, is evidence that Christ came to a culture still battling to keep her world in order.

Thus, generally speaking, it can be said that Gnosticism had understandable reasons for taking a docetic approach to the Christ event, and

76. Any study of Gnosticism (or monasticism) in Egypt which fails to take into account the overwhelming impact which the collapse of Egyptian culture and civilisation had on the collective consciousness of the people would, in our opinion, remain hollow (e.g. Roberts, op.cit.). The over-anxious concern for a safe journey to the realm of the dead (note the Books of the Dead) actually dates back to what P. Jordan calls "the demoralised days of the New Kingdom" (p. 147, op.cit.). Thus Alexander walked into a nation already in retreat from history only to exacerbate the situation. Gnosticism was probably the best response which Egypt (Alexandria is in Egypt!) could give to the Christian Kerygma. It was the response of a nation in mortal crisis. The failure of the catholic orthodoxy to understand this (Bauer, op.cit., pp. 44-60) appears to have driven the most sensitive of the people to the desert where they founded the monastic way of life. Cf. 'The Life of St. Athanasius' (in) St. Athanasius on the Incarnation (London, 1953) pp. 17-24; F. F. Bruce, The Spreading Flame, 1948, pp. 342-352; F. Jackson, op.cit., pp. 586-588. On the effect of the decline of ancient Egyptian civilisation on religious life see P. Jordan, op.cit., pp. 146-150, 183-198.

77. Cf. C.H. Roberts, op.cit.: argued against Bauer (op.cit., pp. 46-60); and maintains that orthodox Christianity had existed in Alexandria from the earliest times, though alongside Judaism. He then holds that it only emerged as a distinct group after Judaism was undermined by persecutions in the second century. To this thesis orthodoxy is prior; and Gnosticism later! However, the weight of evidence is not on Roberts' side!
for seeking to get behind the biblical history, to its spiritual mean-
ing, by allegorical means.  

However, what is of immediate importance to us is to note the distribu-
tion of the 'fragments' from the Persian meaning. In order to be in a posi-
tion to decide on what aspects of the Gnostic teaching that could have possibly come from that (view of) meaning it is necessary to note down the most important tenets of Gnosticism. They are as follows: 1. A dualistic view of phenomena; 2. a view that the created world is basically evil; 3. the belief that this world of evil is the creation of the Demiurge (= Creator God of the Jews) who is by nature less good; 4. a contemptuous view of matter; 5. an allegorical approach to historical records; 6. a strong belief that the Good God (Monad), who is beyond the created world and beyond time, is the Light; 7. an insistence that man's true home is in the spiritual realm of Light; 8. a belief that the reality in the human individual is a spiritual spark of the Light; 9. a belief that this 'pneumatic' element 'longs' to be set free (soteriologically) for a homeward journey back to the realm of the Light; 10. a belief (sometimes) that this Light (Ahura Mazda, Ohrmazd) is the Primal Man from whom mankind originated and to whom individuals may (be saved to) return; 11. a belief that this deliverance/salvation and the safe journey home can only be effected by a possession of a body of esoteric knowledge revealed to the 'pneumatic' Gnostic teachers; 12. a conviction that Christ has revealed this soteriological body of knowledge.

We may now suggest that the Persian meaning is most reflected in 1, 78

78. The Epistle of Barnabas, and Origen are well known for this method. Philo, before them, had however employed it extensively. The allegorical method was one of the ways by which nousological approach handled the Scriptures.

79. For an exhaustive discussion (in the context of the Hellenistic and the Ancient Near Eastern worlds) of this myth of Primal Man, a concept which in a sense occupies the soteriological core of Gnosticism and is found in some literatures as "Adam" or "Son of Man", cf. Frederick H. Borsch, op.cit., especially pp.55-23; also Hans Jonas, op.cit., p.154ff, 216ff.
2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 12(?). However, it is obvious from the extent of these numbers that the blending of the ideas from the 'Persian' and the nousological positions are almost complete in the Gnostic system as may be made clearer below.

(ii) Orthodox catholics: Bearing in mind that the catholics and the Gnostics did not have to quarrel over the basic tenets of the nousological standpoint (their disagreement was over the proper attitude to the historical orientation of the Scriptures) it becomes difficult to note major divergencies between them in their acceptance of ideas from the Persian meaning. The only thing that can be said with certainty is that the catholics were apparently less in a hurry to leave the world. Albeit, both were certainly committed to the conviction that the true home is in the realm of the Light. Otherwise we may say that the above Gnostic table was in some respects acceptable to the catholics too. Perhaps the difference between them lay mainly in the degree of emphasis each side would be prepared to put on most of the points on that table. This observation is important for the fuller understanding of why there were difficulties in determining the exact category in which some individual thinkers - 'catholic' and 'Gnostic' - could be said to belong. This is because certain individuals from the catholic side, e.g. Clement and Origen, might lay degrees of emphases (on certain points) that could make them look "Gnostic". On the Gnostic side someone like Marcion might in many respects appear "catholic" because of his selective emphases on certain aspects of the table. We must remember that the table is already a blend of the elements from both the nousological and the Persian views of meaning.

(iii) Ebionites: Some 'fragments' from the Persian position were also grasped by the ankhologically inserted Ebionites. This is partly the reason why the catholic heresiologists were quick to put them in the
same category with "Cerinthus and Carpocrates". However, we may note that it was the "Ebionitism" which found itself in the process of disintegration, owing to the pressure of the nousological (view of) meaning, that was caught in this quite uncharacteristic flirtation.

(iv) Manichaean; Manichaeanism is, according to J.N.D. Kelly, "in essence...a gnosis, akin in some respects to...Gnosticism." The observation is true as far as it goes; however, there is more to the system: In Manichaeanism we meet with the only attempt, known to us, in the Early Church period to found an ecclesiastical body which, in essence, is radically opposed to the "orthodox catholic" position. Put in other words, Manichaeanism was apparently a conscious effort to give a new lease of life to the Persian meaning by founding a Church more or less on its principles; a Church which, in a sense, set out to interpret the Scriptures and the Christ event in its light. This "diabolical" (in the opinion of the "catholics") act was originally hatched at the fringes of the Roman empire - Babylon and Persia. By the time it emerged in the centre from these regions it was already fully formed! What struck fear in the heart of "orthodoxy" were its rival meaning content, and its strong hierarchical organisation.

It is important, however, to point out that what Manichaeanism did with the Persian meaning was exactly what the 'Western' Gentile Church did with the nousological meaning. At any rate the nousologically informed catholic orthodoxy was not prepared to brook any rival. As a

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80. Cf. Irenaeus, Against Heresies, 1, XXVI, 2. Note also that the Jewish doctrine of The Two Ways - the way of Light and the way of Darkness - which we meet with in the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Epistle of Barnabas, The Didache, John's Gospel, and in pseudo-Clementines seems to sit uneasily between the ethical teaching of Judaism and the Persian meaning.


82. Perhaps St. Augustine of Hippo, for nine years an ardent member of this ecclesiastical form before he became its most powerful opponent, is a good illustration of the extent of the success and the failure of Manichaeanism.
result battle was joined on all sides against the Manichaean institutions as it is evident in the "orthodox" Church's heresiological writings; St. Augustine clearly led the way, if we judge by the effort put in by individual writers; the State also joined in the attack. It was obvious from all these that the need to settle this Manichaean question was an urgent and a very important one. Foakes Jackson, coming from a totally different approach from ours, clearly depicts the situation when he says,

"The heresy spread with extraordinary rapidity in spite of the fear and detestation it inspired.... Diocletian (A.D.284-305), or his successors in 308, ordered the proconsul of Africa to burn the leaders of the sect. Almost all of the Christian emperors passed laws against the Manichaeans.... In Western mediaeval Europe the name of Manichee was full of nameless terror, the accusation of Manichaeism being the most serious that could be made."83

Eventually the spread of Manichaeanism was successfully resisted. And we must remember that "Ebionitism" was by now passing out of the scene while "Gnosticism" as a Church form was proscribed. It was only the nousological standpoint which was actually in a position to win, ultimately, these meaning inspired theological and christological conflicts. (It was in a winning position from the moment Constantine became "Christian emperor").84 But such theological and christological victories would result in theological and ecclesiastical rigidities.

It was partly this situation, which was already noticeable in the second century, which contributed to the rise of Montanism.85 Tertullian was probably the only man of note, from the catholic side, to join this movement of protest against rigidity and the slackening of moral life in the

84. Note the role he played in the Arius-Athanasius doctrinal controversy.
85. On Montanism cf. Eusebius 'The Church History' (in) The Nicene and the Post Nicene Fathers, vol. 1, 5, chaps. XIV-XIX. "Eusebius" view of the Catholic Church makes it unnecessary for us to expect from him an objective disposition in assessing the "enemies" of the Church. His writings on Montanism are no exception. However, McGiffert's accompanying notes do provide some checks and balances; on Tertullian's own comment on the prophetic founders of the movement cf. his Against Praxeas, ch. 1; also F. Jackson, op.cit., pp.224-226.
Church. His telling complaint was against the invasion of "Jerusalem" (the ankhological position) by "Athens" (the nousological standpoint):

"What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? ... Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Jesus Christ..."

Thus the victory of the nousological standpoint is not necessarily the victory of the biblical meaning. At any rate ecclesiastical history had no other choice than to proceed with the victor. The truth, however, is that the Church had committed itself to the nousological view of salvation. This in turn meant the marginalisation of the New Testament's ankhologically informed understanding of it.

This conclusion raises the important question of how we are now to understand the teaching of the Church Fathers on redemption. Gustaf Aulén's *Christus Victor* had since its appearance in 1931 contributed to, or rather, perhaps, revolutionised the usual understanding of the Church Fathers and the bible on the subject of salvation. Approaching the matter from the angle of the Fathers he concluded that the New Testament, the Early Church and Luther held that,

"The CENTRAL idea of Christus Victor is the view of God and the Kingdom of God as fighting against evil powers ravaging in mankind. In this drama Christ has the key role, and the title *Christus Victor* says the decisive word about his rôle. In the situation of theology today it may be, perhaps, even more needful to emphasize this perspective - the perspective of victory - than it was when my book first appeared."

The quote is from the 'Preface to the 1970 Edition' of this important work (i.e. important from the ankhological point of view); he wrote that preface himself in 1968. Thus after thirty-seven years Aulén's conviction on the validity and value of his work has, to his credit, not diminished.


However, the very fundamental point which Aulen did not realise in 1931 or by 1968 is that the Christus Victor of the Church Fathers (or of Luther for that matter) was no longer the victorious Son of Man who came and will come again in the clouds of heaven. Instead "he" was none other than the Logos of the nousological criterion. In the next three chapters we will consider the pilgrimage of the (nousological standpoint as the) victor.
PART THREE

THE WESTERN INTERPRETATION

AND WESTERN THEOLOGICAL PILGRIMAGE
CHAPTER SIX

THE BELIEF OF CHRISTENDOM

With respect to the present Part Three we would like to point out the following: (1) By the title, "The belief of Christendom" we do not aim to discuss every aspect of the beliefs of the Middle Ages. This self limitation is, of course, dictated by the scope of our thesis. However, we do not consider a detailed account or even mention of every such aspect necessary to our concern to point out the nousological context of much of Catholic and Protestant theologies. The writer would, however, never have possessed the energy or the learning which so ambitious a program calls for.

(2) Consequently we will not consider it necessary to get bogged down in the practical aspects of the medieval Church embracing such matters as forms of worship, liturgical rites and sacraments, pilgrimages, devotion to the saints and other forms of mystical and "folk devotions" and practices developed in the later part of the Middle Ages.

(3) Finally, it must be remembered that our study has since the discussions of Part One, been partly concerned to point out the theological necessity of grasping the inter-relatedness of cosmology, anthropology, theology, soteriology and religious practice within the common context of a given (view of) meaning. In the case of the biblical data this meaning is Life.

1. African Legacy:

Our thesis has hitherto placed both the 'East' and the 'West' within the nousological perception of meaning; a perception taken as the primary and the authentic context of religious and cosmological awareness. This meant, of course, the marginalisation of other perceptions. However, there are certain secondary differences - at least as they bear upon theological practice - which we need to point out.
The East had, as it were, processed the Gospel kerygma received from the earliest Jewish Christianity, giving it a nousological character in the course of doing so. (This nousological character it certainly never possessed in its land of birth). Thus in the nature of the case the West was so placed as to be in the main, initially, the ready recipients of the Eastern, and, of course, the African, theological conclusions; the questions raised by "the African" claim will be dealt with below. We must bear in mind that the nousological sense of meaning is a perception of the world which originally obtained as the primary factor in the "ancient Greek world". Therefore the "ancient Roman world" and the later Western world were apparently only gradually converted to it - at least to the extent the conversion process succeeded.

This process seemed to have followed two main routes; firstly, that of philosophy, especially the Stoic system to which many in the Roman world quickly gave themselves — men like Seneca and Marcus Aurelius. Secondly, that of Christianity which was already nousologically structured. Concerning the former Jean Daniélou has pointed out, in the course of his discussion of St. Cyprian's usage of the term, unity, the role of Stoicism in theological constructions:

"The word concordia clearly has a strongly distinctive sense, perhaps best translated as 'universal harmony'. This places it in the tradition of Stoic philosophy, both cosmic and political, which stressed the unity and harmony of all things."\(^1\)

We pointed out earlier that Stoicism stems from the nousological view of the world despite its pantheistic view of 'salvation', as opposed to the Platonic-neoPlatonic metaphysical view of it; for both tend to view

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physics in the light of metaphysics.

Concerning the latter - the route of Christianity - the gradual\(^3\) conversion of Europe to Christianity was almost synonymous with her conversion into the nousological meaning.\(^4\) The effect of this process, on Jewish Christianity obtaining within the sphere of the Latin Church, is again well brought out by Daniélou:

"We have seen that this very early Latin Christianity was strongly marked by Jewish culture.

"Later, however, Latin Christianity became more literary and works written in Latin tended to replace those written in Greek. The leading figure in this movement is, of course, Tertullian, whose plan was to equip Latin Christianity with a complete library of its own which would take the place of the Greek works... His writings contain features which were to become those of Western Christianity at large" (p.465f.).

Daniélou's major contention is that the earliest Western Christianity was "Judaic-Christian in character" (p.137) and that there was "also a reaction against this Judaic-Christianity, a movement with the aim of freeing Latin Christianity from its Jewish ancestry" (p.137); it was led by Tertullian.

Thus the process of the conversion of the ancient Roman world into the Christian faith meant, on the one hand, the gradual bringing of the Church within the nousological terms of reference, and, on the other, a concomitant marginalisation of the ankhological sense of meaning which obtained with Judaic-Christianity. And we may recall that we have already pointed out the role of the 'Western Church' in the eventual designation of Jewish Christianity as heretical.

However, it is necessary to be very careful with this understanding that Europe was converted to the nousological meaning. It needs to be

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\(^3\) The conversion of the European States was not fully accomplished until the fourteenth century, cf. Herbert Butterfield, Christianity in European History (London, 1952) p.17.

\(^4\) The conversion of Europe to the nousologically understood Christianity implies, of course, the marginalisation of every other primary interpretation of the world obtaining in Europe prior to the coming of the Church.
taken as an open-ended truth\textsuperscript{5} which is prepared to take other factors into account: Such as the possibility that there were many within "Christendom" who were never fully given\textsuperscript{6} to the 'newfangled' Greek manners or to the Christian faith. There is also the possibility that what underlay the contention between the nominalists on the one hand and the ultra-realists on the other was the surfacing of a suppressed non-nousological standpoint. Perhaps it is not too far-fetched also to view some aspects of the Reformation in the light of the attempt to check some of the tenets in the metaphysical orientation of the nousological position. The Reformation/humanistic standpoint certainly tended to modify many aspects of the traditional metaphysical theology with the emphasis on the Scriptures; even if this effort was short lived.\textsuperscript{7} And it is not out of context to point to the reactions against certain tenets of the nousological meaning by such movements as humanism and existentialism\textsuperscript{8} and modern art.\textsuperscript{9} The question that comes to mind, of course, is that of whether Northern Europeans, at least, were ever completely nousologists at heart? This question needs to be emphasised in spite of their history of Idealism and tendency to mysticism, noticeable in the rather later mystical writings and in the escapist nature of Gothic cathedrals. There is, of course, the strong case of Empiricism and the plausibility that some ordinary evangelical worshippers, from John

\textsuperscript{5} Truth, in the sense that Europe prior to the entrance of Greek philosophy and the Church was not nousologically informed or minded. Thus, to the extent that mysticism (cf. neo-Platonism and Plotinus in particular) is a basic tenet of the nousological meaning, Wilhelm Worringer's tendency to attribute its originality to his "Northern man" ought to be received with caution and with necessary qualifications; in spite of the later mystical and transcendental nature of Gothic art. Cf. W. Worringer, \textit{Form in Gothic} (London, 1964) pp. 40f., 86f.


\textsuperscript{7} Cf. G. Aulén, \textit{op.cit.}, pp. 123-128.


Bunyan to the present day House-Churches might not, in the final analysis, have been genuine nousologists, despite the all-absorbing emphasis on heaven; as opposed to the life of the present existence.

However, before concentrating on Western Christianity let us deal with the problem posed to African Christianity by what we have called on the one hand "the ancient Greek world" (i.e. the 'East') and what we have on the other called "the ancient Roman world" (i.e. the 'West'). We must not forget that this study is in the nature of prolegomena to African Christian theology. The point at issue in that either/or geographical classification is that north Africa (from the present day Mauritania to Egypt), non-politically speaking, is and was neither "the East" nor "the West". Yet modern works on early Christianity involving Egypt or Carthage, tend to employ "the East" and "the West" terms as if they are eternally valid geographical classifications. To be noted, of course, is the fact that the usage of the East and the West terms did not begin with the earlier settlements\(^\text{10}\) of Phoenician traders on some sites along the Libyan coast. It arose in the context of the colonisation of Egypt by Greece in the fourth century B.C.; and the later Roman colonisation of Greece with its colonial territories, of which Egypt was the most important, and northwest Africa, comprising mainly Libya with its elements of Phoenician descendants. Consequently the Roman imperial administration came to speak of the East (that is, the ancient Greek world, which includes Greece and the Hellenised territories) and the West; the latter covers the Latin speaking territories. Hence, true to the character of colonialism, there was a Latin speaking section of north Africa and a Greek speaking section. This colonial, if cultural, undermining of north Africa was certainly not helped by the strong emphases on the "Eastern Roman empire" and the "Western Roman empire" which arose with the political/administrative innovation started by the emperor Diocletian towards the end of the third

century A.D.: this involved the taking up of residence in the East by the emperor instead of governing solely from Rome. Then Constantine gave his stamp of approval to the changes with his foundation of Constantinople towards the end of his life (d. A.D. 337).

This early East/West political distortion of the geographical understanding of north Africa would have posed no real problem to the continental consciousness of the present day Africans had not the modern Western world appeared to insist on perpetuating it. This insistence is clearly reflected in the scientifically erroneous (Western) cartographic practice of disproportionately doubling the size of the northern hemisphere over and against the south in most atlases; what Ali Mazrui calls the continued distortion of "size on the map in favour of the northern continents of the world".11

The above politically inspired geographical demarcations may in one form or another bear on psychological and religious questions. It is certainly the case that the early African Church Fathers, men like Origen, Athanasius, Tertullian, Cyprian, and Augustine, to name only a few, are rarely presented as African Church Fathers. For the purposes of illustrating our point let us consider the case of two of the most recent writers on the Church of Egypt: George Every and C.H. Roberts. The former tells us that, "Alexandria is not Egypt... Yet Alexandria is in Egypt, and cannot escape the peculiar impact of Egypt."12 Our objection is to the first sentence. It is not clear what it is meant to convey. However, our response is, yes, Alexandria is not Egypt; in the sense that a city within a country is not the country. Yes, Alexandria is in Egypt in the sense that "it cannot escape the peculiar impact of Egypt". At any rate if Every is saying (we cannot be sure) that Alexandria was founded by Alexander the Great (by renaming and expanding an older Egyptian "town"),

that it was the most hellenised city in Egypt, possibly in the world, that there were many Greek settlers in the city we would agree with him by conceding these truths. But we are equally insistent on the point that Egyptians were never expelled or barred from the city built on their town.

We are more satisfied with Roberts' clearer expression of what he probably meant to say; but he also appears to be better understood in the light of what we have called "the basic premise of African studies in the West". Thus he tells us in the first page of his book that "Alexandria was the greatest Greek city in the world". One would, of course, like to ask whether Greece was synonymous with Egypt? and if not whether Alexandria was not merely an extensively hellenised Egyptian city with many Greeks and non-Greeks; for instance the Jews. However, Roberts' Alexandria seems to be a segregated "Greek city" hence he speaks of the beginning of the "mission to the Copts" (p.64) and of the city's "missionary effort" to the Copts (p.64, nt.1). These sound rather like phrases borrowed from the pages of the missionary Journals of the nineteenth-century. However, he went on to claim that the first Egyptian scholar was Hieracas (fourth century!). Probably anticipating possible objections he advised us that "the bearer of an Egyptian name may have been Greek speaking"(p.66, nt.2); but he refrained from equally stating that the bearer of a Greek name may have been Egyptian. In fact in the context of the history of colonialism the latter is more likely. Roberts did not even feel any inhibition in suggesting that Gnosticism could not have appealed to the "native population" because of its "intellectualist" character (pp.68-69). Perhaps the only reply immediately necessary to his claims is that Egypt had, both before and after Hieracas, had more than one Origen.

We may conclude this section of this chapter by suggesting that African Church Fathers including those who descended from 'foreign' settlers could only be best understood when they are seen and read within

the geographical setting in which they were born, in which they lived and in which they often died. Only thus could we begin to remove every shroud placed around the African Church Fathers by the accidents of colonial history and practice. Only then can we begin to appreciate fully the magnitude of African legacy to both Eastern Christianity and Western Christianity. It is certainly in this light that we will view especially the contributions of such African Fathers as Tertullian, Cyprian and Augustine to Western Christianity.

However, these Fathers, whether from the northwest or from the north-east of the Continent, must be seen in their proper theological context; which is that of a nousological view of Christianity and Christian theology. They probably had no choice in this matter. The colonial/cultural milieux in which they found themselves inhered in the nousological world view. This implies of course the marginalisation of other views of meaning. It is therefore the only standpoint promoted and published. All others would have been and indeed were deemed heretical. For it is of the nature of any dominant (view of) meaning in any given community or communities to reduce others to peripheral status; to, at best, regard them as heretical or insignificant opinions held by the few or the powerless, and at worst to ban them altogether. However, our criticism of these Fathers is largely, if biblically, determined by the ankhological viewpoint.

2. The Miraculous and Philosophy in the Middle Ages:

We can do no more in the space available to us for the discussion of


these two important subjects than give them a general and limited treat­
ment. We will begin with the miraculous.

(i) The miraculous in the Middle Ages: The period of the Middle Ages,
the classical period of Christendom, covers the time from the fall of Rome
to the 'barbarians' in the fifth century (c.A.D.476) to the fall of By-
zantium (or Constantinople) to the Turks in the fifteenth century (1453).
This period has, mainly since the Reformation, been variously described,
in whole or in part, as the Dark Ages; in the sense of spiritual darkness
or of abstract speculation. The description can be misleading to the un-
informed if pressed; despite the history of the horrors of the Inquisition,
the witchhunt and the persecution of "heretics", Jews and Muslims. Because
the Middle Ages is an inseparable part of European (and therefore Western)
history. The witchhunt did not in fact end with the Middle Ages nor was
the punishment of heretics confined to the period. However, this period
is also an important one to the African Church historian or theologian;
for the European medieval bases of much of African missionary Church
structures, ranging from the nousological structure of theologising to the
celibate priesthood and nunnery etc. are still very much with us.

The medieval period was the period of a strong, if uncritical, belief
in supernaturalism. 16 It was within this view of phenomena that various
other events took place. For instance the process of christening and
christianising European culture, the developments of monasticism, eccle-
siology, the sacraments, religious piety (in its medieval forms), theolog­
ical and philosophical understandings, and the rest. Thus the period
(of unmitigated supernaturalism) was certainly one of intense activities.

16. In fact much of the doctrinal controversy surrounding Abelard's
life, which led up to the condemnation of his theological position
at the councils of Soissons (A.D.1139) and Sens (1140) may be re-
duced to a conflict between the prevalent hyper-supernaturalism,
represented by orthodoxy, and the spirit of critical enquiry embodied
in Abelard's scholastic method; see the excellent study by James
Cotter Morrison, The Life and Times of Saint Bernard (Macmillan,
However, the understanding, with respect to these activities, was, true to rigid supernaturalism, that like must give birth to like: the Church must be the same; doctrinal beliefs must be the same; heretics and men of other faiths (Jews and Muslims) must be banished or destroyed; witches must be got rid of. The only acceptable changes were those that agree with the monolithic structure and harmony of Christendom. The influence of the insistence of Stoicism on the harmony of all things, especially moral and cosmological on this (that is, the Church's) monolithic predisposition must not be lost on us. Prior to and in spite of the Augustinian grip on the Western Church Stoicism was looked upon as the natural ally of the (Western) Church. The seemingly uncontrollable speculative freedom (dear to Eastern Christendom) offered by the Platonic-neoPlatonic axis was accepted with some due caution.\textsuperscript{17}

What must be noted, however, is that the understanding of supernaturalism in the West is nousologically determined. Thus it was not merely a belief in the miraculous or in the existence of parahistorical beings or agents. Instead in Western supernaturalism there is a disjuncture between the natural and the supernatural.\textsuperscript{18} The one is historical, even when viewed or interpreted supernaturally; the other is metaphysically ahistorical. In other words it cannot be equated with the biblical/ankhological understanding of supernaturalism. To the latter heaven and earth, the natural and the supernatural are ankhologically one.

On the miraculous: one of some possible definitions of "the miraculous" is that it is an effect (or effects) caused by a supernatural agency or agencies. In this sense the majority of mankind have always been supernaturalists. It is also in that sense that the Old and the New

\textsuperscript{17} On the contrast between the Eastern and the Western particular (but nousological) interpretations of Christian Data cf. J. Danielou, \textit{op.cit.}, p.466. This contrast can also be fruitfully viewed from the perspective of art criticism, cf. W.Worringer, \textit{op.cit.}, especially pp.21-54.

Testaments could never be properly understood outside the context of supernaturalism and the miraculous. And as such will always defy any program of demythologisation. It is also in that sense that the world of the Early Church was full of supernatural and miraculous stories; until in the Middle Ages the world looked almost like a tangible supernatural being.

At any rate, the supernatural/miraculous frame of mind needs to be properly understood: Human beings cannot exist in an ununderstood world (that is to say, in an unconstructed world). Thus once the world has been constructed (i.e. understood) it follows that every event in it must be accounted for. To be unable to account for an occurrence, sooner or later, would amount to a careless and dangerous undermining of the construction. Hence the necessity to give an account, any account, is existentially speaking, the primary factor. However, the problem with most supernatural accounts (as opposed to most scientific ones) is that they usually create more problems than they solve. And when such problems mean the immediate or eventual undermining of human life, or its destruction, then there is the need to call supernaturalism to order. The rationalist onslaught against the Church from the seventeenth century Europe onwards will always be misunderstood outside this context of the necessity to call the rigid supernaturalism of the Church to order - a Church which in many ways had become the destroyer of human life rather than its protector (see below).


23. Science can (and has often) been directed against life; Nagasaki, Hiroshima and the world's increasing expenditure on weapons of destruction are terrible reminders.
The excellence of Lecky's great work\textsuperscript{24} lies in its thorough understanding and appreciation of the good service which rationalism, despite its weaknesses which often stemmed from its over confidence, has done to humanity; and therefore to God. Also Bertrand Russell's greatness (not to speak of Jean-Paul Sartre's fight against tyranny) may partly lie in this paradox of championing the cause of human life by taking a decided stand against the Church's rigid supernaturalism.\textsuperscript{25}

The particularly peculiar nature of the Church's upholding of the witchcraft belief in the Middle Ages (down to the eighteenth century) may help to put the above discussions in perspective. Every abnormal or misunderstood phenomenon was accounted for by reference to a satanic being understood as manifesting itself through the person or the wickedness of the one designated as a witch. Forms of punishment were often those of hanging or burning the accused. The peak of this horrendous destruction of life was between the fifteenth and the seventeenth centuries. The superstitious belief was readily defended by theologians including Thomas Aquinas, Luther, and John Wesley. And the legal punishment of witches did not come to an end until the eighteenth century. That was when the European States in the face of the emerging scientific spirit and the protestations of the rationalists, began to remove the crime of witchcraft from their Statute Books.\textsuperscript{26}

\textsuperscript{24} That is, his \textit{The Rise and Influence of Rationalism in Europe} (vols. 1 and 2, 1865; London, 1910 - reissue).

\textsuperscript{25} Cf. B. Russell, \textit{Why I Am Not a Christian} (London, 1957) pp.154-161. We do, of course, reject Russell's agnostic prescription. T.H. Huxley's opposition against the Church in the nineteenth century was also partly due to the above reasons, cf. \textit{op.cit.}

(ii) The dimension of philosophy in the Middle Ages: In the Middle Ages, and beyond, of course, the largely miraculous-supernaturalistic approach to the explanation of events was one shared by the whole of Christendom. For supernaturalism was more or less an explanatory concept that made sense of both the social and the cosmological world of the largely illiterate masses. However, it would be a mistake to think that the educated were exempt. We have already indicated that witchcraft belief was upheld by the Church; and was theologically defended by the clergy, the philosopher and the saint. However, nousologically speaking it is necessary to recognise that the theologico-philosophy of the period was on the whole reflective, critical, and sober and as such must be viewed apart from the easy and quick solutions of the "miraculous minded". Although it is of the nature of this nousologically understood philosophy to pretend to see everything within its grasp, in its bid to account for metaphysical and scientific questions in the same breath.

At any rate Augustine, Boethius (?480-524), John Scotus Erigena (c.800-c.877), Anselm (1033-1109), Abelard (1079-1142), Thomas Aquinas (c.1225(6)-1274), Duns Scotus (1270-1308), the Franciscan (1209 or 1210) and the Dominican (1215) orders, in fact the entire system of scholasticism, were all informed by the nousological (view of) meaning. Thus the so to speak evolutionary line of thought running from the nominalists through William of Ockham (c.?1290-1300 to 1349 or 1350) to the triumph of the scientific spirit and the resulting modern secularism could be viewed as, (a) a retreat from the theological view of meaning to a merely secular understanding of it, or (b) as evidence of a kind of unconscious protest against the nousological perception of meaning, which was after all not the one originally regarded as dominant by the majority (in the non-Greek Europe). Or (c) as the beginning of attempts by those other

perceptions of the world, marginalised in the first place by the nousological standpoint to regain positions in the centre. It is certainly along these lines of thought that we would view the ankho logical tenets which increasingly became stronger in the activities of the humanists. This does not, of course, imply the acceptance of the agnostic or the atheistic tendencies of many of them.

However, the nousological (perception of) meaning is clearly manifested in the all absorbing concepts of "the universals", "essence", "form", etc. throughout the medieval period. They were to form the common bases of philosophy and theology, thereby revealing the nousological context of these two disciplines, until modern times when the need to conform to the scientific spirit eventually led philosophy to divorce itself from theology. This meant the abandonment of the latter to the mercy of all sorts of partners: historical, sociological, psychological, etc. method. Thus theology was forced to face the world created by God.

At the heart of philosophical debates in the Middle Ages is the question of universals, and standing at the beginning of the medieval discussion of the subject is Arnicius Manlius Boethius. 28 It is necessary to add, however, that the Middle Ages was also as much concerned with such issues as the nature of being, the relationship of essence to existence, questions of multiplicity and singularity, the distinction between matter and form, etc.

To ask questions about the nature of Western theology is in many respects the same as asking questions about Augustinianism. Augustinianism is the gift of the African Church to the Western world; it is a gift of a complete theological system. In the Augustinian system God is viewed as Pure Form (i.e. Mind) or as the One. There is a problem here; if the One is pure form then number cannot be predicated of 'it', according to Greek philosophy which Augustine and the early Gentile Church

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operated with. Yet the doctrine of the Church maintains that God is He who is in three personalities; and three is a predication of number!

Consequently Boethius had to confess that,

"the seeds of argument sown in my mind by St. Augustine's writings have borne fruit. And now let us make a beginning on the question proposed."

The question proposed is, of course, his De Trinitate. He was clearly worried by the idea of three (i.e. number) being predicated of God. He preferred to hold that, "the Divine Substance is form without matter, and is therefore one, and is its own essence."

The intention of the preceding paragraph is not to ascertain the nature of Boethius' Trinitarian doctrine but to point out that the question of God, His form and His existence is part of the problem of universals. And it must not be forgotten that philosophical activities in this period were conducted by Church ministers, monks and laymen. The notion of universals is a Greek one. It belongs to the cluster of ideas which includes the following: genus, species, form, image, etc. Let us consider the relation of genus and species to universals. Man, dog and cow belong to the same genus - animal. But man is not of the same species with the cow or the dog, basically because he possesses reason (i.e. he is a rational being) which cows and dogs do not possess. But the concept, genus, which man and dog share, is a universal notion. Does the latter exist separately? The question may perhaps be more clearly grasped if put in the context of the species, man. Is there something called humanity from which individual human beings derive? The common consensus of Greek philosophy is that there is such universal stuff; in which case the individual human being is only fully understood by reference to it.

The preceding analysis is the context of the rather theologico-

philosophical battles (of ideas) between the realists and the nominalists throughout the Middle Ages, on the subject of the universals. There are, however, two types of realists - the ultra and the moderate. According to the ultra-realists the stuff of humanity, for instance, exists independently of the human individuals who "embody or imitate" it "to a greater or less extent". Boethius, John Scotus Erigena, Odo of Tournai (d.1113), Anselm, etc. were all realists in one form or another.

The contention of the nominalists, however, was that the universals do not exist, substantially, independent of the ideas of species and genera. They were merely thoughts in the mind. Consequently the disagreement between the ultra-realists and the nominalists flared into a controversy; centred first around Roscelin of Compiègne (d.1120) and then around Abelard. To Roscelin "Universals, whiteness, the Trinity, were but mere words, but breaths of air." Anselm disagreed with him, of course; maintaining that "Logicians holding such views should be blown out from discussions." Abelard, who perhaps took a moderate position, also denied that Man or Humanity exists independent of individual men.

The nominalists eventually won the debate. The permanency of the victory was fully secured, and helped along, by the discovery of Aristotelianism by the medieval thinkers. The Moors of Spain made a fuller range of his writings available to the thirteenth century Europe. And the new scholastic universities were quick to seize the opportunity provided by his system of thought; though never at the expense of neo-Platonism which was from the beginning entrenched in Augustinianism. There was no way it could have been dislodged had any attempt been made. Aquinas is a good illustration of this point, because despite his wholehearted embrace of

34. Ibid.
Aristotle he nevertheless still remained an Augustinian and therefore a neo-Platonist. The opposition there was was the Church's opposition to the threat posed by the newly publicised Aristotlianism; the latter was clearly too non-supernaturalistic as to be received without opposition. However, it must be said that Aquinas on the whole succeeded in christianising it for the Church, thereby nullifying whatever threat it might have presented. That was part of the major achievements of his immense theological and philosophical writings.

On the question of the universals, Aquinas was a moderate nominalist. Aristotle largely, though not wholly, controlled his thinking. He made distinctions between substance and accident, matter and form, and essence and existence. On the latter he emphasised that it is only in God that essence and existence are identical. For, in his opinion, we cannot think of God without thinking of His existence. While, on the other hand, we can certainly think of the unicorn (or horse, or man) without thinking of its existence; for it is only in existence (metaphysically separable from accident and essence in his system) that essence realises its existence. It must be remembered that in the Middle Ages philosophy was more or less viewed in terms of logic and dialectic. Thus to demonstrate the logicality of a proposition was almost the same as the demonstration of the truth of its claims. Hence Aquinas put every weight behind his Five Ways by which he hoped to demonstrate the existence of God; as Anselm, before him, hoped to with his Ontological Argument. However, the existence of God cannot be proved or denied by sheer reasoning from effects. But His existence can be believed in.

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Aquinas' philosophical system has laid emphasis on reason, while Duns Scotus put the emphasis on notions like will (as opposed to reason) and humanitas (as opposed to the dreariness of Aquinas' system of thought). However, with the turn of the fourteenth century one could almost begin to feel the beginnings of the kind of wind which blew Europe into the turmoil of the Reformation in the early decades of the sixteenth century. Events appeared to be tending away from the 'harmony' of the medieval world towards the uncharted sea that gave rise to the Reformation and the scientific spirit. The Europe of the period seemed to be on the verge of getting fed up with the metaphysicism which explained science and religion in the same breath. It was in this context that William of Ockham emerged to declare, in the words of Fremantle, that,

"by no twist of the intellect can a man be a goat, or a Socrates at home when he is walking on the street. No more can the intellect make the mobile immobile; the perishable, the eternal; or the singular, universal. Only individuals are real, singly; there is no such thing as an individual universalized... Nothing, Ockham says, exists before knowledge of an object except the object that is known; and the object of the senses and of the intelligence must be the same."

It is with this note of change that we will conclude this section. But we need to bear in mind that the medieval world had a unique task. That task was the necessity to digest, towards a common synthesis, the data afforded by the impingement of the Greek world, the Jewish world and the Islamic world. Their total absorption in the metaphysics of form, essence, being, universals, etc. is evidence that the task was essentially one of understanding these data nousologically. And we may add that it was on the whole an accomplished task as far as the Middle Ages is concerned. However, no sooner was it accomplished than the nousological basis of that accomplishment was thrown into question. The process of peripheralising this particular primary interpretation of the world was led by the scientific spirit of the Renaissance movement.

The Understanding of Salvation in the Middle Ages:

Preliminary remarks: In the world of the Early Church there were various religious groups, each of them believing itself to be the possessor of the truth. Some groups jealously guarded such truths from the world outside while making it known only to the initiates. This is the idea behind mystery religions and many Gnostic groups. On the other hand some groups regarded every revealed truth as good news which has come for the salvation of mankind; and therefore as one to be preached to the whole world. This was (and is) the position of Christianity. However, while the nousological emphasis has tended to view the knowledge of the truth (i.e. the Gospel) as the key to the salvation of the soul for a return to God, the ankhological stress tends to fall on the understanding of God with us.

Another thing to be noted is that the Church obtaining in an area where a given (view of) meaning is dominant is thereby, as a matter of course, bound to reflect the intentionality of that meaning. Equally, changes in the structural perception of that (view of) meaning are bound to compel changes and shifts in the perception of the nature of the Church. This last point is particularly applicable to the understanding of the theological and the institutional changes the Church had undergone in the West between the time of Augustine and Pope John Paul II's visit to Canterbury Cathedral in 1982. Also, even Churches obtaining within the milieu of a given dominant meaning (e.g. sunyatological, nousological or, ankhological meaning) may contain more than one type of ecclesiastical tradition; this is often brought about by differing emphases on secondary issues. For instance, the case of the Eastern Churches' emphases on knowledge and the cosmic effect of the incarnation, with respect to the notion of salvation; while the West, on the other hand, tended to stress, if negatively, the Cross and the moral aspects of the teaching of the Church. This last point brings us to the main body of this section which falls into two parts, (i) and (ii); our discussions of them will be extremely concise.
The understanding of salvation in the Middle Ages derived essentially from its understanding in the fifth century Church of North Africa. This dependence appeared to have solidified as the bleakness and the sense of uncertainty consequent on the invasion of the Western Roman Empire (Rome fell in A.D. 410) by the Vandals fully came home to the Church. To this state of affairs, Augustinianism, with the City of God at its centre, was obviously the most effective antidote.

Thus at the threshold of the medieval period stands Augustine. However, Tertullian and Cyprian (200-258), both of Carthage as was Augustine, were his very important predecessors. These three saints had two things in common: a stress on morality/sin and a stress on the Church. Tertullian and Augustine are more known for the first while Cyprian and Augustine are more associated with the second. Tertullian lived at a time when the morality of the Church was being threatened by the influx of 'pagan' converts into 'her' fold. His joining of the Montanist movement was part of his protest against the low moral life of the Church. Cyprian on the other hand lived at a time of great crises for the Church, caused by the problem created by the Decian persecutions. The problem in question was that of reconciling those in the Church who obeyed the Decian edict (by offering sacrifices to 'pagan' deities or bribing their way out) to those who stood by the Church's principles; although in the case of many church members such heroism only confirmed Tertullian's observation that the blood of the saints was the seed of the Church (Apology, ch. L). The problem resolved itself in schism. Cyprian's answer to the schismatics was one of using the concept of the ark to limit the scope of salvation; in fact to deny them salvation, because one is only saved if one is inside the ark. The ark is, of course, Cyprian's catholic Church. This is a rigid conception but Cyprian decided to uphold it.

Augustine inherited the kind of troubles which agitated the mind of Cyprian, but he was too much a neoPlatonist to allow himself to be completely hedged in by Cyprian's concept of the ark. Thus, despite his later advocacy of the use of force to compel the Donatist 'schismatics' to enter the catholic fold he nevertheless held the doctrinal opinion that not all "the saved" were inside the Church; and that some who were inside the Church were not saved, after all; on the principle of predestination, of course.

This theme of predestination brings us to his teaching on sin and salvation. Two works, among others, are in our judgement important on this subject (from the perspective of the concept of sin) from St. Augustine through the medieval period to modern times. These are, N.P. Williams' *The Ideas of the Fall and Original Sin*[^42] and John Hick's *Evil and the God of Love*.[^43] Both works traced, in many respects, the same path. However, while Williams is more concerned with loosening, in fact rejecting the Augustinian hold on the West, with regard to the doctrine of Original Sin, Hick is probably more concerned with relieving man of the theodical charge of being responsible for the presence of sin and evil in the world created by God of love. F.R. Tennant's *The Origin and Propagation of Sin*[^44] is of course an important predecessor to the above two works.

What then is this Augustinian teaching which the Churches of Europe accepted with only little modification, and which the above-mentioned works have, it seems, effectively discredited? The core of that teaching is his view of mankind, dead, alive and yet to be born as a lump of sin,[^45] prior to salvation, of course. The corollary of this view of humanity

[^42]: Published by Longmans, Green & Co., London, 1927.
[^43]: In Fontana Paperbacks, 1979, originally published by Macmillan, London.
[^44]: Published by CUP, London, 1902.
is the equally stringent notion of massa damnata (Enchir. 8.26). This
implies the just damnation of humanity (i.e. Adam) because of its (his)
original sin against God (Enchir. 13:46). To Augustine's manner of thinking every individual was in the loin of Adam when that first man sinned; not in him in a passive sense but in an active willing participation in that dreadful sin (Enchir. 8:27). As a result everyone (babies, children, and adults) is guilty of that first sin against God (Enchir 9:30, 13:43).
To his mind the Church's practice of infant baptism is evidence that all have sinned; as such infants would equally go to hell if they die unbaptised (Enchir. 13:45, 46 and 47). The original sin is one thing, of course; here all have, without exception, sinned and consequently are guilty of it. While conscious adult sins are another thing, in many respects; here the sinner is merely though inexcusably, adding sins to the original sin (Enchir. 13:43).

Augustine insists that Adam was a perfect creature, and Paradise was the ideal place for him to do the good had he actually wanted to (Enchir. 14:48). To commit sin in that ideal setting makes its nature and magnitude all the greater (Enchir. 14:48). Augustine was therefore as much concerned to make it clear that God was not to blame for the sin and its consequences: Adam was free to obey God by concentrating on the Tree of Life. However, this freedom does not imply the inability to sin (non posse peccare) if he wanted to; but it implies the ability not to sin (posse non peccare) had he so desired (the inability to sin, in Augustine's perception of divine truths, is the liberty enjoyed only by the blessed in heaven). Unfortunately for humanity Adam turned away from God, in his selfishness, to commit the one sin which in analysis could be shown to include murder, spiritual fornication, theft and avarice, etc. (Enchir. 13:45). The consequence was the total ruin of the human race (massa damnata). To Augustine the perdition has been and is being perpetuated by the concupiscence inherent in sexual acts (Enchir. 10:34). It must be pointed out that the notion of concupiscence in his under-
standing of it, means a turning away from God for other things; but the full evil of concupiscence is, as it were, concentrated in the excitement accompanying sexual acts. Hence man's salvation lies in the sacrificial death of one born outside concupiscence, and one that is sinless - Jesus Christ (Enchir. 14: 48, 49, 50).

It was clear to Augustine that his emphasis on the freedom of Adam's will and action would appear to make him too autonomous from his Creator. This would impair God's providence; so to restore Him to the position of overall responsibility he resorted to an equally strong, if theodical, emphasis on the grace of God. This naturally led to his doctrine of predestination. Thus his emphasis on the doctrine of grace makes it clear that it is God who in a sort of progressive action begins and completes the salvation of the individual (Enchir. 9:32).

The Augustinian predestination, which is by all accounts tentative if compared with that of the Reformers, is necessary to theodicy. For it is necessary, perhaps only to theodicy, to claim that God deliberately predestined a certain number of people to fill out the ranks of the fallen angels (Enchir. 8:29; City of God, Bk. XXII, 1). The rest of the unsaved (i.e. unpredestined) humanity should be damned. There is no need protesting against this seemingly arbitrary action on the part of God. All that one needs to do is continue to see things in the context of God's grace. Thus it is only a loving God who, in spite of his justice, could even save that number (fixed by the number of fallen angels) considering that man chose his fate by his original sin, in spite of God's clear advice to the contrary (Enchir. 9:27). With this note of God's justice and grace we end this part (i).

(ii) The Western Church and the Augustinian teaching on sin and salvation: It is probably helpful to preface this section with some critical comments on the above Augustinian views on sin and salvation. We have argued in the Old Testament section of the present study that the Genesis account of the Fall belongs more to the ankhological view of the world
than to anything else. Consequently it could not be susceptible to the kind of literal interpretation accorded it by Augustine. Augustine operates, of course, with the nousological view of the world. And we must never forget that the nousological (view of) meaning is that view of the world which equates what is ultimately meaningful with the Mind - a metaphysical 'reality' viewed as the goal of contemplation and of phenomena. Hence nousology has a long history of encouraging contemplation and theology while somehow detesting the world and man. Thus the universal-istic concept of mankind as a lump of sin while belonging to the context of the nousological standpoint is obviously not an ankholological notion. For while the former is at home in the world of the universals and metaphysics the latter is more at home in the realm of history and phenomena, in which God is encountered as life.

Thus throughout the Old Testament, the inter-Testamental and the New Testament periods the Genesis account of the Fall was never understood in the way Augustine (and later the Western Church) came to understand it. Nor was the Fall account ever taken, in these periods, as the only explanation of why men sin or die, or as to why there is evil in the world.

There were other contenders. The notion of רזר הרא (i.e. evil imagination) was one of them; although the Adam story (cf. Gen. 3) had won the ground by the time of Paul. Hence he was in a position to emphasise the first Adam motif to an audience that understood not only the ankholological context of the story but also the predominance of the Genesis 3

47. It must be remembered that the majority of the readers of the Pauline letters came to Christianity from a synagogue background.
48. The basic ankholological context of the Old and New Testaments meant that the eventual triumph of the Gen. 3 story (note our interpretation of the text in Chapter Three above) was in a sense a foregone conclusion. However, the idea of triumph with regards to Gen. 3 story needs to be made clearer: (a) the probably older OT material of Genesis 6: 1-6 seems to have been the earlier explanation of why God destroyed the world through the flood. This is the rather theological story of the fallen angels (the Watcher) who introduced troubles into the world. This Watcher story (1 Enoch) was used to (continued on next page)
account; even though the Gospel accounts are not clear on whether Jesus
did or did not teach the first-second Adam doctrine in its Pauline sense.
However, Paul was never an Augustinian before Augustine in this matter.

At any rate Augustinianism in all its aspects (its concepts of sin,
salvation, grace, the Church, etc.) was the basis of the structure of
medieval (in fact Western) theology. However, Augustinianism was not
accepted without some protests against its view of man, grace and sin.
This is where Pelagius and his followers come into the picture. Without
even attempting to enter into the details of the conflicts between Augustine
and Pelagius (a conflict which in fact compelled Augustine to develop
his doctrine of grace in the same way that Donatism compelled him to de­
velop his doctrine of the Church) we may say at once that Pelagius’ doc­
trinal position is almost the antithesis of Augustinianism. He rejects
the view of humanity as a lump of sin. He was concerned to stress the
freedom of each individual to obey the laws of God. And he believes that
every one has the power (posse) to do so, if he or she is willing (velle)
to obey them; that is, determined to realise (esse) that willing. As a
moralist his position is a natural option, which is maintained almost at
the expense of the grace of God. That is its major weakness.

However, Pelagianism was condemned by the Council of Carthage (418)
and by the second Council of Orange (529) in favour of Augustinianism.
Although in practice (as opposed to the wholehearted acceptance of the
Augustinian theory) the medieval Church was largely semi-Pelagian. Hence
she presented the Reformers with the stick of "work righteousness" with
which they mercilessly beat her.

This triumph of the Augustinian definition of sin and salvation was

48. (continued from previous page)

explain the issues of sin, suffering and death. (b) then there was
the doctrine of evil imagination (Gen. 6:5) which does not carry the
idea of the "Fall", although, to the Rabbin, it explains the origin
of sin. (c) finally the Gen. 3 Adam story which has become predomi­
ant in 11 Esdras (c.A.D.100).
not given any serious critical, if systematic, re-examination before Aquinas' discussion of the issue. Instead the place of the Church as a sacred place in a terribly sinful and profane world was stressed. (Needless to say that in the Middle Ages the sacred and the profane, if by that we understand what is Christian and what is not Christian, obtained inside and outside the Church in a sort of intertwined partnership.) Consequently the doctrines of hell and heaven were seen more or less as tangible realities. These in turn could not fail to contribute to the extreme development of many originally simple sacraments (e.g. the Mass) and the system of penance (e.g. the indulgences). Between the gulf created by the unmitigated emphasis on heaven on the one hand and on hell on the other obtained the equally strong stress on monasticism and on mysticism. Certainly mysticism (although one of the important tenets of the nousological meaning) is also one of the possible ways of diffusing the tension and anxiety necessarily engendered by the overpowering emphases on heaven and hell. For the immediate and direct "union" with the Divine, obtained in the mystical experience, obviously belongs in a category of its own, considering the eschatological nature of the doctrines of heaven and hell.

It was Aquinas who made a serious effort to restate Augustinianism. Thus Anselm's satisfaction theory was never conceived as an alternative to Augustine's position on sin and salvation. Neither was Abelard's


52. John Scotus Eriigena is an exception here, because of his neoplatonic understanding of hell; thus following the standpoint of Dionysius the Aeropagite on the matter.

53. Anselm's Cur Deus Homo (in S.N. Dean,op.cit.) assumed Augustinianism and went on to develop "satisfaction theory"; see especially chapters XI-XV. Although the satisfaction theory effectively replaced the hitherto accepted "ransom theory".
rather liberal view of Christ as our Teacher and Example anything much
less than an idea born before its time (his satisfaction theory was con­
demned at Sens in 1140); it was really never a threat to the position of
Augustinianism. Aquinas belonged to the Dominican Order. The sympathy
of the Order lay with Augustine. Duns Scotus was a Franciscan. The
sympathy of his Order tended towards Pelagianism, although never at the
expense of Augustinianism. But we are here concerned with Aquinas' teach­
ing (which we will only touch upon) and not with that of Dons Scotus.
Aquinas' major contribution (to Augustine's teaching!) is his emphasis
on the concepts of "natural" and "supernatural", with reference to the
Genesis account of the Fall. To be sure, Augustine had also understood
that passage in Genesis in the light of the concepts of "nature" and
"grace"; antithetically too. But, and this is where the major difference
between both men lies, while to Augustine Adam fell from the height of
perfection to a total damnation which, in its magnitude, spelt massa
damnata for the whole of mankind to Aquinas the fall was from the super­
natural state to the natural state. The latter, in Aquinas' understanding,
is the normal state in which God in his goodness created man; a distinct
act from that of his being created with the gift of supernatural grace.
The latter was a kind of promotional gift, which God added to Adam, as it
were, when he was created. It was this important factor which placed him
in the state of original righteousness. Had he continued in that super­
natural state of justice to contemplate the Divine (i.e. the beatific
vision) he would have gone to be with God without having to go through
death (that is to say, physical dissolution). However, he fell; he fell
from the supernatural state to the natural state. In other words he lost
the gift of the supernatural state. This means that what constitutes
original sin is the loss of the gift of original righteousness.

Aquinas' teaching represents the scholastic theory of congruent
merit and condign merit. The first was what a man attained by what he
did in his own strength. This prepares him for the reception of God's
once it is seen as the criterion of Christian theology. And it is only then that African Christian theology will possess and be able to impart the kind of self-confidence and originality of action which are indispensable to spiritual and material (both are inseparable in genuine Christian theology) progress; and to a diversification of interests in society; rather than seeing in economic wealth the only factor that can fulfil human life. We may now end on the note rightly attributed to the Master:

"I come that they may have life, and have it abundantly"

(Jn. 10:10)
CHAPTER SEVEN

THE END OF AN ERA

1. Protestantism and the Old Order:

It may have been observed, with respect to the preceding chapter, that our emphasis has fallen on the Augustinian doctrines of sin, salvation and the Church; the latter was/is the means of dispensing salvation. The emphases (on those factors) are important because the meaning of the Reformers' attack on such beliefs as indulgences, the doctrine of the Mass, devotion to the saints, veneration of images and relics, pilgrimages, the doctrine of merits, etc. will be lost on us if we fail to understand and take seriously the centrality of Augustinianism to both the medieval and the Reformation interpretations of Christianity. We also indicated in that chapter that Augustinianism remained strong throughout the medieval period, in spite of the semi-Pelagian and the Thomist modifications. This semi-Pelagian/Thomist antithesis, which projected the idea that man can will and actualise meritorious actions was, in essence, what Protestantism vehemently rejected in favour of the Augustinian thesis which emphasised the will and the grace of God.

These clarifications are partly intended to remind us that the greatest temptation which we must guard against in the study of the Roman Catholic and Protestant positions is that of thinking that the old completely disappeared from the new or that the new was never in the old. This is a timely warning because the common error among Western scholars in this field is that of viewing the 'old order' and the 'new order' in terms of black and white. Thus it is usually said by the Protestant camp that the medieval Church was totally corrupt; and to the extent this corruption thesis is emphasised the Protestant innovations are justified and
glorified. We are not, of course, saying for one moment that the medieval Church was not corrupt. That it was corrupt in "Head and Members" was already accepted by many since the later part of the Middle Ages. Heretics, mystics and writers - traditionalists and humanists - all proclaimed it. The Reforming Councils also proclaimed it. On the other hand those in the Roman Catholic camp usually speak of the Reformation as if it is a terribly unChristian innovation engineered by the Devil to cause a "rift in the body of Christ". The strength of this line of thought is usually sustained by ignoring the following factors: (a) the fact that Christianity in the earliest period of the Church is represented by numerous and independently organised local Churches (cf. W. Bauer, op.cit.), (b) the fact that the later imposition of catholicity did not prevent schisms, which resolved themselves into the Monophysite, Greek Orthodox, and Roman Catholic traditions; to name the best-known ones. And all these divisions were already there centuries before the Reformation. The point we are concerned to make is that Protestantism is primarily a reformation rather than an innovation. And that the deeper area of continuity is the nous-logical (view of) meaning in which the Augustinian doctrines were packaged and delivered. We emphasised the nousological claim because it is an important factor in our understanding of the Protestant charge of corruption (against the old order) and of the Roman Catholic persecution of the heretics.

On the question of corruption one notes the tyranny of the ecclesiastical laws, especially with respect to the often enforced collection of the obligatory tithes from many who could not even afford to maintain their own living; the common practice of symony and concubinage among the clergy; the secular, political and religious pomp of the popes and the clergy in general; and the many other abuses (e.g. indulgences) consequent on the corruption of the ecclesiastical authorities. This corruption appeared to have reached its height in the Great Schism (1378-1417)
with its rival Popes.

However, we must point out that corruption, in our opinion, was not the only reason why the spirit demanding reforms became very strong in the fifteenth and in the sixteenth centuries - the age of the Reforming Councils (1409-1449) and of the Renaissance (1400-1600). The fundamental issue of (view of) meaning could hardly fail to stand at the heart of that quest for reforms. Therefore the question that arises is: Had some segments in the society of the later part of the Middle Ages been induced by one reason or the other to raise serious questions over the validity or the continuing validity of the obviously overstretched, at least theologically, nousological perception of meaning. We must remember that we suggested earlier on that there was a possibility of this kind of question arising from the probability that many in the West might not have been really nousologists at heart; or that we are in the "quest" already encountering the beginnings of the phenomenon of the retreat from the theologico-soteriological view of meaning (i.e. its sacred view) to the secular view of it (i.e. the profane view); or that some older European meanings, with particular reference to northern Europeans, long marginalized by the successful entrance of the nousological standpoint (a success much helped by the turbulences and the uncertainties consequent on the Vandal invasions and occupations) were at last trying to regain their lost positions.

It seems to us that the protest against corruption is also, at least partly, (a) a protest against the semi-Pelagian watering down of the Augustinian (nousologically conceived) doctrines; this is the form the protests of the Magisterial Reformers took; (b) a protest or rather 'rejection' of the Augustinian nousologically defined anthropology; this is at least the position of the Christian humanists and Radical Reformers;

1. M. Eliade's The Sacred and the Profane (already referred to) is more or less an 'apologetic' for the former, cf. pp. 201-213 of the work.
(c) the questioning or rejection of the central features of the Augustinian theology, anthropology and soteriology; this is what some of the "heresies" did, often with their dualistic (note the Persian interpretation) reinterpretation of the traditional theology. Hence the heretics\(^2\) were not basically persecuted (the persecutions went on for centuries against some groups) because of their protestations against the generally admitted corruption of the Church, or because of nationalistic feelings on their part. They were basically persecuted because of their questioning or rejection (in favour of their own "heretical teachings") of such doctrines as the Trinity, original sin, transubstantiation, etc. In fact protestation against ecclesiastical abuses did not in itself constitute heresy; while a denial of the central doctrines, which resulted from the controversies of the fourth and the fifth centuries did. Was it not the Council of Constance which convened to end the Great Schism and to decide on the method of reforms which found it necessary to send John Huss (1360-1415) to the stake amid cries of "Recant, recant!" The heresies, at least some of them, did constitute therefore an unconscious questioning of the nousological perception of meaning which informed the Church and the world around her; while their persecution by the traditional protagonists did constitute an unconscious defence of nousologism.

This conclusion does not, of course, imply that such unconscious questioning actually grasped that the nousological structure of the Church (with its theological and anthropological implications) was at the heart of the crisis. The notion of primary view of meaning, then as now, is not usually understood as the factor which determines the epistemological/doctrinal basis of cosmology - theology - anthropology. H.R. Rookmaaker is therefore right when he says (albeit in the context of art criticism) that,

"One is not normally concerned, when looking at pictures...to think in terms of world....Yet, we must realize that the naturalness, the full humanity of such pictures...is not just a chance product. It must be controlled by a true insight into reality, an insight that must have a deep foundation, one that really leads to the opening up of reality."\(^3\)

This problem in viewing lines, colours, space and form in a piece of art, seen as a matter of immediate experience isolated from and unrelated to the world, is also the kind of problem which is common in judging the theological and religious data: God is on his own, man is on his own, and doctrinal constructions are on their own. Our thesis of primary perception is vigorously saying no to this erroneous consideration of phenomena; while insisting at the same time that a primary revelation (or interpretation) of the world is the given factor which directs attitudes and expectations (existential and soteriological) under whose behest we move, live, and define our being. Thus being \textit{a priori} it naturally and easily tends to escape our immediate \textit{a posteriori} concerns; hence the atomistic view of theology.

We have already indicated that humanism (in its origins) is a questioning of the traditional anthropology, taught by Christendom; and that the Magisterial wing of the Reformation is the conscious rejection of the semi-Pelagian antithesis (to Augustinianism). We will now concisely examine the nature of Protestant theology, and the emergence of humanism; with the aim of clarifying the points about "questioning" and "rejection".

(i) Protestant theology: The main basis of Protestant theology may be said to derive from two answers which Luther gave to two very important questions: (a) Is human will free? (b) How is one saved? The questions also make it clear that the theological controversy between the Protestants and the Catholics centred around the Augustinian anthropology; and it must also be added that the humanist dissent also took off from this Augustinian view of man, as will be made clear later. Luther's answer to

the first question is given in the title as in the body of his greatest theological work: The Bondage of the Will, written as a reply to The Diatribe of Desiderus Erasmus (1476-1536). The latter work is Erasmus' attempt to distance himself from what he considered Luther's theological excesses. Erasmus was a Christian humanist who like other humanists had come to distrust the imposing sacramental edifice of the Church, desiring instead a kind of simplification that would restore the simple faith of the earliest Christianity. But as a humanist he also distrusts Luther's iron-clad anthropology which denies any freedom of action to the human will. The Diatribe appeared on September 1, 1524, and the Bondage of the Will was published on December 25, 1525. The tone of the latter is strongly uncompromising.

Luther's reply to the second question is that justification is by faith alone (the *sola fide*). The unscriptural idea of "the bondage of the will" derives its meaning and force from the context of the teachings of Augustine, Pelagius and Aquinas. Nevertheless, the idea takes Luther, past the Middle Ages and its semi-Pelagianism, back to Augustine. But St. Augustine had maintained that human will is free, thus somehow refusing to leave his doctrine of grace and predestination untethered. Luther could not afford this luxury in the midst of the waves of opposition coming against him from both the humanists and the Catholic supporters. Hence the twin notions of "the bondage of the will" and "total depravity" were used to remove the Augustinian tether and any Catholic concessions to the Pelagian doctrine of the freedom of the will. In rejecting Pelagianism and semi-Pelagianism Luther had also rejected, by implication, the positions of the extreme and the moderate humanists. The consequences were the uncompromising emphases on the bondage of the will, total depravity, predestination, the grace of God (*sola gratia*), and justification.

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4. The idea of *sola fide* is fully stated in *The Bondage of the Will*, of course, and in *Christian Liberty*. 
by faith alone. These meant that he threw overboard the traditional Thomist distinctions between congruent merit (meritum de congruo) and condign merit (meritum de condigno). The first is the merit which a man attains by his own effort in spiritual matters. This in turn prepares him for the reception of the gift of internal grace. Once this grace is received God is then bound to reward the merits (condign merit) flowing from actions performed in that state of grace. On the whole this distinction aims at making man a co-worker with God, with regard to his salvation. The duty is, as it were, shared between man and his Maker. The danger here is that man would tend to forget the grace of God and consider his actions as the cause of his righteousness and his salvation. The medieval Church certainly fell into this trap even while sitting on the chair of Augustinian theories of sin and salvation. Hence the sacramental and the penitential systems were viewed as the effectors of salvation; hence also the Reformers levelled the charge of "work righteousness" on the Catholic position.

However, Luther's doctrines were not accepted without qualification by every Reformer. Calvin certainly accepted them and, being concerned with clarity of expression, law and order, made them more rigid as is clear from his Institutes of the Christian Religion. He obviously did not believe in mitigating the Protestant position on the questions of total depravity, bondage of the will, and the Divine predestination of the lost and the saved. Nor did he see any point in withholding some of his blunt expressions of them. On the other hand, Zwingli, who received a humanist education (as opposed to Luther's more nominalist


training) did not share this rigid approach to the questions; and he emphatically rejected the idea of consubstantiation, which Luther insisted upon. At any rate all three laid emphases on "Predestination and election". 7

A more pronounced swing away from the original Lutheran doctrines came from the wing of the so-called Radicals. It appears that the farther away any group within this division moved from the Augustinian anthropology (and theology), which Luther and Calvin refurbished and strengthened, to that extent it was considered heretical. The accusations commonly brought against the Radicals was that of semi-Pelagianism and work-righteousness. At the heart of these accusations is their rejection of Augustine's idea that humanity is a "lump of sin"; an idea repeated by the so-called Magisterial Reformers with their doctrine of total depravity. This rejection is made manifest in their abandonment of infant baptism; hence the description, "Anabaptists". 8 They were at various times attended by grave persecutions.

Protestantism appeared to be an inevitable movement. It is obvious that the medieval Church, informed by the preposterous 9 Augustinian view of mankind as a lump of sin, was bound to create oppositions sooner or later because of its extremely negative, though theodical, view of mankind. A Church inspired by such bad anthropology could naturally see nothing wrong in burning and hanging "thousands" of people - bearers of life - over centuries. But the nousological standpoint, which defends the invisible at the expense of the visible, the metaphysical at the cost of the physical, the supernatural at the expense of the natural, was by

9. In defence of Augustine we must say that he is probably concerned to point out the dreadful, if universal reality of sin and evil in the world and in man (what Paul Tillich calls "the structure of evil" - The Protestant Era, London, 1951, p.xxxvi); but it is totally inadequate to account for these demonic forces of destruction in terms of humanity as "a lump of sin". This is an error, which stemmed from the nousological standpoint.
now so entrenched that some wings of the Reformation movement not only adhered to, but also refurbished, that anthropology. Thus the nousological basis of perceiving the Christian faith remained. Luther had rediscovered the Scriptures (that is, other than the Vulgate - the medieval Church's Scriptures), he had discovered Paul, but he did not discover the primarily ankholological basis of the Scriptures. It is therefore inevitable that scholasticism had to re-emerge within the orthodox Protestant camp, in spite of the Reformation. And the eighteenth-century revival movement which sought to rediscover the original Reformation faith did not "rediscover" it without its basic nousological underpinning. Nor did the missionaries (inspired by the revival doctrines) who went into "the mission fields" do so with a Christian anthropology and theology different from that held by the Revivalists, the Reformers and the Catholic counter-reformation. If the "missionary Church" is a "Church with no theology" it is because the doctrines are largely assumed but less articulated; they are certainly too nousological to become amenable to such articulation.

(ii) Humanism: Commenting on the modern understanding of the term, humanism (in his Introduction to Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary) Theodore Besterman speaks of "the now fashionable 'humanism', a word as vague as it is ambiguous". We wholly agree with his judgement. The confusion often stems from the frequently incomplete accounts of the religious context of the rise of the term. The tendency neatly to separate the scientific spirit from the religious spirit and to identify


11. We do not deal further with the history of the Reformation, which is actually the context of its theology. However, see, in addition to the works already referred to, especially G. R. Elton, Reformation Europe (Fontana, UK, 1963); A. G. Dickens, The German Nation and Martin Luther (London, 1974); Owen Chadwick, The Reformation (Penguin Bks., 1972); G. Ebeling, Luther (Fontana, UK, 1972); B. L. Woolf (tr.). Reformation Writings by Martin Luther (London, 1937); H. Bainton, Erasmus of Christendom (Fontana, UK, 1972); and H. Nickerson, The Loss of Unity (London, 1961).


13. On this separation, see Ian Barra, The Italian Renaissance (New (continued on next page)
the 'birth' of scientific spirit with the birth of humanism has led to the secularisation of the concept of humanism to a degree that has only served to introduce confusion into its essential meaning.

Obviously humanism is a reaction (an 'anthropodical' reaction), from within the milieu of the Renaissance movement, against the theodically stringent theology of the later Middle Ages. However, the reaction still obtained within a religious context; the modern separation of the sacred from the secular was unknown at the time. This does not, of course, imply that there were no humanists in the later Middle Ages who were decidedly anti-Christian, but it does mean that the majority of the humanists then were decidedly Christian. The anthropology of the medieval theology was Augustinian, in spite of semi-Pelagianism and Thomism; to that extent humanism could be seen as a rejection of the Augustinian negative view of man as a lump of sin.

Humanism as a movement was preceded by the revival of learning in twelfth-century Europe. Revival of learning on the other hand happened within the period of the Crusades (1095-1270) - a period of greater contact with the East. It is also a period when the Arabic and Jewish philosophers were exerting immense influence on the Middle Ages. The Renaissance as humanism was on the whole patronised by the Church, probably because they operated on the periphery. However, there was, undeniably, a secular dimension to humanism as a movement; but it cannot at this period in time be realistically defined as a secular movement. Although E.W. Hunt rightly defines humanism as,

"'The civilizing and refining influence of polite letters and of liberal arts.' The aim of the Renaissance Humanists was to 'disinter the buried classics, to restore a lost means of culture, to recapture an ancient charm of style, and a broader humanity of spirit'; to recover what they

13. (continued from previous page) York, 1980 pp.7-8; H.R. Kookmaaker, op.cit. p.27; on the definition of humanism, see E.W. Hunt, Dean Colet and His Theology (London, 1956) pp. 1-2; on their role in the Reformation movement cf. A.G. Dickens, op.cit., pp.21-71.

called litterae humanae or litterae humaniores, the Humanities, the language and literature of ancient Greece and Rome...the movement began in earnest in fourteenth-century Italy...the first of the pioneers was Petrarch (1304-74)." 15

But as we have pointed out it can only be properly understood as a movement of reaction within Christendom; a movement caught between the claims of dogma and the claims of humanity. Thus the area of conflict between medieval theology and humanism was not on whether God is or is not; not on whether He is loving or is not loving, etc. On these points medieval theology and humanism were agreed. The real issue was, what kind of man is man? If he is the kind of man defined by Augustinianism and the (Western) Church then mankind (with the exception of the predestined few) is an abandoned creation. In this case the standing of theology was bound to be affected. This implication of God in the question of, what kind of man is man? is clearly a recipe for confusion. It led to differing attitudes to man and to God in the camp of the humanists.

This state of affairs is, in our opinion, seen clearer in the attitudes of some of the personalities involved with the Reformation. Melanchthon, for instance was a humanist who took his stand on the Augustinian anthropology, and so rejected the ancient Greek definition of man as a "measure of all things". The more pronounced non-christian humanists appeared to have operated on the assumption of the ancient Greek definition. Men like Erasmus (cautious as ever) obviously rejected the Greek anthropocentric view of man but were at the same time not prepared to go along with Luther's (or the Magisterial Reformers') "total depravity" definition. On the other hand there were some, especially the Radical Reformers, who had a "more balanced anthropology" and so could accept neither the total depravity definition nor the ancient Greek anthropocentrism.

In concluding this section we may say that the Reformers' stand on

the Scriptures was undeniably a stand on a source informed by the ankho-
logical (view of) meaning. But it is equally obvious that the nousological,
if negative view of man was to remain largely the given basis for the Magis-
terial wing of the Reformation. And to a lesser degree also for the Radical
wing. It is also the case that within the world of the christian and the
non-christian humanists obtained the attitudes to man, God and the world
which soon 'flowered' into such movements and articulated opinions as
puritanism, rationalism, empiricism, romanticism, liberalism and to the
secular and the sacred view of the world. This in turn would lead to the
tendency to banish the divine from human life, despite the fact that God is
life. However, the rise of the humanist objection to the Augustinian anthrop-
ology is undeniably a move in the ankholo- 
gical direction. Thus the Refor-
mation is in many respects a move in the same direction. But anthropocent-
rism at the expense of God or theocentrism at the expense of man has been
rejected throughout this study, and we want to underline that rejection at
this juncture. We took this theological position on the basis of a convic-
tion that the ankholo- 
gical message of the bible is that man is made in the
image of God, that he is holy and sinful, and that he is bound and yet free.
These principles appear to underlie the ministry of Jesus; hence Christianity
must be christocentric. To this extent the lump of sin-total depravity-
predestination mode of thought is one we cannot accept. This basic position
needs to be borne in mind as we proceed to the rest of this chapter.

2. The Secular Society and Theological Confusion:

The title of this section reflects more obviously the socio-religious
environment of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, with respect to
the Western world, than that of the eighteenth and seventeenth centuries.
In fact it is more true to say that it is a situation more clearly observed
in the second half of the twentieth century than at any other time. Thus
the title is more or less a sounding to the effect that the highly complex
and immensely creative period (theologically and otherwise) between the
Reformation and most recent times could only be dealt with in outline. This handicap implies, of course, that many questions in the period must remain unraised; and many of those raised cannot be given the desired elaboration. However, the brief treatment given should tolerably, we hope, serve our ultimate intention to point out that the changes created by scientific progress (in the West) in the last four hundred and fifty years have led to radical shifts in the perception of the nousological basis of Western Christian theology, towards secularism. And it may be said at once that modern secularism essentially stands for a radical questioning of the nousological (view of) meaning. Hence it is also a period of theological confusion. The reasons for this judgement will become more evident before the end of this chapter.

It may be recalled that there are three stages in our account of the principle of primary interpretation, with regard to cosmology and religious-system. Stage one is that moment when the existentially threatening world (or the ununderstood world) is given sense (or interpreted); we have also insisted that this process by which the world (and by implication man and God) received its meaning could also be the process through which God revealed Himself. It is certainly our insistence that the biblical perception of meaning is a divine revelation given through the process. Stage two is that of cosmology; that is to say, that stage in which the principle of primary interpretation (e.g. Life, Void, or Mind) becomes the basis of the cosmologisation of the world. This is the stage we regarded hitherto as one of secularism; only in the sense that secularism is not (yet) a religious system. The third stage is (the stage) when the principle of primary interpretation has become the kernel of a religious system, and thus the object of theology. (The precedence of secularism and cosmology is perhaps obvious; the 'chaotic' universe was there before the emergence of man, Adam.) Consequently a retreat from stage three to two is a move from the sacred to a cosmologico-secular existence. While a further move from this position to the very rejection of the given principle itself is merely a sign that
a shift has been made from one (view of) meaning to another; in the
twentieth-century case, a shift from cosmologico-secularism to modern
scientific-secularism. The above recapitulation is meant to recall the
discussions of Part One so as to prepare us for the understanding of
twentieth-century Western Christian theology which has been grappling
with a secular world informed by the Einsteinian relativity factor.

The Reformation movement was followed by the movement of Rationalism.
The term, "movement" in the case of rationalism, may be misleading; be­
cause rationalism as a term simply describes the nature of the activities
of certain writers who wrote at different times particularly between the
time of the Reformation and the end of the eighteenth century. Perhaps
the clearest description of rationalism is "Freethought". The latter is
often used interchangeably with the term, rationalism. G.W. Foote and
C.Watts define freethought as,

"The right to think freely, to attempt the discovery of
truth...unimpeded by any restrictions, and to announce
the result of...investigations without respect to the
wishes of temporal or spiritual rulers.... For freedom
of thought is the indispensable preliminary to intel­
lectual progress."\(^{16}\)

Rationalism is therefore an obvious rejection of the dogmatic claims of
the Church on the basis of exclusive revelation. The authority of reason
alone could, of course, be exaggerated\(^{17}\) to the point of weakness. But
no one could reasonably dispute the fact that the activities of the ration­
alists contributed immensely to rid Christendom of much of its superstit­
ions; especially that of witchcraft which Aquinas, Luther, John Wesley,
etc. all believed in. Rationalism belongs, of course, to the history of
humanism, and the latter was only an aspect of the Renaissance movement.
From the beginning a current of thought within this movement seemed to be
saying: the natural we (can) know, phenomena we (can) know, but, super­

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\(^{16}\) Cf. G.W.Foote and Charles Watts, Heroes and Martyrs of Freethought

\(^{17}\) Feuerbach seems to me to have done this in giving an all-pervading
role to man's reason in his The Essence of Christianity.
naturalism - who or what are you? This spirit is the spirit of scientific quest for the knowledge of and control of nature.

The coming of the spirit of natural and scientific studies to the fore in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries soon led not only to the birth of new ideas but also to the alteration or abandonment of the old ones. There was the Romantic movement with its emphasis on "the emotion of sympathy". What is important to note about the movement is that it was generally concerned with rejecting much of the easy assumptions of the ethical and moral ideas handed down by past generations. Jean-Jacques Rousseau set the tone of this Romantic protest when he said in the opening statement of the opening chapter of The Social Contract that,

"Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains. Those who think themselves the masters of others are indeed greater slaves than they. How did this transformation come about? I do not know. How can it be made legitimate? That question I can answer."^{19}

The process of answering that question was explicitly one of finding ways (note the French Revolution) of "liberating" man "shackled by" the ethical, moral, political, religious, and social complexities of eighteenth-century Europe. The effect of the movement went beyond that century, of course.

Then there was the slow but steady transition from the conception of the nature of philosophy as metaphysical and its project as that of discovering the nature of ultimate reality to the conception of its nature as positivistic and empirical, and its task as that of linguistic analysis. Some of the important names on the way to the present state of philosophy are those of Rene Descartes (1596-1650), John Locke (1632-1704), David Hume (1711-1776), Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), Bertrand Russell, L. Wittgenstein, and A.J. Ayer. Every one of them opposed in one form or the other the Church's traditional view of metaphysical truth and tradition, through his writings.

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There was the transition from the conception of the role of art as that of dealing with sacred imageries to what is today generally called "modern art". The origin of modern art is usually dated from the work of Paul Cézanne (1839-1906).\(^\text{20}\) In his time art is already defined as "an ever-living question, asked of the visible world by the visual sense".\(^\text{21}\)

It was the renaissance art which started the ripples which have now settled at this edge of "the visible world". It must, however, be said that renaissance art, in spite of the naturalistic influences exerted on it by ancient classical art, operated not only under the patronage of the Church but also mainly with the sacred imageries provided by Christendom. Whatever contrary ideas they put forward they mainly did so through those imageries. What ought to be noted, again, with regard to the relationship of modern art and the renaissance art, is that both opposed Christendom's religious and doctrinal views of art with imageries, ideas and concepts often drawn from outside its sphere. It is in this connection therefore that the tremendous impact of African art forms (with particular reference to carving, music, and the philosophy informing them) on modern art needs to be evaluated.\(^\text{22}\)

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\(^{20} 20.\) Cf. Herbert Read, op.cit., p.12ff.

\(^{21} 21.\) Cf. H. Read, ibid., p.12.

\(^{22} 22.\) On art and European Christianity the following needs to be noted in addition to what is said above: Christianity was born without images and paintings because the Decalogue forbids them (Ex. 2:4). However, the Early Church soon adopted the pagan art forms to express its own beliefs (cf. G. Michael, The Origins of Christian Art, London, 1973). This christianisation of art, which in turn frowned upon pagan art, remained unbroken until the Renaissance art went back to the classical pagan art for inspiration (cf. Lecky, op.cit., vol. 1, pp.69-94; D. Whittle, op.cit., pp.1-22). However, the Renaissance art was still the art of Christendom. Modern art is characterised by its rejection of the metaphysical and the supernatural. Within its perimeter there are the expressions of romanticism, of existentialism, of outrage against reason (e.g. surrealism) and of despair. There is the influence of African art; Cubism was one of the main benefactors; the name of Picasso is important here. African art forms are largely abstract in nature, in the sense that they rarely contained natural works. Here man is ugly, disproportioned, imbalanced, suffering and 'flowing' out in all sorts of directions: now with the head of a bird or a dog, now with the body of a reptile or a tree; he is close to nature. But he is a happy man, and optimistic in the midst of his predicament; he affirms life in the midst of death. On the whole Cubism and some

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However, it was the impact of the scientific spirit, with particular regard to Copernicus, Newton, Darwin and Einstein which appeared to have agitated the settled world of the Church. The theories of these men, proved or unproved, clearly affected the Church's theological definition of the nature of the world, the nature of God and the nature of man. They spelt crisis in the very area where it disturbs most: the Church's understanding of salvation. This is because the threats often appeared to be posed against God or against man. What ought to be recalled at this juncture is the inter-relatedness of the nature of God, the (derived) nature of man, and the nature of salvation. Man's idea of God is bound up with his idea of the meaning of the world; they are packaged together. Thus it is not really the existence of evil in the world which rendered a belief in the traditional God of Christendom problematic; what turned it into a problem was the fact that with Copernicus and Newton the possibility of a birth of a new, if irreligious, primary interpretation of the world began to threaten the nousological (view of) meaning, which had hitherto informed Western understanding of Christianity. What remained a threat with Copernicus and Newton (Darwin's effect is basically anthropological, and not cosmological, in nature) later became an actuality with the emergence of the theory of relativity. We will take up this matter again. Meanwhile let us undertake a short examination of the world of the father of modern theology, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768-1834).

the Reformation movement and formed part of its complex. However, it was able to separate out sufficiently in the eighteenth century to reconstitute itself into the Evangelical/Methodist revivals of that romantic age; the century of the romantic movement. Both may in a sense be said to be reacting also against the Newtonian mechanical universe. But the theology of the revivalists was more clearly set against the dull life of Protestant orthodoxy, which has with time waned in its original Reformation fervour. In an age when wealth was constantly flowing into Europe from the sugar plantations of the West Indies, when the Industrial Revolution was beginning to make itself felt in all sections of society, thus increasing the polarisation of social classes, the sins of mankind were bound to multiply.

Consequently the Evangelical movement and the Methodist movement formed more or less a two-pronged attack against those sins. The Evangelicals appealed mainly to the middle class, upwards; while the Methodist movement appealed in the main to the working class, upwards. The message of the revivalists was of the greatest simplification (and that is part of its strength): (1) emphasis on the sinfulness of humanity; (2) emphasis on the theme of "heavenly home" (as opposed to the "worldly home"); (3) emphasis on the idea that everyone needs a "new birth", and (4) emphasis on the belief that Jesus is the Saviour who will save any believing soul, now. The context of these factors is the Cross/blood theology. The reaction of the movement was generally against the world and its sins, against certain pursuits of life like art and drama, and against the dogmatic theology of Protestant orthodoxy. The question that may be asked is, where does Schleiermacher stand in all these? The answer may be multiple but the decisive one is that he fully recognised the

23. Cf. Eric Williams, op.cit., an excellent work on capitalism and slavery.
26. John Bunyan's Pilgrims Progress (Penguin Bks., 1965) is a classical illustration of the Evangelical attitude to the world in the eighteenth century, even though the two parts of the work were published in the second half of the seventeenth century.
importance of theology to the Church; and the need of that theology to address itself to the world (especially "the cultured world"). In his own words "piety is a state in which Knowing, Feeling, and Doing are all combined". Thus to him piety does not exclude the pious from participating in all creative and useful activities which other members of mankind participate in.

The world which Schleiermacher influenced profoundly is that of the nineteenth-century Europe. Before Schleiermacher the scientific spirit had theoretically and practically established itself; the Industrial Revolution had already started. Let us say at once, with regard to the effect of scientific results on the claims of theology, that our approach to the questions of the nineteenth/twentieth century theology does not in the least interest itself with taking sides in the often mud-slinging battle between the Evangelical and conservative theologians, on the one side, and the Liberal and neo-orthodox theologians on the other. (Neo-orthodoxy disagreed sharply with some aspects of liberalism, of course; see below.) In fact in our opinion, the charges and counter-charges, from both sides, appear to stem from an almost total ignorance of what actually happened to Western theology: In a controversy where there seems to be no clear grasp that a primary interpretation (or revelation) of the world is like a shepherd to the Christian flock (this applies also to all other religious systems) it is understandable that this kind of confusion would follow if the shepherd is taken away. The 'offender' in the controversy is in fact the modern scientific spirit; yet the latter should not be theologically over-blamed if we remind ourselves that the nous-logical meaning, upon which Western theology was based, had, in the first place marginalised all other European primary interpretations of the world. It is certainly not without reason that we feel that the ankholological anticipations in the works of the existentialist writers,

or in the works of people like Henri Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, etc. seem to us to hold some great promise for the future of theology in general; provided they succeed in drawing attention to the role the notion of life plays in the bible.

At any rate by Schleiermacher's time the scientific spirit has become pervasive. The Christian Faith was written from within this world. The work has cleverly over-stepped the conflict between orthodoxy on the one side and rationalism on the other. One of the impressions one gains in reading through this rather modern work is that the traditional theological concern for theodicy has gone. The strength of this innovation will only be fully appreciated when we consider that the bible does not know of the kind of preoccupation with defending God or protecting His honour which littered the history of theology. Instead in the bible God is worshipped, adored, reverenced, accused, charged, taken to court on the basis of the promises of the covenant, and pleaded with in earnest supplications. The complaint, "why hast thou forsaken me?" has indeed always been part of the structure of the relationship of Yahweh and his people. The overall impression given by the bible is that God is overwhelmingly too great, too powerful, all-knowing and holy as ever to be in need of the prop of a highly developed theodicy.

Central to The Christian Faith is the idea of religious consciousness and absolute dependence on God. Augustinianism, with regard to original sin, original righteousness and predestination, is rejected (pp.253-256, 325-326, 328, 329, 337). On the whole Schleiermacher has made man the starting point of his theology; and it is not difficult to notice that this basic factor was applied throughout the book as the basis for re-defining the accepted traditions of Protestant theological orthodoxy. In our judgement Schleiermacher has, in spite of the weaknesses in his position, rightly called the attention of Western Christian theology to the fact that man was never intended by God to be the victim of religion, but
its benefactor. However, he appears to have succeeded in doing that at some cost to the role of God, especially with regard to revelation. In his view, "every original idea which arises in the soul...may be regarded as revelation" (p.51); this is one of the weaknesses.

Schleiermacher had set the path for modern theology, partly at the behest of the scientific spirit; but Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel probably did more for the nineteenth century. He gave to it the idea of historical progress and, in reply to the pride of scientific spirit over its concern with the observable and the testable (the "natural philosophy") he asserted that the so-called (in his view) phenomena and noumena are no more than aspects of the Spirit (or Mind). This is the burden and the message of Phenomenology of Spirit (1807). It must be remembered that Kant had in his Critique of Pure Reason (1781) divorced the scientifically knowable phenomena from the scientifically unknowable noumena; Hegel's thesis is its rejection.

Hegel's influence was enormous in the nineteenth century. And it is not surprising that Schleiermacher should pay homage to him by speaking of "'All-One'" as the definition of the "nature-system" (p.173). However, it is true to say, on the matter of humanism, that the mantle passed from Schleiermacher to Ludwig Feuerbach (1804-1872), despite the fact that the latter studied under Hegel. In his The Essence of Christianity (1841) the impression is clearly given that man is God, and that God is man. In other words, there is a God, but it is man who created Him. What is central to the three men, however, is the term, consciousness. It is obvious that it is a quality of human experience. Hegel viewed it from the side of God (Mind) while Schleiermacher and Feuerbach viewed it from the side of man. It is this latter tradition of thinking about God from the side of man which remained a more permanent feature of the nineteenth-century liberal theology. And this factor must be taken seriously for a proper understanding of not only the Barthian theology but also the development of humanities in the century.
Leaving aside the question of the developments of the historical-critical study of the Scriptures in particular and of Christian tradition in general on the one side, and of comparative study of religion, sociology and anthropology, etc. on the other, we may note the dominating influence of Albrecht Ritschl (1829-1889). His influence lasted until Barth rejected nineteenth-century liberalism. Of Ritschl, R.A. Finlayson points out:

"Acutely aware of the dangers of over-subjectivism on the one hand, and of dependence upon philosophy and physical science on the other, Ritschl introduced his own theory of religious knowledge as based on what he called judgement of values. In doing this Ritschl was really setting up a dualism between judgement of knowledge and judgement of values, between the religious and the theoretical, not allowing the one to be influenced by the other. On this principle what was valid as religious knowledge was not necessarily valid on the plane of theoretical thinking."  

This quotation contains an example of what we have called the historical-critical approach to the Scriptures and Christian tradition. Ritschl was basically concerned with safeguarding the claims of theology in the light of the scientific spirit, and with rejecting the enormous appeal of the over-subjectivism of Hegel, Schleiermacher and Feuerbach.

We may now conclude the above discussion by saying that the liberal theology of the nineteenth century, which was decisively informed by humanism, science, and Darwin, in rejecting the Augustinian anthropology had tended to think, (a) that evil is part of the childhood of man which social, moral, and scientific progress would put right. The emphasis was disproportionately put on progress; (b) that revelation could be defined in terms of the evolutionary discovery of the divine; the initiative was understood to be on the part of man. And, as a result, (c) that Jesus was the greatest and the best man that ever lived; the greatest discoverer of God, as it were. That was the message of the lives of Jesus (cf. Renan, op.cit.).

The aversion of Karl Barth (1886-1968) to the above tendencies is such a strong feature of his writings that it tended to define the

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character of his immense and almost intimidatory theological output. Thus in his writings the sinfulness of man is emphasised\textsuperscript{29} in tones that recall the Reformation orthodoxy; the wholly otherness of God is stressed in extremes that not only prepared the ground for his doctrine of revelation but also contributed to the eventual declaration of the "death of God" by some theologians.

As far as Barth is concerned (we are presently more or less dealing with his doctrine of revelation) man cannot by searching find God; he rejects the claims of mysticism, of course. Such searching only ends in paganism; Barth would have no truck with the nineteenth-century Comparative Religion, which attributed a measure (below that of Christian religion, of course) of soteriological value to other religions. Barth's kind of theology, shared by Emil Brunner and others to some extent, is usually described as neo-orthodoxy because one meets in it the ideas and clichés of pre-nineteenth-century Protestant orthodoxy. However, neo-orthodoxy is on the whole an 'extreme' reaction against the nineteenth-century liberal theology. Yet it carried out its task with the tools fashioned by that liberal theology. But, an important point is that scientific progress had encouraged humanistic optimism in the eyes of the liberal theologians. While the First World War served to dampen that optimism, and thus provided the neo-orthodox theologians with a convincing platform from which to reject the theology erected on the foundation of an optimistic, if almost anthropocentric, view of man. However, scientific research operates on independent assumptions and consequently was not inhibited by that war. This brings us to the work of Einstein.

He was born in 1879, and died in 1955:

"In 1905, the obscure, 26-year-old patent-office examiner published four papers in a single volume of the German scientific journal, Annalen der Physik... One set forth his special theory on the relativity

of space and time. Another explained how the zigzag movement of particles in a liquid proved the reality of atoms. The third declared that light comes in discrete packages, or "quanta" of energy and not continuous waves - a perception that won him the Nobel Prize in physics in 1921.\(^{30}\)

His general theory of relativity, which extended the implications of the special theory, dates from 1915. Then in 1917 he published his paper on "Cosmological Consequences of the General Theory of Relativity" - a paper which served to bring the weight of his work on relativity to bear on scientific cosmological discussions. All these have the overall effect of raising questions as to the meaning of the world. In 1919 relativity became a proved theory after the observation at Recife showed the bending of starlight around the sun during the latter's eclipse. This proof left on the informed world an impact of cosmos-shaking proportion; old foundations, scientific or otherwise, were 'literally' removed. In the euphoria which followed, the theory was given both scientific and non-scientific elaborations.\(^{31}\)

However, we are concerned with the case of theology: Theological debates hardly, if consciously regarded this relativity question as an issue constituting an immediate problem to its concerns;\(^{32}\) one very seldom comes across theological works that mention the name of Einstein with the same constancy to which theological treatises subject Darwin. It can, of course, be argued that the theory of relativity is merely concerned with the questions of motion (and their observation), mass and energy in the universe. These are apparently, if deceptively, not theological issues.

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32. Process theology is obviously an exception to this charge. To be excepted also are series of works which may be described as merely dealing with science and religion; they usually either defend religion against science or science against religion. For instance, David Foster, The Intelligent Universe (London, 1975); S.L. Jaki, The End of Science and the Ways of God (Univ. of Chicago Press, 1978); A.R. Peacock (ed.) The Sciences and Theology in the Twentieth Century (Henley and London, 1981).
The truth of the matter is that the question of "the relativity of space and time" (more accurately, space-time) tends to give the false impression of being a remote scientific question of no immediate concern to faith. Yet Darwin's theory of evolution quickly dwindles into insignificance when we consider that the theory of relativity tended to come home to religious consciousness as a primary interpretation of the universe (Darwin's theory does not do this); hence it forced itself on the West's existential awareness of the world, because of its disturbance of the answers (in this case the nousological answer) already given to the question, "What is the meaning of life in the world given the fact of death?"

However, it must be said that within the first decade of this century a new primary interpretation of the world - relativity - was given in our own time. (The theory of relativity is, of course, the twentieth century culmination of the progress of scientific quest which began in earnest in the age of the Renaissance.) The speed with which it proceeded to effect the marginalisation of the nousological perception of meaning, upon which the Western (and Eastern) Christianity, theology, ethics, liturgy and sacred art were built, is a phenomenon of the twentieth century; aptly described in the midst of the consequent anxiety as "the death of God". Nietzsche was immediately declared a prophet: it was a time of great anxiety. Kierkegaard was also taken out of oblivion; it was obviously a time of fear and trembling when existence smells of nothing - as far as the reflective Christians were concerned. What is at stake is the centrality of the nousological view of meaning, of God, man and the nature of his salvation. Because the dominancy of the Einsteinian interpretation has given the impression to most educated Westerners that the notion of Mind or One (i.e. God) as the Ultimate Reality is now a useless piece of metaphysical logic.

In this crisis, concomitant with the process of peripheralising the
Deity of traditional theology Martin Buber's *I and Thou*[^33] and Rudolf Otto's *The Idea of the Holy*[^34] had a ready market precisely because of the strong element of mysticism in both works. However, as various responses are bound to be given to a single problem in moments of crisis 'solutions' other than mysticism were also propounded. Put in other words, the efforts of writers and theorists to deal with the theological, moral, social, ecclesiastical and existential problems raised for the Church-in-process-of-marginalisation were informed by many factors past and present; and were responding to variegated issues at once. For instance, to say that phenomenology of religion was playing the role of a "detached participant"[^35] in the crisis at hand does not mean that it is not at the same time effectively dealing with other religious questions.

In the propounded solutions (and we must be selective) we may first notice the prescription of the existentialists. Having come near to recognising that the concern of religion, or any other human activity for that matter, is not religion but life (note their concept of existence) they nevertheless tended to come up with a council of despair owing to their inability to advance beyond human life to its Divine source. Bultmann, on his part, had advocated a whole-scale demythologisation.[^36] This apparently included the abandonment of any attempt to cling on to the nousological (view of) meaning. It proved difficult for many who have not really come to terms with Einstein's world; this will soon become clear. Bonhoeffer went a step farther than Bultmann (in the sense that Bultmann did not address himself to a religionless society); he declared that the latter has not after all gone far enough, towards tackling the question of secularism:

"A few more words about religionlessness: I expect you remember Bultmann's essay on the demythologizing of the New Testament? My view of it today would be, not that he went 'too far', as most people thought, but that he didn't go far enough. It's not only the 'mythological' concepts, such as miracle, ascension, and so on (which are not in principle separable from the concepts of God, faith, etc.), but religious concepts generally, which are problematic. You can't as Bultmann supposes, separate God and miracle, but you must be able to interpret and proclaim both in a 'non-religious' sense. Bultmann's approach is fundamentally still a liberal one (i.e. abridging the gospel) whereas I am trying to think theologically".

Paul Tillich accepted that foundations had been shaken. He insists that scientific progress and war has brought it about. J.A.T. Robinson stressed that the issue at hand is the problem of "God up there". Both he and Tillich see the solution in terms of Being-itself or Ground of Being who is man's ultimate concern. People like P. Van Buren, T. J. J. Altizer, William Hamilton, Harvey Cox, Langdon Gilkey, appear to reject in one way or the other the Tillich/Robinson solution. Instead some, like W. Hamilton advocated that the traditional idea of God be regarded as dead; others, like H. Cox advanced the idea that the traditional God of Christendom is now for all intents and purposes a hidden God to the secular society. Every suggested solution was obviously problematic, and none will escape this predicament as long as it is not recognised that the problem centres mainly around the clash of the nousological (view of) meaning and the Einsteinian innovation; the theory of relativity has secured the position of secularism.

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However, the problem also called forth added emphases on the sociology and psychology of religion. Some (e.g. M. Merleau-Ponty) emphasised the phenomenal world which "we perceive" and in which "we are inserted". Jürgen Moltmann, on his part, stressed the elements of hope and social justice. His position soon branched off to inspire the theology of liberation. The latter concentrated on dealing with the specific issue of oppression which, as the writers in the field insist, much of Western theology had encouraged and institutionalised. Roman Catholic writers and authorities (the latter mainly since Vatican II) on the whole tend to opt for the more controllable policy of modernisation (Wicker, op. cit.). It is obviously much more difficult for them to face the "new situation", the secular world. The Evangelical writers on the whole appear to prefer to hold on to the theological ideas and cliches employed by the Reformers of the sixteenth century and the revivalists of the eighteenth on the ground that the old time religion has not changed; even if the world has. Some took refuge in the theology of ecumenism, with its emphasis on the Church. This is understandable in a (Western) world in which the Church is progressively being marginalised. Consequently emphases are put on missiology and mission. Within the latter categories are writers (e.g. A.R. Tippett, McGavran and Peter Beyerhaus) who viewed missions in terms of "Church Growth"; with the "third world" in mind, of course. And there are those who consider the secularised West, 'rid' of her traditional Deity, nearer to the ideas of Eastern religions. This partly led to the flowering of Eastern religious communities in Europe and North America.

43. There is no space for our bibliography on this subject (which is in fact the case with various themes in Parts Three and Four of the thesis); however, we must call attention to the following historical documents: Pope Pius IX, 'To all the bishops of the Churches of the Eastern rite...' and 'To all Protestants and non-Catholics' (both in) Annals of the Propagation of the Faith, vol.XXX,1869,pp.1-10. All non-Roman Catholic communions are called heresies in the document; Lord Halifax, The Conversations of Malines,1921-1925 - Original Documents (Philip Alan,London,1930); H.R.MeAdoo and A.C.Clark, Anglican-Roman Catholic International Commission,The Final Report (London,1982).
It must be said, however, that the secular spirit is not confined to the West nor to the twentieth century. There had been "fools" down the ages of human history, who said in their hearts that "there is no God". And there were those who had at various times and ages embraced agnosticism, holding that it is the only reasonable option to man; man who is after all bound by his epistemological limitations. It is, however, true to say that these opinions remained no more than marginalised (sometimes vague) interpretations of the world prior to the fuller realisation of the implications of Einstein. Sometimes those opinions, in the case of the West, were no more than cases of retreats from the religious dimension of the nousological (view of) meaning to its secular dimension. However, with Einstein there emerged a new primary interpretation of the world which provided the secular world with a recognisable kernel: relativity. And as the kernel is obviously not reconcilable to the nousological meaning the marginalisation of Western Christianity ensued as secularism became dominant.

At any rate, is the "relativity of space and time" really a threat or an alternative to the biblical view of meaning or understanding of God? In our opinion it is not any of them by any means. For relativity is not in an either/or relationship with life; neither is relativity synonymous with life. Life is instead the goal and the aim of science. It is its purpose; and the final thing to be said after all else, including relativity, is said. With this in mind we will ask and answer the question, "What does salvation mean in the context of the above variegated response to secularism?" This is the task of the next section.

3. What Does Salvation Mean?

To raise a question as to what salvation means within the context of Western secularism (and the manifold responses to it) is to raise a difficult question indeed. This is because every unit of response to the secular situation or every marginalised (or in the process of being marginalised) primary interpretation of the world would understandably
insist on its own standpoint. In which case a single answer or a common answer to the question would not be given. If one insists on asking the question then one must be prepared to be faced with answers that could be variously described as secular, nousological (that is, salvation of the soul in contradistinction from the body), other-worldly (in the apocalyptic sense), this worldly, existential, sociological, psychological, etc.

At any rate we must insist on asking the question because it is our view that theology is at the cross-roads, and at least one of those roads could easily lead to self-demise. However, it is also the case that our commitment is to the proper understanding of the soteriological intentionality of the bible, the basic source-book of the Christian faith.

At any rate what is now clear, from the vantage point of modern secularism, is that after over two thousand years of the dominancy of the nousological (view of) meaning, a primary interpretation of the world bequeathed to Western (and Eastern) Christianity by the Greek philosophers, its dominant position has now been taken over by the spirit of secularism. We must remember that the nousological (notion of) meaning is that Mind is the meaning of phenomena. We have shown (or at least tried to) in Chapter Five how this

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Greek primary interpretation became the basis of the Western understanding of Christianity and theology. We also traced out its domination of Christian religious thought from the fall of Jewish Christianity (that is to say, their stigmatisation as ebionites) to the emergence of the relativity theory in the twentieth century. We have also seen how the previously peripheralised secular/scientific spirit eventually emerged in the centre. We indicated too that the humanistic context of this new situation does hold out some anthropological tenets with a greater degree of freedom than was the case under the theodically oriented nousological standpoint. It is to be noted, of course, that we refused to have any truck with the humanistic tendencies to anthropocentrism, agnosticism, and atheism.

What all these mean is that the Western Church is obviously now in a position to read the bible from a context that is comparatively free from the dictates of the nousological (view of) meaning. This is certainly a gift from the secular situation; thus the divine voice coming from secularism is that the metaphysicism of the nousological standpoint as regards the world, God, man, and salvation is no longer acceptable to the majority of Westerners. This is the problem presently facing the Western Church. And it is not a problem that could be solved from the angle of a marginal existence. This is one of Bonhoeffer’s warnings, before his death in the hands of the Nazis:

"What is bothering me incessantly is the question what Christianity really is, or indeed who Christ really is, for us today. The time when people could be told everything by means of words, whether theological or pious, is over.... Our whole nineteen-hundred-year-old Christian preaching and theology rest on the 'religious a priori' of mankind. 'Christianity' has always been a form - perhaps the true form - of 'religion'. But if one day it becomes clear that this a priori does not exist at all, but was a historically conditioned and transient form of human self-expression, and if therefore man becomes radically religionless...what does that mean for 'Christianity'? It means that the foundation is taken away from the whole of what has up to now been our 'Christianity', and that there remains only a few 'last survivors of the age of chivalry', or a few intellectually dishonest people, on whom we can descend as 'religious'. Are they to be the chosen few? Is it on this dubious group of people that we are to
pounce in fervour, pique, or indignation, in order to sell them our goods? Are we to fall upon a few unfortunate people in their hour of need and exercise a sort of religious compulsion on them? If we don't want to do all that, if our final judgement must be that the western form of Christianity, too, was only a preliminary stage to a complete absence of religion, what kind of situation emerges for us, for the church?"  

The question in the last sentence led Bonhoeffer to suggest that the Western Church must find a way of also becoming the Church of the secular society which has elbowed that Church out of the centre. We, on our part, must go further than Bonhoeffer to suggest that the ankhological perception of Christianity, is obviously one that does not come under the prohibitions exerted by the tensions obtaining in the misleading contrast between the secular world and the other (metaphysical) world. Consequently it (the Western Church) can develop the ankhological tenets already revealed by the disappearing cloud of nousologism. In fact (as already indicated) Henri Bergson, Teilhard de Chardin, etc. have in their different ways pointed in this direction. However, their efforts or similar efforts can only become total and biblically realistic when the basis of such action comes from a prior commitment to the ankhological (view of) meaning which, as we have argued, informs the biblical perception of Christianity.

All these do, admittedly, raise questions as to what our attitude actually is to the ecclesiological and theological data which we have criticised hitherto. In other words, what is actually our attitude to

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46. This means, of course, that we must reject Julian Huxley's evolutionary/anthropocentric program outlined in pages v - 8 of his Religion Without Revelation (London, 1967 ed.).
the Western ecclesiological and theological structures which had been built up over the centuries? Are these fully acceptable to the ankholo-
logical program? We certainly do not want to appear as advocates of iconoclasm over these matters; but we certainly do not accept their nousological assumptions. This has to be the case, of course, if we are in fact advocating the ankholological (view of) meaning - which is the intentionality of the earliest Christianity. The old undeniably had its contributions to make to the present; they can still be made to preach the ankholological message. But what we may add is that, to the ankholo-
gical program, the notion of God, the notion of personhood (or man), the understanding of salvation, the role of ethics, the definition of death, the role of science, and the concern of religion should now have their centripetal and centrifugal basis in the category of life. Life, not just in its temporal dimension but also in its everlasting ultimacy. That is, life in the presence of God who is life, definitionally. This conclusion may also be seen as a denial that we are no more than evolutionary acci-
dents inexplicably thrown up as living somethings only to be swallowed up in the end by nothingness - by non-life! This, to us, is the task of theology, christology and soteriology.

In the next part, the final part of the study, we will deal with the African dimension in theology. It is primarily with respect to that dimension that we have considered it absolutely necessary to conduct the investigations embodied in the preceding chapters. However, our prior commitment is to the proper understanding of Christian theology, which would be biblically based.
PART FOUR

THE AFRICAN DIMENSION IN THEOLOGY
CHAPTER EIGHT

MISSIONARY CHURCH THEOLOGY AS A SPECIES OF WESTERN THEOLOGY

It may be useful at this juncture to point out once more the main line of argument being maintained by our study. We will begin with Chapter Four. In the chapter we reached the conclusion, on the basis of preceding discussions, that the primary interpretation (or revelation) of the world which basically informs both the African and the biblical world is Life. Though we insisted, in the light of the New Testament, that the notion is ultimately christologically defined, in the case of the biblical world. We also pointed out in the same chapter, in the light of the discussions of Part One, that the Western primary interpretation is predominantly nousological. Consequently Chapter Five paid a closer attention to the necessity to understand how these two predominant primary understandings of the world met and agreed or disagreed. We observed and emphasised that much of the doctrinal controversies of the Early Church is largely reducible to the 'Western' (that is, bearers of the nousological standpoint) attitude to both the ankho­logical and the Persian standpoints. These two were rejected in principle while the secondary religious data of the former and the fragmented ideas of the latter nevertheless became part of the christian religious data now informed by the nousological standpoint. Thus the victory of the nousological viewpoint involved a highly controversy-ridden process of bringing the religious data and fragments of the losers within its terms of reference. The consequence of this process was the engendering of various heresies; which of course included the marginalised and discredited Jewish Christianity - the main bearers of
the ankhological (view of) meaning.

Our study of the basic aspects of the Western Church in Chapters Six and Seven shows that the nousological understanding of Christianity remained predominant until the emergence of the Einsteinian theory of relativity. We argued that it is the marginalisation of the former by the latter which authoritatively legitimised secularism and created problems for the Western Church. We also argued that it was this problematic marginalisation of the Church by the predominancy of the relativity view of the world which led to the frantic theological search for ways of containing the new problem - the problem of the Western Church in a process of being marginalised. We pointed out that it was a search conducted without a clear grasp of the primary and all-inclusive role which a primary interpretation (or revelation) plays in a religious system, or in constructing cosmological worlds. Consequently our attention to this primary and all-inclusive role of any given (view of) meaning naturally predisposed us to be extremely sceptical over the (conscious or unconscious) idea that the nousological standpoint could achieve much, in the long run, by continuing to fight its theological battle from the sidelines to which it has been confined. The battle is, of course, that of winning the secular world back to its viewpoint. Hence we feel that it is most appropriate at this point in Western ecclesiastical history to call the attention of Christian theology to the ankhological basis of the biblical data. With this last point we will turn to the first section of this chapter: "The Church Without Theology".

1. The Church Without Theology:

The spiritual ethos of African missionary Christianity originated from two basic sources: (1) The spirit of the Roman Catholic counter-reformation of the sixteenth-century Europe, in the case of the African
catholics; the military rigidity which characterised that sixteenth-century reassertion of the Roman catholic ecclesiastical and doctrinal positions in the face of the then growing Protestantism almost repeated itself in Africa as the Protestants who initiated modern missionary enterprise in the continent began to succeed with increasing rapidity. This point on the rivalries between the Catholics and the Protestants in Africa needs to be additionally borne in mind in reading works on such rivalries.¹ (2) The spirit of the eighteenth-century evangelical revivals in Europe (and America) which resulted in the formation of the Missionary Societies. It was these missionary societies that recruited and sent most of the missionary personnel which formed the dominant group in the formative core of African Protestant missionary Christianity. The missionaries, of course, went to various parts of the (largely) non-Western world. On the attitude of the eighteenth-century revival movement to theology Orlando Costas has this to say:

"The Pietistic Movement grew basically as a reaction to the theological scholasticism of seventeenth-century Protestantism. It was a call to reformation of life, the Pietists began to emphasize regeneration, sanctification and fellowship. They called the church to a spiritual renewal in which theology would be a means rather than an end and the true church would be conceived of in terms of a regenerated fellowship of believers who not only confessed the historic faith but lived it in the concrete situations of everyday life."²

It is obvious from the above quotation that a serious concern for theological enquiry is not really natural to the evangelical/missionary


spirit. It courts instead a kind of romantic spirit which prefers emotional and experiential response to the Christian data to a theological enquiry or reflective response. In fact the revival movement itself was part of the general eighteenth-century European romantic movement, as we already pointed out in the course of the preceding chapter. We must also not forget that the Missionary Societies were not conceived and organised as parts of the ecclesiastical structures of the Churches and so were not compelled to come within the Church's view of the role of theology in proper ecclesiastical understanding.

One must not assume that the prolonged training of the Roman Catholic missionaries significantly exempted them from this lack of theological concern in the African Church. Such early interest in theology would have, of course, meant that the Roman Catholic Church in Africa would today be more theologically aware than their Protestant counter-parts. There is certainly no evidence for such a Catholic upper-hand over the Protestants (on the question of theological awareness) as far as the laity of both Churches are concerned. In fact according to Erasto Muga, "The Roman Catholic missionaries have trained an African priesthood, who according to the Roman Catholic policy, must lead and guide a flock who look to Rome as a source of their ecclesiastical strength. Thus their freedom and activity are rigidly controlled by orders from Rome." This kind of policy is obviously not designed to rear up an African Church with a theologically inquisitive mind. For a theologically healthy African Church could hardly view its priority, in fact its concern, as that of moulding a flock that would in the end lose its African sense of direction by turning to Rome in such a filial predisposition.

Another point to be taken into account, however, is the obvious

fact that in the earliest period of African missionary Christianity the Roman Catholic missionary priest had more work to do than his Protestant counterpart. It is certainly much easier to (a) preach the gospel of individual conversion (that is to say, the salvation of the individual's soul) in, say, a market place on two or more occasions and then gather the converts into a church, which initially often started in one of the converts' house; (b) teach the individuals how to read and write so as to enable them to read the bible by and for themselves; (c) teach them how to pray individually and collectively. These were often considered as (if not more) important as liturgical rituals. The following was usually the Catholic program: the Catholic churches, at the beginning of their modern missions in Africa were usually formed out of the flotsam and jetsam of society, who more often than not saw in the churches the means of proclaiming their humanity. However, they were usually given quick legitimisations by the later, if more cautious, joining of the new faith by the more respectable members of society (e.g. chiefs). They often joined more for political and material considerations. Normally the new congregations would be forbidden to read the Protestant literature and bible should they come across one. Such materials were sometimes brought home by an elder brother or sister who happened to be a Protestant. Churches were not chosen on the basis of 'the true Church.' Given the colonial setting decisions were pragmatic. However, they were forbidden to read the bible more on the ground that the priest/missionary would teach the new churches all they had to know than that of religious rivalry. The same priest was usually responsible for the Catholic churches in many towns and villages; many priests would have done the work in normal circumstances. The distance from one village or town to the other may be anything up to fifty miles or more. The priest had to

4. Earliest Protestant Churches in Africa also drew their initial adherents from this social group.
teach them the often centuries-old set of prayers (Catholics were not supposed to pray like the Protestants whose manner of addressing God is generally speaking impromptu), he had to teach the proper rites for the veneration of the various saints, for devotion to the sacred heart of Jesus, to the virgin Mary, to Joseph the earthly father of Jesus; he had to explain the role of each saint, for instance, St Christopher as a protector against accidents. He had to teach which prayer each bead in the Rosary stands for, the memorisation of the various liturgical Latin sentences which were considered necessary to a proper Mass service. As well as warn the congregation that the "altar stone", the "chalice" and the consecrated "bread and wine" must not (almost under pain of death) be touched by them with exposed hands. After teaching all these and more he still had to teach (like his Protestant counter-part) the proper attitude, usually negative, which the "native" convert must adopt towards the enemies of the true faith. The enemy to be avoided was sometimes one's own brother, sister, or parent. It is clear that any priest with these rounds of activities would have little time left for serious theological work, inspite of his theological training. Missionaries like Placide Tempels were indeed the exception. Such theologically conscious often spend much of their time in the seminaries inducting the African students in the Thomist/Scotist systems of scholasticism. Which is, of course, an induction into the nousological (view of) meaning.

Professor Ogbu Kalu seems to endorse some of the above observations when he says,

"In the heat of rivalry and the mistaken ideal of church growth as index of success, the problem of domesticating the christian change-agent was ignored. The product-content has been a Church with no theology, no indigenous liturgy, and poor understanding of stewardship and mission, a Church caught in the webs of denominationalism and conservatism.... The contemporary issues in African Church History, like indigenization, moratorium and African theology, are signals of the efforts by modern Africans to transcend the unsavoury by-products of the missionary
However, to agree with Kalu, as we do, that the African missionary Church is a Church without theology clearly brings us face to face with objections to that claim. For instance Professor John Mbiti is obviously right in pointing out that,

"There are three main areas of Africa theology today: written theology, oral theology, and symbolic theology. Written African theology is the privilege of a few Christians who have had considerable education and who generally articulate their theological reflections in articles and (so far few) books, mainly in English, French, German, or other European languages. Oral theology is produced in the fields, by the masses, through song, sermon, teaching, prayer, conversation, etc. It is theology in the open air, often unrecorded, often heard by only small groups, and generally lost to libraries and seminaries. Symbolic theology is expressed through art, sculpture, drama, symbols, rituals, dance, colors, numbers, etc.... Since about 1960, a considerable literature, mainly articles has built up. In preparation for this paper I was able to draw upon some three hundred such articles and books by African theologians, most of which were published in the last five years or so."  

Mbiti is clearly using the term "theology" in a sense different from our use of it as theology. Perhaps he is speaking more of theology than theology. However, we are probably on a safer ground if we accept his use of the word theology in the senses he has characterised it. In which case we will have to admit that he has advanced a step or more beyond the sphere within which our claim that the missionary Church is a Church without theology could be more clearly observed: that is, the period before the modern revolt of African theologians. We emphasised the word revolt because African theologians were not originally trained to upset the expectations of the Western mother Churches, which is what modern African theologians have on the whole done with their flirtations.


with the traditional religions. The latter had, of course, been discredited by missionaries with such terms as "paganism" and "heathendom". The flirtation in question is expressed in terms like Africanisation, contextualisation, etc. Much ink has already been spilt in pointing out the deviations of the theology of contextualisation from Christian theology. Christian theology is of course the nousologically informed traditional Western theology, which has come to be viewed as the norm.

However, we will still maintain that our view of "a Church without theology" is still valid even in the contexts in which Mbiti convincingly shows us the presence of African theologies. This is because we are making a clear distinction between the availability of materials (which are in abundance) for African theological activities and the actual existence of theologically structured and systematised theologies - oral or written. It must, of course, be pointed out that our main concern is to refute any impression that the availability of materials for theological work - which is yet to be done - could be equated with a finished product. Neither do we want to ignore the fact that much of the Sunday School type of teaching given to the African christians is too nousologically eschatological, and too flippantly structured. We cannot understand these as coming near to anything like seriously critical theologies, which is ankhologically informed. The latter is what African Christianity unconsciously cries out for. To accept the materials for theology as finished products would be to ignore at our own peril the fact that the majority of African christians, true to their missionary origins, are decidedly anti-theology.

Again, it is a truism to say that the theologies of Africanisation, contextualisation, etc., have hardly escaped the problems imposed on the African missionary Church by the latter's "over consciousness" of its own life-history in matters of theology. Hence much of the
theologies of contextualisation, etc., appear to be more like (a)
theological letters of complaint and protest addressed to the (Western)
mother Churches; (b) they also appear to be doing neither Christian
theology nor the theology of African traditional religions. Their
relationship with these two religious domains is clearly more like what
we may call the scissors and paste methodology: a method of cutting
out appropriate bits from each side and then joining them together,
theologically. Hence it is the case that one searches in vain for
substantial theological treatises on themes like the nature of God, the
purpose of the Christ event, the Holy Spirit, the nature of man's sal-
vation, the essential intentionality of the Scriptures, angelology,
demonology, prophecies and dreams, etc., in any shelf on African Christian theology. It is the absence of these which compels us to insist
that an African theology which has overcome its (missionary) historical
handicaps, which operates with the realisation of the ankholological
intentionality of the biblical data and of the African traditional
religions will be other, must be other, than exercises in contextual-
isation.

7. For some representative works on the current character of African Christian theology cf. Kofi-Appiah Kubi and Sergio Torres, op.cit.;
An African theology come of age shall be one that grasps the enormous task, which is divinely and traditionally, placed in its hands to explain to the world the ankhological nature of God, man, salvation, the world, and the biblical data. It is a realisation it cannot escape with clear conscience. And there is a note of urgency here if man who appears to be bent on destroying himself, destroying submarine life, exterminating flora and fauna, is to be truly converted to God, the source and giver of life. In the next section we will look more closely into what we may call, the search for methodology.

2. The Search for Methodology:

The search for a theological methodology, which will go with and will explain the understanding, "African Christian theology" has been going on now for decades. Let us say at once that the search is necessitated by the fact that the Christianity questing for such adequate theological self-expression is African Christianity. Thus, given the existence of the reality called African Christianity, it is understandable that it cannot rest content with Western theology. To say, as it is sometimes said, that Christianity is one and Christian theology one, and that as such there is no such thing as Western, African or Asian theology is, in our opinion, evidence of the general lack of awareness of the role of primary interpretations (or revelation) of the world in religious systems and in theological constructions.

8. The various African Christian councils from the Ghana consultation on Christianity and African Culture (1955), The Church in Changing Africa (Ibadan, 1958) to The Confession of Alexandria, 1967 and the many others, regional, national and continental, may be taken as conscious expressions of this search. The desire to conduct it from a position free from the pressures, spiritual, cultural and economical, exerted by the "big brother" (i.e. the Western mother Churches) eventually led to the demand for a moratorium. Moratorium was a child of crisis and says more for the problems inherent in the contextualisation theology than for what the term implies. On the issue of moratorium cf. Kendall, op.cit., pp.86-107.
On the whole, however, the existence (even if schools) of
theologies, and the right of African Christianity to its own theological
self-expression are recognised. With regard to the recognition of the
validity of African Christian theology efforts are sometimes made to
delimit its materials or define its theological themes in terms that
beg questions. For instance, why is it that the Old Testament is more
agreeable to the African world-view while the New Testament is not? Is
it because the West has Westernised both Jesus and the New Testament by
almost cutting them off from their Jewish setting and from their continu-
ity with the Old Testament? In which case the left-over is good enough
for Africa. Again, what does it mean to say that the God of African
Christian theology is (primordial) Ancestor? when all ancestors in the
theology of African traditional religions are creatures. Nor does it
make sense, christologically speaking, to conceive the Christ of African
Christian theology as a medicine-man (with the undertone of a witch-
doctor) when it is generally (theologically) maintained that the Christ
is God and that his presence in the world is incarnational; the medicine-
man is none of these! However, it is to the concepts of Africanisation,
contextualisation, etc., that we must now turn.

The terms Africanisation, contextualisation, indigenisation, adap-
tation, traditionalisation, and incarnational come up with by African
Christian theology in recent decades are indicative that Christian
theology as it is understood within these terms is a cry of despair (a
letter of protest and complaint) from within the world of the nousologi-
cal understanding of theology. As such the 'African Christian theology'
of these terminologies, hitherto, is obviously a species of Western
Christian theology, in spite of its self-understanding manifested in its
protestations and complaints. The proper definition of its predicament
appears to be given by an Igbo proverb which insists that,
"Nnu nu rapulu ana be na mkpu -
na ana anobu k'ọnokwa"

(A flying bird that flew off the ground only to
perch on a little hill is still on the ground
because it is not in the air.)

The point is that the bird is not in the realm of freedom; it has only
exchanged one aspect of its limitation for another.

Nevertheless, we fully recognise that the work of contextualisation
theology (etc.) has been in many respects beneficial and productive.
Perhaps a genuine African theology could not be possible without such
initial endeavour. It is a first-stage theological activity. It has
partly cleared ground without which there can be no planting. Thus what
our present study is basically saying is that there must now be such a
planting on the rich soil of the ankhological (view of) meaning. It is
this recognition of the role of contextualisation theology in a genuine
African Christian theology which led us to put this Chapter Eight in
Part Four of the present study instead of in Part Three9 where it essen­
tially ought to belong. We may now look at the different stages (not
schools) which African Christian theology has passed, or embodies.

When we consider the practice of African Christian theology as it
obtained hitherto we could notice that it has gone through different
phases; we will categorise it into three periods and consider it in
that numerical order. The first is that period when African traditional
culture and religion were viewed as a preparation for the gospel. This
idea was at the time revolutionary, because it is a negation of the

9. Our identification of the source of contextualisation (etc.) theology
as that of Western theology must not be taken as an indirect endorse­
ment also of the eagerness of Western scholarship to claim every
African creation or achievement as due to its inspiration. This
eagerness is most clearly manifested in the domain of Literature
where a futile attempt was made to characterise African Literature
as Commonwealth Literation (that is, a branch of English Literature).
The case of African Christian theology is different: it assumes
Western theology and so sees its role as that of adaptation. On
the issue of African Literature cf. H. Coombes, English Literature
(Made Simple Books, UK, 1977) pp.280-286; Chinua Achebe, Morning Yet
missionary rejection of African culture and religion as a pagan mumbo-
jumbo. This missionary attitude to African religio-cultural data was, of course, necessary to their over-all intention to insist that the African soul, culture, and world do, altogether, constitute a clean slate upon which they could write their theological and cultural wishes. However, this missionary approach calls for some explanation: Africa, as with the rest of the mission fields,¹⁰ was not characterised as anything other than what the missionaries in the field, usually at the instigation of the Missionary Societies, wanted it to be. To present a contrary picture is to reinstate (for Catholics and for Protestants) the earlier Protestant thesis,¹¹ which the latter maintained for centuries until the eighteenth century, that mission is not necessary. This would of course mean that the collection of missionary funds should cease, that missionary work should stop, and that the Missionary Societies should close down. Thus neither the colonial Governments nor the Western Churches could contemplate the reinstatement of that earlier thesis:

Because there were certainly the need to convert the pagan souls and lands, the need to bring them within the sphere of influence of Western nations, in a world that was increasingly becoming dangerous - China and Japan were threatening to become world powers. And there is the need to secure and maintain areas in foreign lands for the securing of raw materials and for the disposal of the finished products. It may be

¹⁰. It must be pointed out, however, that some missionaries in India, probably over-awed by the sunyatological orientation of much of Indian religious data and practice, tended to either (a) take to Hinduism or Buddhism in one form or the other, or (b) emphasise that Jesus was the message of Christianity (and) so was distinct from Western Christianity. On (a) note, for instance, the case of Roberto de Nobili (seventeenth century), a Catholic missionary in India "who adopted the life of a bráhman", cf. Trevor Ling, op.cit., p.321. On (b) cf. E. Stanley Jones, The Christ of the Indian Road (Hodder & Stoughton, London, 1925) especially pp.65-66, 84 f., 86-101, 158-161, 231-254, particularly p.248; also Lin Shao-Yang, op.cit., p.266 ff.

noted that the rejection of the thesis that mission is not necessary
actually coincided with the Industrial Revolution in Europe and America.
However, to sustain missionary work and raise the necessary funds the
missionary approach had to be what it was and still is in some quarters:
missionary reporting must necessarily end on the note of the badness of
the missionary field.

The theologians of preparation probably felt that the missionary
policy of the ever badness of the missionary field could be counter-
productive in the long run. To this extent the concept of African
culture and religions as a preparation for the gospel (usually equated
with Western Christianity) was viewed as a welcome alternative. However,
the presuppositions of the theology of preparation and that of the
missionaries, with regard to African culture and religion, were largely
agreed that that culture and religion should in the main be abandoned;
what should remain are things that do agree with the gospel. The
African theologians were of course the ones most prepared to see to it
that as many things as possible from the African culture do agree with
the gospel. The price they paid for that, however, was that much of
what they approved of was not taken seriously by the (Western) mother
Churches.

12. I find S.N. Ezeanya's "The Method of Adaptation in the Evangelization
of the Igbo-speaking People of Southern Nigeria" (unpublished) (Ph.D.
thesis, Propaganda Fide College, Rome, 1956) a good illustration of
what I have called theology of preparation. It is in my opinion a
much dated work as far as its general approach is concerned. For
instance, he tells us in page 270 that "The Igbo people ... appear
as a people who inspite of the evil practices and defects in their
customs and traditions can nevertheless be said to be specially
disposed to receive the Catholic faith". He seems on the whole to
be judging the culture from the outside. A modern work on adaptation
theology is Ayward Shorter's African Culture and the Christian
Church (London, 1973). For earlier attempts at adaptation in East
Africa cf. Terence Ranger, "Missionary Adaptation of African
Religious Institutions. The Masasi Case" (in) The Historical Study
of African Religion (T.O. Kanger and I. Kimambo eds., Heinemann,
The second period is that of adaptation, contextualisation, Africanisation, traditionalisation, indigenisation, and the incarnational view of the place of Christ in African culture. Our idea of periods need not be understood to mean that one period ends and another takes its place. In fact they shade into one another and are in some respects concurrent with each other. However, the various terms are indicative of a very serious crisis in the core of African Christianity. It is a crisis consequent on the refusal of the enkholological (view of) meaning, which largely informs African traditional religions and African Christianity, to accept the nousological standpoint's demand, from within the African world (the very sphere in which the influence of the ankhological standpoint is dominant) that it be marginalised. Thus the various terms are in fact the different ways in which the theologians, who are most likely also subscribers to and bearers of the ankhological view of reality, sought to express that (view of) meaning. For instance we read Professor Iwe saying that, "We must insist on African Christianity for we are Africans.... Our African mind, religion, psychology and personality are clearly reconcilable and harmonisable with Christian principles," and Final Communique, Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians saying that, "For Africans there is unity and continuity between the destiny of human persons and the destiny of the cosmos. African anthropology and cosmology are optimistic. The salvation of the human person in African theology is the salvation of the universe. In the mystery of the Incarnation Christ assumes the totality of the human and the totality of the cosmos." At any rate, we may assume that the


14. Cf. N.S.S. Iweh, Christianity, Culture and Colonialism in Africa (name of publisher and date not given in this work which came out in the late seventies) p.80.

terms have neither fully grasped nor clearly stated what we believe they mean. It is our contention that they mean to say (and insist) that the meaning of the world, of God, of man, of salvation, and of the bible is basically ankhological; and their protestation is that the nousological (view of) meaning is not by any means the predominant perception of the world in the African context as to constitute the basis of African Christian theology. However, the urge to speak this truth, a truth that is not fully grasped, understandably gave rise to the duplication of terms. There is nothing out of the ordinary in this failure of African theologians fully to see that some given primary perceptions of the world do lie behind their quest for theological authenticity. We have already emphasised this same lack of awareness on the part of Western theologians. It is a universal shortcoming. Yet such primary perceptions of the world are, in our opinion, necessarily the 'primordial' given bases for man's determination of what is ultimately meaningful, meaningless, or absurd.

We may further point out that it seems to us that it is this ankhological (view of) meaning that Okot p' Bitek, as the theologians of contextualisation whom he criticised, ¹⁶ is actually seeking to name and insist on. However, p' Bitek seems to be less ruffled by the problems agitating African Christianity. He appears to speak more from within the world of the traditional African culture, which subscribes mainly to the ankhological ¹⁷ standpoint. The theologians, on the other hand, are obviously ruffled because they have not fully perceived that the biblical world and the earliest Christianity actually affirms the ankhological standpoint and not the nousological standpoint which is interred in the

¹⁷. p'Bitek appears, however, to be unaware that social and religious acts do follow from the assumption of an already interpreted world. cf. ibid., p.110 f.
very ecclesiastical and theological forms bequeathed to African
Christianity. Once African theologians become fully aware of this ankho-
logical continuity between their world and the biblical world of the Old
Testament, the New Testament, and the earliest Christianity then the
search for the basis for and the criterion of African Christian theology
would cease. The ankho logical (view of) meaning is the basis, the cri-
terion, and the raison d'être not only of African Christian theology
but, more importantly, of Christian theology. How can any of the terms,
adaptation, Africanisation, traditionalisation, indegenisation, and con-
textualisation be the basis of Christian theology? They are clearly
sociological rather than theological terms. In fact the terms, singly
or collectively, tell us little or nothing about Christian theology.
And it must equally be pointed out that the christological term, incarn-
national can never on its own constitute the basis of theology. We are
also rejecting the idea that the concept of communalism, albeit a
notion that comes under the rubric of commensality, can constitute the
basis, or anything like it, of African Christian theology. It, like the
others, is a sociological concept which can only play secondary roles in
any serious theological activity.

The third period is that of liberation theology. There is clearly
evidence of more concreteness and sense of direction within the camp of
the liberation theologians. Of all the theological methodologies origin-
at ing from the West, or whose egg was laid by the Western hen only to be
hatched somewhere else, as is the case with liberation theology, it is
the latter that African theologians, coming mainly from Southern Africa,
find most useful for dealing with social and political injustices. We
will later indicate some reasons for this adoption of liberation theology
into the service of African Christian theology.

Meanwhile let us take more note of the sources that contributed to the birth of this form of theologising. We may recall that we indicated earlier that liberation theology may be said to have branched off from the writings of Jürgen Moltmann. That is true as far as it goes but the deeper truth of the matter is that both the theological methodologies of Moltmann and liberation theology were compelled by the crisis consequent on the emergence of the secular spirit in the centre of the (Western) world stage. We may also recall that we did stress that this emergence is legitimised by the Einsteinian primary interpretation of the world in terms of relativity. We must keep emphasising the point that relativity theory is a critical negation of the nousological notion which sees the Mind (or God) as the Ultimate Reality. This constant emphasis is made necessary by the fact that neither the all-inclusive role of a primary interpretation (or revelation) nor the full implications of the Einsteinian revolution is, in our opinion, yet fully grasped by Christian theology. Instead the nebulous idea of secularism is incessantly mentioned and used without any question asked as to the single factor, the kernel, which can be said to have brought it to the centre stage and continued to sanction its existence there.

However, the Church was fully aware of the "destructive" effect of secularism. After all "she" is primarily the one being marginalised, because of its placement on the pedestal of the nousological (view of) meaning. At any rate before the emergence of liberation theology the problem of secularism had for decades become the problem of the Church. Moltmann, the 1968 report of the Fourth General Assembly of the World Council of Churches, and liberation theology were each able to perceive

19. This assembly convened in Uppsala, Sweden, between July 4 and 20. Its report is obviously a determined attempt to enable the Church and its mission to come to terms with the secular realities of the world. For a fuller discussion of this Uppsala report, and the Evangelical reactions to it cf. Orlando E. Costas, op.cit. (1974) pp.177-217.
more clearly the social and political failures and sins of the (Western) Church (a) because this Church, already in a process of marginalisation, is by now more than one remove away from the (Western) world now dominated by the secular standpoint, (b) because each of them is seeing things more from the side of the secular world than from the side of the nousological (other-worldly) view of meaning. In other words, some of the theologians do not see any point in allowing themselves to be marginalised together with the nousological standpoint. Hence their (type of) perception of the sins of the Church and their readiness to criticise the nousological orientation of its theology.

Thus David M. Gill, who is himself attached to the WCC Department on Church and Society, is right when he points out that,

"The spiritual crisis which Kohnstamm anticipated nearly four decades ago is upon us. Christians in most parts of the world are facing, within and without their own ranks, a deep questioning of everything for which their doctrines, practices and ecclesiastical structures have stood. The Church's credibility gap is widening to become a gulf of truly awesome proportions. Causes of the crisis are legion, but clearly one of the most important has to do with the current discussion regarding the theological significance of secular modes of life and thought.

The first arm of the ecumenical movement to give attention to this subject was the International Missionary Council, at its Jerusalem meeting in 1928."  

The 1928 meeting in question has this to say on secularism: "By the spirit of secular civilisation we mean that spirit which draws its strength from this present world. 'Materialism' is hardly the right word, for it is more than materialism. But it is in the first place profoundly indebted to modern science. The complexity, the delicacy, and the infinite range of that world of 'Reality' which the labour of men of science has unveiled in the last century is to any thoughtful mind powerfully appealing..." (italics mine).  

sometimes used to describe certain elements in Moltmann's writings and in the writings of liberation theologians, is the result of the serious thought given to secularism and the Church by some theologians. M.M. Thomas, a one-time chairman of the Central Committee of the WCC had already expressed the tenets of that form of theology as far back as 1950.22 It was not until 1964 that Jürgen Moltmann's *Theologie der Hoffnung* was published. This was of course followed by the 1968 Uppsala assembly with its emphasis on the social dimension in the whole question of man's salvation.

All these precedents (with respect to the status of Liberation theology) are important for the development of liberation theology in various parts of the world where the rich, the State, and the State-Church thrive on their exploitation and oppression of the impoverished. Thus it was basically the marginalisation of the nousological basis of the traditional Western theology which gave rise to the crisis that in turn spawned the materials relevant for the birth of liberation theology. Hence Aloysius Pieris is, in this context, right in saying that "liberation theology is thoroughly Western"23 theology. However, as the "rich" or the "oppressor" is the antithesis of liberation theology it is not to be expected that the latter could have developed in the "rich" and "powerful" West. (Nonetheless, the tendency on the part of the rich and powerful to become oppressive is a problem already taken care of in the West by the existence of Communism, and the consequent emphasis on Welfare Society by capitalist countries; an emphasis made necessary by the need to keep Communism at bay.) Its development requires the setting of a


very clear polarisation of the rich and the poor. A context in which the privileged could easily choose to be demonically oppressive. A setting where the poor, the oppressed, is deeply feeling the boot of the oppressor and is no longer willing to continue to bear his chains, and yet gets no help towards his desire for freedom from either the nousologically structured theologies of the traditional Church or from the laws of the State. This is the kind of setting in which liberation theology becomes necessary and extremely useful as a tool for the destruction of oppression. The situation in which the oppression of the impoverished by the rich and the powerful is sanctioned by the State laws and by the theologies of the traditional Church is the situation of Latin America; it is the black American situation, and it is the South African situation. In most of these places, the humanity of the impoverished is to this day still groaning under the boot and the heartlessness of the rich and the privileged. In these places the official theology of the Church and its 'God' are undeniably part of the structure of oppression, and are often its legitimisers. Consequently any alternative theology which considers the case of the poor as a blatant negation of God's intentionality must be a theology which liberates him from the merciless grip of the wicked. And there are plenty of Scriptural materials to enable the liberation theologian to uphold his case.

It is in Latin America that liberation theology, as a theological methodology, was hatched, fully developed, and systematised. 24 Soon

afterwards some black American theologians, who fully realised that a mere taking of refuge in the experiential spirituality of some "black Churches" is self-defeating if it only comforts the oppressed and does not alter his oppressive situation, adopted the principles of liberation theology. The principles were viewed as change-agents and were accordingly domesticated to serve the cause of the suffering black Americans. In their hands it became the black theology of liberation. In this black colouring it is now ready for a role in South Africa, particularly. In fact, it can be said that of all the theological methodologies arriving in the Continent, the principles of liberation theology gained most sympathy from African theologians. This phenomenon is not without some deep-seated reasons: some aspects of the teaching of liberation theology appear to answer to the dynamics of the ideology of commensality. Thus liberation theology could more easily be seen as a form of the necessity to reject the anti-ankhological forces in society. Therefore liberation theology in Southern Africa is in the final analysis a further articulation of the intentionality of this commensal ideology. The emergence of this commensal view of society in the forefront is already noticeable in the rise and character of the Independent Churches in Africa and in the development of the political philosophy of Ujamaa. Therefore, this form of theology, to the extent it is on the side of God in opposing the anti-life structures of society, is clearly theological.

However, it is our view that liberation theology is maintaining a precarious existence as long as the ankhological (view of) meaning is not clearly and unquestionably seen to be its centripetal and centrifugal centre. This point about precarious existence ought to be viewed as a very serious criticism. For how are we sure that the poor once he

becomes rich and powerful could not develop the oppressive mentality? The Protestant oppression of the catholics in Protestant lands after the Reformation, and the Communist persecution of the capitalists in Communist lands are lessons of history to be borne in mind with respect to the above point. It is also the case that liberation theology does not have much practical appeal and uses in countries and places where the social, political and economic polarisation of the poor and the rich is not clearly detected or pronounced. These very serious limitations on the idea that liberation theology could form the basis of theology ought to be worrying. Why is the God preached by liberation theology too much attached to the poor? Why does He appear to be an alien Deity in countries and places where oppression is less pronounced? The point we are making is that God as He is usually understood by liberation theology is too much on the side of the poor; He is not free to judge him with justice if and wherever he develops the anti-life characteristics of the oppressor. It is our view that liberation theology can only be in a position to express its principles in a universal key when it fully establishes itself within the ankhological terms of reference.

3. The Inevitability of a New Beginning:

The diverse materials investigated by our research on its way to the present position in which we are speaking, particularly with respect to African Christian theology, of the inevitability of a new beginning need not be seen as an unnecessary exercise in cracking a nut with a sledge-hammer. Because the present predicament of Christian theology in general, and the problem of African Christian theology in particular, are certainly no nut. For the predicament or the problem is the frustrating and anxiety-ridden issue of, on the one hand, what (view of) meaning shall now be the basis for reconstituting Christian theology given the near demise or the marginalisation of the nousological criterion, on the
other, the problem of finding such a criterion for the constitution of
what has come to be called African Christian theology. Thus to speak
of the inevitability of a new beginning, as we do, is simply to emphasise
that the ankhological (view of) meaning is the (revelation of) meaning
primarily subscribed to by the Christian data which African theologians
in particular and Christian theologians in general can no longer afford
to peripheralise. Otherwise there is no such thing now as a new begin­
ning with respect to Christian theological activity; theology has been
practised for centuries. However, there is such a thing (given the theo­
logical problems) as a new beginning with regard to theological under­
standing and approach.

When we look more closely at the problem of African Christian
theology we are struck by the fact that for over one hundred years, if
we begin with the writings of Edward Wilmot Blyden, African theologians
have been doing little more than complain, protest, and then give some
outlines of what should be adapted and what should not. Professor J.
Mbiti is obviously struck by this phenomenon as could be detected from
the following statements:

"Some of us are getting tired of seeing all sorts of
articles and references under the big banner: AFRICAN
THEOLOGY (or some similar wording). The substance of
these articles often turns out to be advice on how
African theology should be done, where it should be
done, who should do it, what it should say, ad infinitum.
Some of these self-made theological advisers, whether
they be African or foreign, have little or nothing to
produce beyond their generous advice; and others want to
play the role of theological engineers who meticulously
sabotage spontaneous theological output of African
Christians.

Theology is not produced by advice alone, and those
who have enough advice to give about it should first use
their advice for themselves; let them produce theological
works and let these works speak for themselves. I say
this to both African and overseas Christians. We are
tired of being advised. Let the Bible be our human
adviser and the Holy Spirit our Divine Adviser."

Mbiti importantly points out in this article that African theo­
logians must pay much more attention to the biblical data.
There are probably signs of frustration and despair in this quotation. They may be taken as the high water-mark in the obviously mistaken methodological assumptions of the concepts of adaptation, indigenisation, contextualisation, traditionalisation, Africanisation, and incarnational. That is, mistaken in the sense that any of them or all of them together could not be taken as the criterion for genuine Christian theology - or African Christian theology.

At any rate what Mbiti appears to fail to understand is that the kind of results he asks for cannot be obtained until African Christian theology comes within the terms of reference of a given authentic (view of) meaning. Hence the pointing out of this indispensability of (view of) meaning to theology is part of the basic concern of our present study; but we have carried out that task of pointing out by actually conducting theological study (albeit preliminary in outlook) of the basic, if disparate, data of Christian theology, bequeathed to African Christianity, instead of merely giving "advice alone", which is what Mbiti is objecting to. However, our 'advice', with respect to the centrality of (view of) meaning, is in our opinion, absolutely necessary because theology of any kind is an impossible task without a given (view of) meaning - a primary interpretation or revelation of the world - which informs the religious community. It is certainly very much an easy matter for an interested African traditional religionist to do the theology of African traditional religion as long as he recognises that the largely unwritten religious data are ankhologically informed. It is even easier for an African Christian theologian to do Christian theology (given the written biblical data) provided that he fully recognises that the biblical data are ankhologically informed, and that the New Testament is, additionally, christologically defined.

28. Or any other theologian, for that matter.
The stumbling block to most African theologians hitherto, is that they consciously and unconsciously feel themselves compelled by their ecclesiastical history to guard and to protect the nousological inten-
tionalities of the theological, liturgical, and ecclesiological structures bequeathed to them, in spite of the fact that most of them as most of the Church members are subscribers to the ankhological (view of) meaning. It is our opinion that an ankhological new beginning is an inevitable task for theology, now. Our limited endeavour to make the Old and the New Testaments reveal their ankhological intentionality is already a move that breaks the vicious circle of the hoary advice on what to adapt and what not to adapt. It ought actually to be obvious to all and sundry by now that the ankhologically informed African religious data have defied all attempts to mutilate them for the purposes of propping up the nousological (view of) meaning. These attempts are clearly contrary to the fact that the majority of people in the West do not any longer subscribe to that particular understanding of God and the world. Thus Christian theology, African or non-African, has obviously arrived at a point where it must be given its rightful and natural ankhological criterion.

However, we must point out (and insist on it) that such a new approach to Christian theology needs clearly to grasp and consistently to hold together the inter-relatedness, the nexus, of God, man, the world, and the concept of salvation. For the goal of man, and the goal of his world (and both are constantly in need of salvation) is God Himself. In the next chapter we will consider the question of the sources of African Christian theology.
CHAPTER NINE

AFRICAN CHRISTIAN THEOLOGY:
ITS THEOLOGICAL SOURCES

The preceding chapter more or less concludes our investigations of the religious data of the Bible, the Early Church, the Western Church, and the African Church in the light of the different views of meaning. The chapter also emphasised the point that the ankholological standpoint (christologically defined in the case of the New Testament) is the basic criterion of the biblical data, which Christian theology in general and African Christian theology in particular ought no longer to peripheralise. Consequently the present chapter is more concerned with the matter of determining to what extent and in what forms the more ancient (as opposed to the rather very recent mission Christianity) religious traditions of Africa do constitute part of the sources of African Christian theology. This task implies of course that we already do assume that the ankholological criterion is the determinant, the basis, and the goal of theological questions and answers. This also means that the ankholological (view of) meaning is henceforth the centripetal and the centrifugal point which determines for us how we view, examine or construct theological systems or works in the future. It also plays the decisive part in our determination of what is theologically right or wrong, useful or useless among the enormous theological data offered by the writings, creeds and formularies of the Early Church, the Orthodox Church, the Nestorian Church, the Monophysite Churches, the African Churches, the Western Churches (etc.), and by the data of African traditional religions. The ancient religious traditions in question are of course African traditional religions, the Coptic Church and the
Ethiopian Church. It is to them that we will now turn.

1. Coptic and Ethiopian Churches and African Christian Theology:

We will deal with this section in two parts. Part (a) will discuss the case of the Coptic Church, and part (b) will discuss the Ethiopian Church. We may point out, however, that we can only deal with bare essentials as regards the two great ancient Christian traditions of Africa; and the purpose will be (as already pointed out) to see to what extent and in which forms they do provide primary sources for African Christian theology.

(i) The Coptic Church. The All Africa Conference of Churches' The Confession of Alexandria 1976 would appear to query the structural approach of our present study which makes our consideration of the Coptic Church follow our discussion of Western Christianity. Canon Carr's penetrating letter, which explains that Confession, appears to make such a query all the more acute:

"Here in the soil of Africa was the Rock of our faith... in Alexandria...in the Western Desert...in Old Cairo... in Africa. We could hear God speaking to us, 'in accents clear and still', a fresh new word...relevant to the situations, the struggles and turmoil out of which we had come to Egypt. From this Rock sprang the cool waters of renewal that would quench our thirst for identity and authenticity.

Alexandria? Yes, it is in Africa...with its rich academic, monastic, cultural and theological heritage... with its heritage of suffering and martyrdom for the cause of Christ and of His Gospel. Here we could drop the anchor of our search for identity...of our own expression of Faith...our own confession of Faith for today. This Rock of Faith always has been present and part of the soil of Africa. He is the one God, acknowledged by Akhen Aton three thousand years ago, who had revealed himself to us in the Person of His Son Jesus Christ."1

It could also be argued against this our structural approach that our present Part Four, in keeping with the spirit of Alexandria Confession,

ought to have followed after Part Two; and that Western theology is no more than a big footnote to African Christian theology. Let us say at once that our ankhological thesis, and the ancient nature of the Coptic and the Ethiopian Churches of Africa should, of course, concede these points in the light of the rather recent and the nousological character of mission Christianity. However, issues are much more complicated and complex than any such query (albeit hypothetical) of our structural approach would like to make us believe. It is therefore in order to deal with all those complex and variegated issues, that our structural approach assumed its present form. Thus African mission Christianity cannot simply betake itself to the African monophysite religious history or theological ethos in its quest for Christian religious authenticity without a prior self-questioning and theological analysis of its Western life-history. Such self-questioning and analysis also apply to Monophysitism. This is necessary if we are to avoid building a theological house of cards at this point in time. In other words the monophysite standpoint, which is the Coptic standpoint, ought to be thoroughly interrogated so as to ascertain the areas in its theology which the ankhologically informed African Christian theology could adhere to. Perhaps we ought to explain at this point that African Christian theology is, in our opinion, the activity of the African Church since the beginning of its history. This history 'begins' with the traditions of "the presence of St Mark, the disciple of Jesus, in Egypt", and "the presence of the Ethiopian Eunuch in Palestine". However, it is the task of African Christian theology to consider its data objectively so as to be able to guide the Church aright.

The Coptic Church (= the Egyptian Church) survived the Arab invasion and occupation of Egypt in the seventh century; and is today the living witness to remind us that there was a time when the African Churches of Egypt and north Africa held the first positions in ecclesi-
ological and theological activities. However, what concerns us presently is the general monophysite character of the Coptic Christian theology. The term, monophysite (mono phusis) is a christological term meaning one nature (in Christ). Before we deal with this monophysite question let us first sketch out concisely the theological history of the Orthodox Church from Chalcedon up to the seventh ecumenical council. The Monophysite Churches, which includes the Coptic Church, emerged as "schismatic" Church bodies as a result of the Chalcedonian christological compromise. This compromise was considered by the monophysite theological orientation as a victory for the Roman and the Antiochene theological positions. Rome did not of course really possess much if any theological originality at this point in time but it did possess the political, imperial, and ecclesiastical power to decide theological and christological disagreements. Thus the theological ideas in Leo's Tome can easily be shown to belong originally to the two branches of the north African Church and to the Asian (or Eastern) Churches. Hence the christological debate settled by the fourth ecumenical Council of Chalcedon (451) was actually between Africa and Syria (in Western theological parlance: between Alexandria and Antioch).

However, as already indicated, the settlement of Chalcedon was not the end of the christological matter nor was it the end of theological controversies, which became largely inevitable owing to the need to bring the biblical data within the nousological terms of reference. Thus Roberta C. Chesnut is certainly right in pointing out that,

"It has often been the case that the serious study of Chalcedon has ended with 451, while what came after it was regarded as a mere tidying up of loose ends. But the period following the Council cannot be understood

in this fashion without giving a truncated and unbalanced picture of Chalcedon itself."^3

This is because after Chalcedon the Monophysites (as the Nestorians earlier on - since 431) went their ecclesiastically and theologically different way. Even the majority subscribers (with respect to the Orthodox Church) to the Chalcedonian definition were not to enjoy much theological peace of mind after the "settlement". This is evident from the next three ecumenical Councils, all of which were convened to deal with christological disputes: the fifth Council met in Constantinople in 553. Perhaps its main achievement is that the Chalcedonian decrees which had led to the dissent of the Egyptian Church, were now reinterpreted from the latter's monophysite point of view. This event may be taken as the point in time when the Orthodox Church committed itself to a kind of "crypto-Monophysicism". 4 The sixth Council was also held at Constantinople (680-1). It condemned the Monothelite heresy. Monothelitism (= one will) is as it were Monophysitism from the back door. It accepted the Syrian insistence on the two natures theory but maintained that Christ has one will, because he is one individual. However, the Council upheld two natures and two wills in the one person of Christ against the heretics. Heresy is, of course, determined more by the dominant (view of) meaning than by anything else.

Then there was the Iconoclast controversy which went on for a period of about 120 years. It began in 726: the impingements of Islamic religion in particular and the Semitic aversion to the making of divine images in general could hardly fail to remind some of the Christians that the bible, their primary source book, forbade such images in no uncertain terms. The Iconoclast movement within the Orthodox Church

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was concerned with the getting rid of the icons (i.e., images) which had by
now filled the churches. The point which the iconoclasts failed to per­
ceive, and which the Church did, was that the non-Semitic church members
were the authentic bearers of their 'pagan' culture (with its icons) and
that there was no way of being church members without the images and
some other cultural items which were part of their lives before and
after conversion. Consequently the movement was opposed with every
relevant instrument (theological, christological, Council decision, etc.)
at hand. Thus in 787 the seventh and the last ecumenical Council met at
Nicaea and confirmed that it is theological to have Christian religious
icons and to venerate them. This Council decision did not, however,
prevent the outbreak of new attacks on icons in 815. This continued
until 843 when Orthodoxy won the victory for the icons permanently. 6

We may now take up the question of monophysite and dyophysite
tendencies in christology prior to the Chalcedonian definition. But
before we do so let us reiterate once more, even at the risk of over­
emphasis, that the heresies and schisms of the Early Church, to which the
monophysite christology belongs, were largely given rise to by the need
to conform the biblical religious data to the nousological (view of)
meaning. This factor is extremely important if we are properly to grasp
the fuller implications of such terms as phusis, hupostasis, homousion,

5. The Eastern Orthodox Church defines its nature in terms of the
decrees of the seven ecumenical Councils. And (as already pointed
out) in the absence of any serious scientific agitation the nouso­
logical basis of its theology was never really disturbed; as it was
disturbed and later marginalised in Western socio-religious history.

6. On the post-Chalcedonian controversies see especially John Meyen­
dorff, op.cit., pp.151-167; Timothy Ware, The Orthodox Church
Eastern Orthodox Church' (in) Union of Christendom (ed. Kenneth
Mackenzie, SPCK, London, 1938) pp.245-261; W.A. Wigram, 'The
Separated Eastern Communions - official doctrinal position' (in)
prosopon, logos, etc. which were so crucial to the fourth and the fifth
centuries christological controversies. Of course, none of those con-
cepts is biblical; nousologically speaking they are alien to the
ankhological thought-world of the bible. Except, however, when we begin
to deal with those documents which are clearly influenced by, or con-
tained, Hellenistic elements of thought. For instance John's Gospel,
Philippians, Colossians, Ephesians, and Hebrews.

At any rate the doctrine of one nature in Christ was from very
early times deeply rooted in Egyptian christology, while that of two
natures (duo phusis) was also from very early days rooted in Syrian
christology. The ecclesiastical capitals of these two sees were Alex-
andria and Antioch, and it is only in this sense that we could and do
speak of Antiochene and Alexandrian christologies. The monophysite
approach to the person of Christ is the "Word-flesh" approach. That of
the dyophysites is the "Word-man" approach. These Word-flesh and Word-
man concepts will become clear in the course of the next few pages.

Certain factors are common and uncommon to these two divergent schools
of christological thought. Common to both sides are the nousological
tenets such as the theory of the universals, the abstract concepts of
phusis, hupostasis, logos, prosopon, etc. Uncommon to them are (a) the
fact that the proximity of the Jewish world, with its orientation to
historicity, is much more felt in Syria than in Egypt. This of course
meant that the Antiochene theologians were most likely, under the
pressure inspired by that Jewish world, to insist on the reality of the
humanity of Jesus. But they were also being pressured at the same time
by the strong presence of Hellenism to uphold the nousological criterion
as the context of christology, theology and ecclesiology. The consequence
of this double influence, with respect to the understanding of the nature
of Christ, is the baffling, if anchkologically unacceptable, theory of
two natures, and two wills all masquerading in the one Jesus. (b) the
fact that the Egyptian theologians were obviously surrounded by the air of the African notion of divine king; kings were from time immemorial taken to be gods in human flesh. Thus the insistence by the Egyptian theologians that Christ is God in human flesh is a strong conviction with traditional precedents and underpinning; which Leo's Tome and the Antiochene theologians could have understood but refused to. They could because the notion of divine beings was never confined to Africa. However, the idea of divine kings appears to have had deeper roots in Egypt than in other parts of the empire. At any rate the Syrians insistence on the two natures, one divine the other human, is apparently a watering down of the divinity of Jesus which the Egyptians continuously refused to accept; even to the point of the monophysite schism. Because such a divine-human patchwork is too far removed from the simple straightforward idea that this Jesus is God (in the sense of a member of the Trinity) incarnate in human flesh. However, it must be pointed out that quite a large number of people outside Egypt, especially in the regions of Syria and Armenia, accepted the Word-flesh christology and so entered the Monophysite schism as much as the Egyptian Church.

We will next consider more clearly these notions of Word-flesh and Word-man christologies in the light of soteriology. In fact the disagreements were insisted upon partly because the two understandings were each allied to a particular soteriological judgement. The Word-flesh christology works with the notion of humanity, viewed as a universal. But it was seen as a fallen humanity, which has lost the divine gift of immortality. It is therefore a corrupt humanity. The work of Christ

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7. George Every has rightly laid emphasis on this African traditional influence on christological and theological understanding, although he did so on his way to his idea of the Pope as the "universal primate". He himself was an Anglican turned Roman Catholic so he tended to view all ecclesiastical traditions from his new standpoint. Cf. G. Every, op. cit., especially chapter 4 entitled "The Kingship of Christ in Egypt and Babylon".
is basically to restore immortality. Hence the doctrine of incarnation
is decisive, because it was the moment when the Word assumed the stuff
of humanity. This assumption was a new creative act by the creative
Word (Logos). Consequently the resurrection (and not the Cross) becomes
the great moment of assurance; assurance that mortality has been over-
come. Thus God became man that we may become divine. Consequently the
emphasis was on the unity of the person of the incarnate divine Word as
opposed to the dyophysite separation. Athanasius (295-373) insisted on
it until his death. And Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) fought for it. The
extreme form of it is the Apollinarian heresy, which denied human will
to the person of Christ altogether. To Apollinarius the Antiochene
notion of "a man conjoined with God" was one to be rejected. And he did
so with his belief that the divine Word in Jesus was the substitute for
the human soul, spirit, and will in his person. Such ideas clearly dis-
turbed orthodoxy, which feared that the salvation of man (who commits
sin with his will) is impaired if the incarnate Word assumed was without
soul, spirit and will. So Apollinarianism was condemned as a heresy.

The Eutychian position was also condemned. He, Eutyches, accepted the
idea of two natures, but maintained that it was not so after the union.
Thus after the union there was only one incarnate Christ, who is of one
nature.

The disagreement between the Word-flesh and the Word-man christo-
ologies came to a head over the notion of Theotokos, which was at home
in Egypt but deeply disturbing to the Syrians. The term applied to
Mary, the mother of Jesus, and means God-bearing. Nestorius found the
idea of the human Mary as the Mother of God clearly too hard to accept.
He was prepared to accept the notion of Christotokos (Christ-bearing).
Perhaps deep down in his heart he would have preferred the term anthropo-
potokos (man-bearing). He in fact suggested that if the term Theotokos

is used, the term anthropotokos also be used to qualify it. These viewpoints of his came in the open in 428, and immediately drew down the wrath of Cyril of Alexandria. We have already pointed out the pre-Christian ideas which also lay behind the controversy. It is equally in order to indicate that Cyril's opposition to Nestorius was partly fuelled by the fact that Alexandria as a city was fast losing its primary status in the empire to the new Rome (Constantinople). But it did not go down without a fight. Unfortunately any bitterness expressed seemed to have gone into the fight against Nestorius - the new Patriarch of Constantinople. Nestorius was a strong advocate of the Word-man christology. This approach to the nature of Christ insisted that the Word assumed a total man and not just human flesh. Its anxiety was that unless Jesus was fully man then man was not really assumed and therefore not really saved.

The controversy between the two sides eventually led to the convening of the third ecumenical Council at Ephesus (431). But Cyril and his party appeared to have come with the intention of forcing their own position on the Council. That was exactly what they did even before the arrival of Nestorius and his party. The latter were a few days late in reaching Ephesus and Nestorius, who was already in the city, understandably declined to attend the session without his party. Cyril seized the opportunity and chaired the Council which wasted no time in drawing up points to be accepted as orthodox. The points, as would be expected, were fenced round with sufficient anathemas. Nestorius was condemned as a heretic and accordingly deposed. Nestorius, however, held a contrary session with his party as soon as they arrived and reached their own resolution, which in turn condemned Cyril's teaching with a good number of anathemas. They also deposed him. However, it was Cyril's own Council which was recognised as the third ecumenical Council; precisely because Rome supported it.
The Council of 431 was very divisive: the origin of the Nestorian Church, which exists to this day, dates from it. However, if the Syrian and the Egyptian positions were to be reconciled then another Council would be needed. Such a Council was held in 451, although there was a prior attempt to patch up the quarrel between the one nature and the two natures christological approaches. The symbol of agreement is a formula known as the Symbol of Union (433). It is a formula which never really solved the problem it set out to solve. And the outbreak of Eutyches' teaching in 448 makes that clear. It was the Eutychian controversy which in the end forced the Chalcedonian Council of 451.

According to J.N.D. Kelly:

"The whole object of the council, from the imperial point of view, was to establish a single faith throughout the empire." 9

The emperor in question was Marcian, a supporter of the two natures christology. He wanted a new creed to be formulated, but the majority of the bishops present did not want another creed. They felt that the Nicene Creed was sufficient. But the emperor insisted on a formulary which everyone could be required to sign. So the bishops decided for a Definition which, in its confession of faith, set out to incorporate elements from Leo's Tome, and from the one nature and the two natures theories. However, it had long been clear that Rome emphasised the christological notion of Jesus as "fully God and fully man". The Syrian and Egyptian positions accepted this definition, of course. But the Syrians tended to put the emphasis on the man-ward side while the Egyptians emphasised the God-ward side. The problems created by the understanding that Jesus is fully God and fully man, in the face of the Scriptures which show him as thirsty, feeling hunger, growing in stature and wisdom, and ignorant of the hour of the coming of the son of man,

were usually taken care of by all sides in the dispute with the theory of the communication of attributes (communio idiomatum). The theory holds that expressions relating to the God-side of Jesus (e.g. that he is eternal) could also be used of his man-side; and that those relating to his man-side (e.g. his expression of ignorance) can also be used of his God-side. It is the exchange of idioms.

The Definition speaks of Jesus in one of its sections as,

"one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, only begotten, made known in two natures without confusion, without change, without division, without separation, the difference of the natures being by no means removed because of the union, but the property of each nature being preserved and coalescing in one prosopon and one hypostasis - not parted or divided into two prosopa, but one and the same Son, only-begotten, divine Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets of old and Jesus Christ Himself have taught us about Him and the creed of our fathers has handed down."10

Perhaps the importance of this confession of faith lies as much in its struggle to bring the Jesus of the bible fully into the nousological terms of reference as in anything else. But it is a struggle and not a success. However, the Definition stressed the two natures just as Leo's Tome had done. To the monophysites it was evident that Rome and Antioch had banded together. It also seemed to them that the divinity of Jesus was threatened. The corollary of these suspicions was the birth of the Monophysite Churches of which the Church of Egypt (or Copt) was the prime mover.

It is, of course, true that the Council of 553 redefined the Chalcedonian formulation along the Cyrillian lines but it is also true that the Iconoclast controversy compelled a re-emphasis of the two natures. However, the Orthodox Church while more "crypto-monophysite" than Chalcedonian nevertheless subjected the Monophysites (and the Nestorians) to prolonged persecutions. These persecutions clearly served to prepare

10. Quoted in J.N.D. Kelly, op.cit., p.340. We preferred this translation to Henry Bettenson's; cf. his Documents of the Christian Church, pp.51-52.
the ground for the triumph of Islam. The latter were in most cases welcomed as a liberator.

Perhaps we are now in a better position to ask the question: How is African Christian theology, committed to the ankhological (view of) meaning, to view the Coptic (Monophysite) Church? The problem here is that the Church, in keeping with the teaching of the African Church Fathers of the Early Church, is nousologically informed. And it is not out of context to point out at this juncture that the ease with which the Early African Churches viewed Islam as the liberator raises not only political questions but also questions as to the deep-rootedness of the nousologically informed Churches within communities which largely viewed meaning ankhologically. But the Coptic Church survived - more or less like an oasis. (And it is equally the case that the ancient north African churches did not disappear at once.) Thus the survival of the Coptic Church calls for deeper reasons as to why: In addition to the fact that the reduction of their liturgy, the Scriptures and other religious documents in Coptic played a great part in their survival, we may add that there are dimensions in the Monophysite understanding of theology which most easily lend themselves to the ankhological (view of) meaning which had informed Egyptian culture for thousands of years. These dimensions of linkage could be ankhologically fully developed to the point of showing that the nousological tenets are in the final analysis no more than secondary features.

Some such areas of linkage can be seen in the Monophysite emphases


on (1) the decisive victory of the resurrection over the Cross, (2) the
soteriological understanding of the work of Christ as the victory of
life over death, (3) the understanding of salvation in terms of deliver­
ance, and as cosmic in dimension, instead of merely the escape of souls
from the body and from the world, (4) the fact that the notion of life
(ankh, a Coptic word) as the meaning and goal of phenomena is a (view
of) meaning which the Coptic Church, missionary Christianity, non-
misionary Christianity, the biblical world, and African traditional
religion commonly assume in varying degrees. These basic points of con­
tact are such that African Christian theology is offered in them the
additional platform from which to make it clear that the ankholological
intentionality is the ground of Christianity and Christian theology.

(ii) The Ethiopian Church: We will largely confine our short
discussion on the Ethiopian Church to pointing out what we regard as an
impediment to objective and fruitful scholarship, which African Christian
theology must set aside if any progress in its Ethiopian studies is to
be made. The impediment in question is the racialistic approaches to
Ethiopian studies. We have already noted this phenomenon in our dis­
cussion of Egyptology and what we termed "the basic thesis of African
studies in the West". The latter implies, essentially, that the Negro is
(a) dark skinned, (b) primitive, (c) uncultured and uncivilised, (d)
primal, in the sense of being in our time (that is, western time) but
not of it. He has only managed to make it to the modern world. Conse­
quently any light-skinned person, any attitude that runs counter to
primitivity, any presence of culture or civilisation in art, idiosyn-
crasy or in society was generally traced to the caucosoid (or the Aryan
man) who, it was usually claimed, possessed these qualities and abilities
naturally and genetically. It is therefore not surprising that most
works on Egypt and Ethiopia are distorted by these wishful, if fallacious,
ways of thinking.
It must be pointed out, however, that the above factors were much more articulated in the nineteenth century, and more denied (or more muted by more people) in modern times. It is partly in reaction to its nineteenth-century form that Edward W. Blyden presented a paper on "Ethiopia stretching out her hands unto God; or, Africa's Service to the World" to the American Colonization Society in May 1880.13 Ethiopianism has since his time been more often than not understood in spirito-racial-istic terms in many quarters. This is also a myth which needs to be debunked for the sake of genuine understanding of the Ethiopian spirituality. It is, however, our affirmation that this genuine understanding can only come about by viewing the Ethiopian Church in the light of what it is: an ancient African Church. It is in so doing that we are bound to reject Edward Ullendorff's thesis which takes Ethiopia as "this remote outpost of the Semitic world".14 This thesis forms the all-inclusive basis of his study of the Ethiopian Church. For instance in page 108 (op.cit.) he claims, "The date of circumcision on the eighth day is shared, to my knowledge, by Jews and Ethiopians only". We must point out against this claim (Ullendorff actually leaves room for such possible correction) that the Igbo (particularly northern Igbo), whose customs I am familiar with, do, from time immemorial, circumcise both the male and the female child on the eighth day. And it needs to be noted that the Ethiopians circumcise the male and the female child while the Jews do not circumcise the female. This kind of forcing every aspect of the Ethiopian Church and social practices into the view that the mainstream Ethiopians are Semitic people (and not Africans) is clearly noticeable throughout the book. It is in fact surprising that Ullendorff

should stress (and rightly so) the following aspects of the Ethiopian Church as he did, with his back turned on such practices in the African non-missionary churches or in the African cultures; the practices are: tendency to Hebraism, building churches on high hills (the holy ground), dietary prescriptions, ritual cleanliness, sabbath observance, building round churches, "dancing, the beating of drums, the rattling of the sistra, the plucking of lyres and harps" (p.94) etc. He pressed all these into the mould of Ethiopia as a "remote outpost of the Semitic world". It seems to me that the Semitic approach only served to vitiate much of the contents of his work.

It may also be noted that E.G. Parrinder in his Africa's Three Religions also fell victim to the kind of notion which asserted that Egyptians were "black white" people. Hence he claims,

"Christianity was taken to the Sudan or Nubia by missionaries from Egypt.... This was the first establishment of the Church among the Negro races." 16

It is in the light of this piece of Egyptology that we may view his rather too pronounced emphasis on the dependency of the Ethiopian Church on the Egyptian Church at many points in his section on the Ethiopian Church. For instance, "The Ethiopian church was dependent on Egypt, followed its Monophysite teaching and received its bishop (Abuna, our father) from there" (op.cit., pp.115-116). To understand Parrinder's approach more fully we need to note that there are usually two main explanations regarding the origin of Christianity in Ethiopia. On the one hand are those who want to insist that Ethiopia received its Christianity in the fourth century; and that it received it together with its strong and pronounced Old Testament features, practices, and ethos.


This explanation fits, of course, into the mainstream missiology which likes to see African Christianity in the light of missionary work. Parrinder belongs to this camp. The second explanation is more objective. It accepts that the Old Testament faith is a prior and older context into which Christianity was later inserted. This is in fact the account which the Ethiopian Church traditionally holds. And it is supported by the fact that the Falasha 'ethnic' group in the country who do not profess the Christian faith nevertheless do adhere to the Old Testament type of religion. However, the depth of the influence of the Old Testament practices in the Ethiopian Church is such that we are better informed if we view the former as much older than the latter. Thus Ullendorff rightly, in our opinion, argues for this view that the Old Testament religion was already established before the arrival of Christianity.

With this ancient character of the two biblical religions in Ethiopia in mind, we may begin to assess S. von Sicard's belief that adaptation theology is an adequate methodology for the study of both the Ethiopian Church and the other ancient African Churches. Thus on the issue of Africanisation he says,

"One way in which this could happen is for theologians concerned with the africanisation of the Church to study the ancient churches of Africa i.e. those of Egypt, Ethiopia and Sudan, and their traditions to see what patterns of indigenisation emerge and whether these would help the younger churches in their search for authenticity and identity. Such a study is important ...because it would help the younger churches to grapple with their own situation, rather than simply reacting to the ways and forms in which the Gospel has been brought to Africa via Europe and North America. It would offer them an opportunity to look into the ways in which the Church in Africa faced its responsibility to present the Gospel long before there was any 'European' influence to react against."\(^{18}\)

\(^{17}\) The ancient African Church of Sudan which continued into the sixteenth century needs to be borne in mind also.

The main point which we may raise against this well-intentioned piece of advice is that the modern concept of indigenisation cannot really be used by African theologians on the ancient African Churches, in the sense of seeking out what to adapt and what not to adapt, when the basic problem, as we have argued, is that it has yet to recognise and accept that the primary ground for its theological and ecclesiological activities is the ankhological (view of) meaning. What is needed is this realisation, after which possible points of contact with the ancient Churches may, in our opinion, be more fruitfully investigated. Theology is not a matter of adaptation. It is a matter of elucidation; and what is elucidated is basically the meaning which informs the religious data, the people, and the world. Things other than this primary factor are secondary features to theological activity. On their own they are almost irrelevant.

Therefore in concluding this section we may suggest that a theological investigation of the Ethiopian Church ought to bear in mind the strong sense of commensality which underlies its ecclesiastical structure. Such investigations also need to grasp this commensal factor as it is manifested (especially) in the African non-missionary churches, and in the Old Testament; that is, the covenant in the case of the latter. Then from this point the extent of the christological, and not simply theological, understanding within the Church needs to be ascertained; and deepened if necessary.

2. African traditional religion and African Christian theology:

Our concern in this section is, basically, to consider the place of African traditional religion and culture in African Christian theology. This consideration is very important given our rejection of the idea that adaptation theology, etc. could constitute the criterion of African Christian theology. It is also important because of our unequi-
vocal acceptance of the adaptation theologians' insistence that Christian theology must address itself to African traditional culture and religion. However, it may be noted that to the adaptation theologians, Christian theology primarily means Western theology; hence the talk of adaptation. This equation of Christian theology with Western theology also involved them in assuming the nousological standpoint as the basic biblical view of meaning.

We may now preface our discussion on the relationship of African traditional religion and Christian theology with the indication that our thesis of primary interpretation (or revelation) also means a conscious rejection of what we may describe as a cyclic view of meaning. It is important to realise that the dubious ideas of "primal world-view" and "primal vision" are more or less informed by this cyclic conception of meaning. The notion of a cyclic view of meaning is, objectively speaking, a rather ambiguous notion; even though it derived from the theory of a cyclic conception of history. A clearer distinction between these two closely related viewpoints is necessary: A cyclic view of history is concerned with time and obtains within the compass of chronology. On the other hand a cyclic view of meaning is, strictly speaking, a misunderstanding of the cyclic view of history; it erroneously sees the intentionality of the latter in terms of nature of meaning. These distinctions need to be taken seriously because the fallacious assumption that meaning was viewed cyclically by any people, past or present, is a common one.

This is certainly the case with those works on the religion of the Old Testament which adopted the evolutionary approach. They usually stress the conclusion that the earlier stages of that religion viewed history cyclically. This stress is often accompanied by emphasis on the polytheistic nature of the religion of this period. The mistaken understanding is that polytheism necessarily excludes monotheism, as if the
two are in a kind of either/or relationship. Perhaps it is necessary for us to stress that polytheistic dimensions in a given belief-system do also assume a given dominant (view of) meaning. And the latter is the modality which conveys the one God (i.e. the Meaning). However, this point at which emphasis is placed on polytheism is often also the point which does indicate that an almost imperceptible shift has been made from the theory of a cyclic view of history to a theory of a cyclic view of meaning. Hence polytheism which relates to the various gods associated with the cycle of seasons and to other aspects of phenomena is in a sense (perhaps unconsciously) taken as consequent on a cyclic view of history. And both are usually written off on the same line.

It is obviously still necessary to draw out the essential points in our above analysis: (a) while a cyclic view of historical events is certainly an undeniable social phenomenon it is also to be noted that no society really or completely views history cyclically. There is always the linear-pole; for instance the king (or leader) who died five years ago was dead five years ago. His death is a once-and-for-all event; an event which is now recalled lineally rather than cyclically. He may "reincarnate" but 'his' reincarnate life is totally other than and distinct from his old life which came to an 'end' with his death. (b) a cyclic view of history (which co-exists with the linear-view) more often than not deals with seasons, and with the planting and reaping normally associated with them. And also with the wars or the festivals organised around them. (c) a cyclic view of meaning taken as a primary interpretation (or revelation) is a contradiction in terms. In fact the concept of a cyclic view of meaning is, in the final analysis, a secondary question. Hence polytheism is merely a conglomeration of the various divinistic interpretations of various phenomenal manifestations. For instance an unusual crag of rock, a particular type of tree or animal
is seen as a deity because it induces numinous experience. Or a human or natural quality like strength, weakness, or thunder is deified towards controlling or being at peace with it. (d) Consequently none of the above factors is to be equated with a primary interpretation of the world; which orders the universe by receiving or giving meaning to it. All other factors obtain or operate in a world already so ordered. Therefore those "other factors" belong to second-order questions; and may come or go, multiply or diminish without world-shaking disruptions. Because they are merely gods and events and not God. In fact in some, if not all, African traditional religions consistently recalcitrant deities 'are' often taken to town borders and bade farewell. Among the Igbo, Ikenga knows full well that it must play its 'divine' role or face the censure of its owner. Yet African traditional religion could not contemplate bidding farewell to God. That would spell the end of the world. Also the Jews did not at any time in their history contemplate living without the one God. Of course, they came to grow out of polytheism in the course of their history and also came to a point when they rejected it for other nations; but these had nothing to do with the idea of one God, the primary Meaning, which is generally taken for granted from the start. It does not, of course, necessarily follow that what is taken for granted is always stated.

The problems which the complex issues in the above points created for the missionaries in Africa are well known: Ideas such as that traditional Africa "does not believe in one God", that its religion is solely "polytheistic", that it was at first "monotheistic" before declining into polytheism, that what it believes in is not in the one God but in a "High God" were each a bone of contention at one time or the other. 19

19. For these ideas cf. particularly W. Schmidt, The Origin and Growth of Religion (Methuen, London, 1931); E.G. Parrinder, West African Religion (Epworth, London, 196 ed.) especially p.13 ff. For more recent studies on African traditional religions which discussed the
The truth of the matter is that traditional African religion believes in the one God who is primarily and totally in a class of His own. It also believes in many gods who belong to the mundane world created by that God. It also comprehends this one God as an ankhological being. This was the theological position of African traditional religion long before 'Israel' left Africa as a distinct group which later became a nation. It was after 'her' emergence from Egypt that we meet her with the primary notion of the living God at the centre of the Yahwist religion. Then Christianity was born because of the emergence, the incarnation, of the greatest expresser of the ankhological meaning - Jesus Christ the son of God.

We have now arrived at a point at which we must take up our concepts of "recognition" and "elucidation". We have so far referred to them in passing; however, they do define what we regard as the correct approaches to the doing of African Christian theology. Firstly, the concept of recognition refers to the necessity, in our opinion, to grasp that the kernel of the biblical religious data as of the African traditional religion is the ankhological meaning. This recognition of the primary role of the ankhological standpoint in the biblical and in the African traditional religious systems raises an immediate question regarding the cultural details of African traditional religions: What is African Christianity to make of these? The question is an acute one because the identity of meaning does not by any means imply identical copies when it comes to the appropriations and reflections of the kernel. One can, of course, say that it is because of their common subscription to the basic principle of ankhological standpoint that Jewish and

19. (continued from overleaf)

African religious systems are averse to the making of images of God, to the advocacy of monastic life, to the opposition of the supernatural to the natural etc., but there are many more which will still be left out. And it is these which actually do define the distinctiveness of African traditional religious culture from the biblical culture.

Therefore to answer the question the following factors must be taken into account: firstly, that African religio-cultural data are primarily informed by the ankhological standpoint; secondly, that the data are merely secondary in their relation to the ankhological meaning; thirdly, that the data are not christologically defined; and fourthly, that African christians (as their non-Christian counterparts) are also the authoritative bearers of the culture of African traditional religions. This fourth factor is far-reaching in its implications, because it means that the data which the question refers to are actually within the being of the African Christian or theologian and not merely without. As a result the culture of African traditional religion which obtains in the Churches is at once the culture of African Christianity. The task of African Christian theology is therefore to give them christological expressions. But we must warn that the data which obtains without do lie within the territory which rightly belongs to the traditional religionists. The right of the christians in this sphere is no more than evangelistic in nature.

Consequently the answer to the question is one of emphasising what is already said: the data of African culture obtaining in the Church, inspite of the pretensions of Western culture present in it, is now, also, the data of African Christian theology. Because African Christians are equally the authoritative bearers of African culture. They have no other of which they are collectively its authoritative bearers. In the light of this fact, and in the light of our conclusions on the nousological and the ankhological standpoints we may now declare that there is nothing
to adapt, nothing to contextualise, nothing to indigenise, nothing to traditionalise, and nothing to Africanise. On the theory of "Christ incarnate in African culture" we may also stress that strictly speaking Christ is incarnate in man and not in culture. The decisive point is that whatever African Christians are is what their culture is. And wherever they are is also where their culture is. Now they are Christians, so the culture they are bearing is Christian; now they are in the Church so their culture is also in the Church.  

The above claims perhaps require to be additionally viewed in the context of our definition of "gospel and culture": the gospel-principle is cultureless because it is a message. The message is that Jesus Christ of Nazareth, son of man and son of God, is the very fulfilment of the Old Testament hope. This hope was that in the future lay the moment when life should triumph over death and over the anti-life and demoniacal structures of evil and sin in man, in society, in nature and in the world. The fulfilment of this hope is defined by the resurrection of Christ. At any rate it is equally obvious that the gospel message had never at any time existed outside culture. But while it was the Jewish culture which cradled it it is also the case that the principle is universal in intentionality. The implication of this last point is that the principle can never be contented with one form (i.e. Jewish) of culture. For the true structure of the principle's culture-robe is potentially composed of the entire cultures of the world; but only to the extent those cultures are found in the Christian Churches of the world. Hence it is therefore sinful for Christians to try to reject their cultures rather than bring them to Christ. It is also sinful to coerce Christians so

20. We must stress, however, that it is one thing to say that the culture borne by the African Christians "is Christian" and "in the Church" and another thing to say that it is theologically right and acceptable in all cases. Nor would anyone conversant with the biblical data dare say that every cultural factor found in the temple, synagogue or church of the earliest period was theologically right and acceptable. These questions are matters for theology to decide, in the course of its service to the Church.
to reject them. However, the primary factor is the necessity to recognize the ankho­logical basis of Christian theology; for it is only in the light of this criterion that the various cultures (borne by the christians) can secure their christological legitimisations.

The next matter for consideration is our concept of elucidation. The character of African Christian theology must, in our judgement, be basically and primarily informed by the ankho­logical meaning if it is to be unquestionably true to the biblical intentionality; and if it is to become meaningful and authentic to the African Church and peoples. African Christian theology ought also to take upon itself the task of pointing the world to the ankho­logical intentionality of the Christian faith. Thus its approach ought to be both particular and universal.

This process of pointing out is actually a process of elucidations. The goal is meaning; that is, ankho­logical meaning. What are elucidated are the ankho­logical nature of God, of Christ, of the biblical data, of the cultural data borne by the Christians and the Church; the ankho­logical nature of man and his hopes, and of salvation and eschatology. This normative and methodological insistence on the ankho­logical meaning is equally the task of hermeneutics.

Finally we may also indicate that this elucidation methodology includes, as a matter of course, dealing with matters that fall within the categories of commensality and phenomenon-aura. These categories belong inseparably to the all-inclusive ankho­logical standpoint. However, we hardly need to emphasise that a great deal of life-constricting superstitions and mythologies which has built up unchecked (over centuries) in the speculative world of phenomenon-aura must be clearly faced and critically, if carefully, rendered harmless. But we may at the same time stress that it is equally the one which deals with spiritual questions, which are obviously very important in religion. Thus it does also contain a great deal of valid spiritual questions.
For instance, is the Holy Spirit not God's phenomenon-essence? In the next section we will assess what we may describe as the challenge of non-mission Churches.

3. The Challenge of Non-mission Churches (i.e. 'Independent' Churches):

Many of the studies on the "Independent Churches" hitherto were, in our judgement, more or less based on a wrong assessment of the reasons for their emergence from the ranks of the mission (or missionary, see pp. 2 - 3 ) Churches. They are usually seen as neo-pagans, separatists, nativists, Hebraists, etc. The less apologetic works tended to regard them as Independents. We have on our part also used the term Independent Churches to designate them. However, we have come to prefer the term non-mission Churches because of our recognition that what defines their separateness from the mission Churches is not primarily a desire for independence (etc.) for its own sake but the urge to maintain a continuity with the traditional social ideology of commensality. Scholars like H.W. Turner and D.B. Barrett have of course done much to present the case of the non-mission Churches in a better light. But their approaches had been mostly apologetic in nature; while at the same time failing to undertake a really serious assessment of the churches in question in the context of the African primary interpretation of the world. It is in the course of remedying this situation that we reached the conclusion that "the Independent Churches are the authentic communities". That is, authentic on the basis of their continuity with the said ideology of commensality. However, their insertedness into this factor is not the whole story; because their ecclesiastical self-hood is, basically, christologically defined. This final point is important

22. For instance his two volumes on The Church of the Lord (Aladura) published by OUP (1967).
in any group that calls itself Christian. And it is a requirement which
is on the whole fully met by the non-mission Churches.

What is important to note, however, is that the notion of commensality is one of the frameworks in the ankhological view of meaning.
And they are part of the basic structure of the total reality\textsuperscript{25} of the non-mission Churches. In the latter there is a great concern for a harmonious relationship with God, for commensality and for spiritual matters; and Christ is regarded as the mediator of these expectations. This is what Kenneth Enang probably meant when he speaks (with respect to the non-mission churches) of,

"the setting where the openness of man to man and confidence reign; one feels accepted by his brothers and sisters, problems are accorded adequate attention and a true chain of love binds all of them together. Here one feels free to expose his heart not only in prayer to God in an unconventional mood, but also to his neighbour sitting next to him. The openness of man to man in an atmosphere of trust and brotherhood signifies the inner religious reality encountered by the members."\textsuperscript{26}

It is in the Christian achievement (consequent on the clash between the African traditional culture and religion) embodied in the total reality of the non-mission Churches that the mission Churches are challenged. It is this authentic achievement which creates in them the now proverbial "self-confidence". And their ankhologically informed ecclesiastical confidence and trust are obviously in a different category from the despairing calls for adaptation, traditionalisation, contextualisation, etc. This challenge obviously calls for a resolution; which

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{25} By "total reality" we mean "that which is of the permanent essence of the non-mission Churches taken together as opposed to the elements that have no permanent bearing on their overall definition". However, what is included or excluded in that permanent essence is a matter for theology to decide. But what cannot be excluded is the centrality of God (understood ankhologically), Christ (the supreme expresser of the ankhological standpoint), and the Holy Spirit (the essential power of God).
\item \textsuperscript{26} Cf. K. Enang, 'Community and Salvation in the Nigerian Independent Churches' (in) Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft und Religiwissenschaft, vol.60, no.4, 1976, pp.276-291; see p.260 for the quotation.
\end{itemize}
can only come by the missionary Churches taking a positive step towards seeing in the total reality of the non-missionary Churches the answer to the problems of indigenisation. This step obviously raises its own problems which must be seriously taken into account. But they are largely theological problems. For instance the unacceptable problem of the central roles given to visions and prophecies in the non-mission Churches; and the fact that not all such Churches can be unequivocally accepted as a Christian body; it is of course the case that these problems cannot be solved or even discussed without a theological appropriation of the living theological materials obtaining in the non-mission Churches. Let us take up these points for closer examination.

(a) The immediate problems presented by visions and prophecies are,

(1) too much power is concentrated in the hands of one individual who is almost always not educated in the sense of being theologically informed. In this situation both the prophet (or prophetess) and the Church are exposed to all sorts of misinformations, which can sometimes be exceedingly misleading or even destructive in their implications.

(2) creativity and progress can be dangerously restricted and confined basically because visions and prophecies understood solely in terms of foretelling instead of mainly forthtelling (open to all members) is often antithetically opposed to religious reasonings. The danger is that in any community where the full flowering of the creative potentialities of reason is retarded human suffering will be the price paid in the long run. However, it needs to be stressed that visionaries and prophets in the non-mission Churches are phenomena consequent on the missionaries' attitude to, and attacks on, African culture, which bears the ankho­logical meaning. Thus the way in which the farsighted leaders of the non-mission Churches distanced themselves and their followers from the missionary ignorance of cultural truths was by opting to operate from
the legitimising platforms of visions, prophecies and dreams. And they are right, in the circumstances.

(b) Some non-mission groups are clearly of the character which lends support to the inadequate term "neo-pagan". This factor must be recognised in dealing with any group which does not consider Jesus Christ as its Lord.

(c) The insertedness of the non-mission Churches in the ankho-logical meaning, their beliefs, songs and actions are all materials waiting for theological elucidation. However, the ending of hostility between the missionary and the non-missionary Churches is obviously a pre-requisite to a common birth of theological interest in the ankho-logical meaning of the bible and other materials. It is only such theological activity undertaken from a position of a common acceptance of each other which can lead the way in the process of removing all irrelevant characteristics in both the mission and the non-mission Churches. Otherwise hostility is a big problem and a stumbling-block.

With the above points on the challenge of the non-mission Churches we end our discussions of the theological sources of African Christian theology. And with the present chapter we end the analyses and the evaluations of the various sources and factors which we considered necessary to a proper understanding of the various aspects of our thesis. The various aspects may be summarised as follows:

(1) Christian theological methodologies have hitherto operated with little reference to the biblical notion of Life basically because theological activities have assumed the nousological (view of) meaning as the biblical standpoint. This stems of course from a general lack of

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27. Nathaniel I. Ndiokwere's Prophecy and Revolution - the role of prophets in the Independent African Churches and in biblical tradition (SPCK, London, 1981) does not seem to me to have fully grasped the extent of the problems posed by the centrality of visionaries, prophets, and dreams in some "Independent" Churches. Though he has rightly recognised that prophecy is part of the basic structure of biblical and christian religions.
awareness that culture-worlds do not often or necessarily subscribe, as a matter of course, to identical primary interpretation of the world (cf. Chapter One). Nor was it clearly grasped that such given primary interpretations (or revelation) do form the kernels of religious systems. Although philosophical speculations have held different views of Ultimate Reality.

(2) However, it is the problem of inauthenticity within African Christianity, and the absence of a clear basis for African Christian theology which did set us on the quest for religious and theological truth, with regard to the Western understanding of the bible and the Christ event. It is to this Western understanding that African theologians do try to adapt aspects of African cultures. All these involved us as a matter of course to investigate the basic nature of the problems attending African Christianity and theology. This investigation revealed that the dominant ankhological standpoint of the African culture-world has consistently refused to yield its place to the nousological standpoint which was illegitimately made dominant in the theological and ecclesiological structures of the African Church by the missionary authorities. It is the need to find the basis for settling this energy-sapping disagreement which led to our search for the nature of the biblical (view of) meaning. The intention of this search is clear: African Christianity (and theology) is bound by its commitment to the Christ event to give itself to the biblical standpoint.

(3) Our investigation of both the Old and the New Testaments reveals that their view of meaning, which was revelationally given, is predominantly Life. However, while the OT views 'it' Yahwistically the NT views 'it' Yahwistically and Christologically. We naturally named this notion of life ankh, because the notion already formed the primary basis for perceiving the world in Egypt. It is from this African kingdom that the people of 'Israel' later emerged to become a
nation.

(4) The accounts of Chapter Five revealed that it was in the course of the Early Church that the nousological standpoint, subscribed to by the 'West' and the imperial authorities, effectively marginalised and banned other primary interpretations, including the ankhological standpoint. Henceforth the nousological standpoint was to become the undisputed criterion for conducting Christian theology by the various theological methodologies which cropped up in the course of Western Christian history.

(5) Part Three argues that the predominance of the nousological standpoint in Western Christianity lasted until the emergence of the Einsteinian theory of relativity. And points out that it is the marginalisation of the former by the latter which created the state of theological confusion which Western theologians have not yet overcome. At any rate we have pointed out, with respect to the latter context, that the ankhological standpoint is not only the biblical (view of) meaning which ought to constitute the criterion of Christian theology but that it is the standpoint which, in our opinion, is the one which the Einsteinian position is bound to serve if science will remain meaningful.

(6) Part Four assesses the theological issues which are more or less peculiar to African Christianity and its theology. Our conclusion is that the problems stem from the failure of African Christianity and theology to recognise that they are primarily inserted in the ankhological (view of) meaning. It is our recognition of their insertedness in the ankhological criterion which warranted our rejection of the ideas of adaptation, contextualisation, etc. on the ground that they stem from a mistaken premise. This premise is the uncritical acceptance of the nousological standpoint as the norm. However, it only served to lead to a blind alley. Nevertheless, we pointed out that African Christian theology has its criterion in the biblical criterion which is the
ankhological standpoint. This naturally led us to discuss the concepts of recognition and elucidation. It is in the light of these two concepts (which do focus on the ankhological meaning) that we approached the data of African Christian theology.

In the next section (which we would regard as the conclusion of the thesis) we will take up the four basic themes of Christian theology (i.e. the Father, the Son, the Spirit, and salvation). They will be elucidated with reference to the data of African Christianity. The discussions will be extremely short but they are intended to give some idea of what we mean by an ankhologically based theology as it relates to African data. The data provided by the biblical world and African data are actually the primary sources of African Christian theology.
CONCLUSION

I

The ankhological meaning and other primary interpretations: We have throughout this study employed the analytical tools of marginalisation/peripheralisation and dominant/predominant to express the interrelatedness between the different primary interpretations of the world identified within the areas our research concerned itself with. In fact the notion of primary interpretation is one of the other ways by which our thesis carefully insists on this subject of the interrelatedness of the various interpretations of the world. At any rate the concepts of marginalisation and dominance which define the status of a given primary interpretation in a given culture-world can even be more quickly and immediately assessed in the life-cases of individuals; that is, their predispositions to the world. For instance in an individual predisposition the Persian dualistic approach, or the nousological metaphysical approach, or the sunyatological tendency to negate phenomena, or the ankhological affirmation of the unity of the spiritual and the physical may be the predominant or the marginalised. It is therefore fairly safe to say that every individual is by virtue of his being human the potential bearer of primary interpretations of the world; which we have considered on a universal canvas. It is precisely our assumption of this human potentiality which enabled us to argue the case of the ankhological standpoint. Because we do believe that the entire world of men can be persuaded to usher the ankhological meaning into the centre-stage of the affairs of mankind. Thus while there is no ground for a neat separation of the various standpoints there is certainly a ground for observing which
view of meaning is primary or secondary to an individual or to a culture-world.

II

Life and the doctrine of God: Christian theology has until recently understood the nature of theological activity primarily in terms of determining the essential nature of God and his attributes, and the essential nature of the relationship between the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. This is precisely the nousological approach, because if spiritual questions are exclusively metaphysical in nature then it becomes necessary indeed to expend energy on mapping out the contours of the metaphysical objects of faith. But theology does not begin with the metaphysical 'God'; it begins with the 'concrete' God who is concerned with the meaning of life in the world. This God is the meaning of the world: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the face of the waters. "And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Gen. 1:1-3). Behind the whole of Genesis 1-3 is the question of life and the answer to that question, which is revelationally given, and received in faith (Heb. 11:3). The tragedy of the Genesis 1-3 account is that it ended on the note of death. But this only served to emphasise that the only certain thing in the Garden of Eden is not merely life (note the Tree of Life) but God himself who still called out for Adam from the midst of the chaos of the Fall. This is the reason why the Adamic fall never played a central role in Jewish religious tradition. And it is also the case that the New Testament's first Adam and second Adam motifs are actually ankhological motifs. Thus the tragedy of the fall (or death) is in the end a preparation for the doctrine of the Christ event, which attained its climax in the resurrection. Man's original sin is his
childish choosing of alienation from the Source of his being; a fall from a relationship with God, a relationship that is totally defined by life. Hence man's original sin is not so much his disobedience as his disobedience unto death, with its tentacles of sin, evil and destruction.

Thus when we speak of God we speak of life; for God is a living action. Therefore "life" is that which is prior and must be stated before such notions as "mind", "love", "wisdom", "being", etc. can have their meaningful context. And when we speak of life we mean that which cannot be terminated (Ex. 3:13-14). This is the essential meaning of the doctrine of "ancestorship". And it is the standpoint of both the Old and the New Testaments on the one hand and of Christian theology on the other. To the New Testament life is eternal, and to our non-Christian fathers it is a continuum affirmed in the nature of the ancestors and in the nature of God. But life is a phenomenal reality which must not be undermined (Ex. 20:13) but rather enhanced. It is in the light of the latter that we may also view the healing ministry of Jesus.

III

Incarnation and commensality: The incarnation occurred because God's intention is to reconcile all things to Himself through Christ (11 Cor. 5:18-19). The incarnation is the ending of alienation, and the beginning of the victory of the Son of God over death and its agents: sin, evil, sickness and hopelessness, etc. (Col. 2:13). It is the moment of the renewal of the meaning of the world, of man and his salvation. Hence the central message of the Scriptures is that man can live because God lives. This is the main message proclaimed by the Exodus motif, by the call of the prophets to return to Yahweh, by the prophets of the later exilic period and by the entire ministry of Jesus. Thus in Christ's death we are forced to hold our breath in fear and trembling, because it is not yet a victory over the anti-ankhological
forces of the world. Then, the victory came as the Master enthroned our ankhological hopes over the "empty tomb". Hence we ought to see in the ascension the final confirmation of the victory of life over death.

The incarnation is God with us. It is a commensal relationship between God and his people through Christ. Our non-Christian forebears had known this commensal joy in their commitment to the various divinities, which, as they believed, dispensed the ankhological intentionality of the Supreme Being. Now we are more fortunate to be placed on a clearer relationship with God through Christ - the greatest expresser of the ankhological meaning. Thus we are not called upon to experience for the first time this commensal relationship: it is already our ancestral heritage. So in Christ, our new divinity, we can cause it to come to life with the effect and the certainty which our forebears never knew. But it is merely a difference of degree and not of kind.

IV

The Holy Spirit and phenomenon-essence: The Holy Spirit is the phenomenon-essence of God. That is to say, His power and His love operating in the midst of God's people and in God's world; to heal and to enable the community of faith to live in the will of God. He is the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead (Rom. 8:11); and it is he who overcomes all the forces that work against life. Consequently we can no longer believe in the power of charms, witches, and in the power of the wicked medicine-men if indeed we are within the protection of him who is all-powerful. In fact there is no evidence that "the world of auras (or essences)", which our forebears erroneously believed in, actually existed. They believed because they did not know about the Holy Spirit of God.
The salvation of mankind: Man is made in the image of God (Gen. 1: 26-27), and salvation is man's harmonious relationship with his Maker. Therefore man's life is complete when it is in harmony with God - its source. Salvation is deliverance from alienation, and from all the anti-ankhological forces to which we are constantly subjected. But resurrection is always the final word.

Salvation is the saving of the whole man from whatever stands between him and his Maker; it is the deliverance of man from all things which retard or suppress his fulfilment (Lk. 4:18-19). Hence the concern of religion is not religion but life. Consequently the process of salvation commits man to being a co-worker with God (11 Cor. 6:1). This involves all aspects of work: spiritual, physical, moral, intellectual, scientific, etc. It calls upon man to think, to invent, to create, to love and to worship. Without all these our life as co-workers with God will remain unfulfilled. But Life (God) is always the goal; the centripetal and the centrifugal point which inspires the children of God (Jn. 10:10).

But we are saved unto God and not unto ourselves. Our fulness of life only brings us closer to God who is in the midst of his commensal people. And is present in the poor, the weak, the rich, the outcast, the prisoner, the hungry, etc. Wherever God is there is righteousness, and there is justice and commensal love. In maat\(^1\) or in ofo\(^2\) God has

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1. "'Maat', which is difficult to translate ... means something like 'righteousness, justice, truth'." Cf. P. Jordan, op.cit., p.107. This concept of maat (as opposed to written laws) was in fact the basis of social relationships and social actions in Pharaonic Egypt. Maat is the essence of commensal ideology.

2. ofo is the symbol of social relationships and social actions among the Igbo people. It is the controlling factor which stands in the centre of commensal ideology. It means precisely, "righteousness, justice, and truth". Ilogu appears to translate it as "the power of justice which in its nature of...transparent honesty, innocence and (continued on next page)
given us the basis, through our forebears, for our Christ-centred moral actions. It is the basis that goes before legal systems and legitimises the laws but does not depend on the law. For its strength comes from our commensal relationship with the very Meaning (God) of the world, which is also our meaning and the goal of our salvation. We will live because God lives.³

VI

Salvation in Christianity and other religions: Every religion has given a form of answer to the basic question, "What is the meaning of life in the world, given the fact of death?" Because such answers must be given as a matter of a priori necessity, in order to establish a bearing for dealing with phenomena. The answers are of course usually interpretations; that is to say modalities or looking glasses, through which the world and the Divine are viewed. But the bible has declared that in dealing with the biblical (view of) meaning that we are dealing with what is revelationally given. This is a statement of faith which Christian faith teaches. However, if God is the living God — Life himself — (as we have insisted upon) then, we may be convinced, judging from the various answers given or revealed that there is a note of common orientation towards God/meaning (Nirvana, in the case of Theravada Buddhism) running through all religions. This orientation towards God may even be seen in terms of common discovery. For God has at no time left himself without witnesses in his world. Certainly Jesus is "the

2. (continued from previous page)


3. The extreme shortness of our discussion of these four themes selected for elucidation coupled with the fact that we used the discussions as the conclusion of the thesis has meant that we could not really illustrate our discussions with materials from the various sources of Christian theology which now includes the data of African traditional religion borne by African Christians.
way, the truth, and the life" but he has also come not to destroy the law and the prophets but to fulfil them. We can therefore hardly miss the revelation which is that the labours of past, present, and future prophets and law givers of all religions are like an enigmatic thread running through him. Consequently we are forced to stand back in the face of other religions, burdened with the question: "What is God also saying to them?" Yet, at the same time, we are denied the depth of their total experience, by our ignorance of that "total experience", so in the end we have only our experience to share with them; we are condemned to preach only this our experience as our message.

VII

Final remarks: Our research has convinced us that the kernel of Christian religion and Christian theology is LIFE. Consequently the present thesis has set out to argue this ankholological case by involving itself with materials from various disciplines which do, in one form or the other, impinge on actual theological activities. It is also the case that our thesis is concerned with dealing with the problems inherent in African Christian theology; and it is obvious that it is the latter which forms the context of our study. However, the ankholological thesis of our study has a much wider outlook and application: in a world in which atomic weapons are constantly threatening humanity (and can destroy mankind many times over), in which living beings in the sea and on land are at the mercy of a form of economic materialism which is hardly informed by the ankholological standpoint, it is obvious that Christian theology can only have an impact if it speaks out with an authentic voice. It is clearly inappropriate to address the issues from the nousological platform. At any rate the ankholological position is the authentic Christian position. Our ankholological thesis also does hold the impeccable promise of speaking in the tongue which the African Church members understand -
once it is seen as the criterion of Christian theology. And it is only then that African Christian theology will possess and be able to impart the kind of self-confidence and originality of action which are indispensable to spiritual and material (both are inseparable in genuine Christian theology) progress; and to a diversification of interests in society; rather than seeing in economic wealth the only factor that can fulfil human life. We may now end on the note rightly attributed to the Master:

"I come that they may have life, and have it abundantly"

(Jn. 10:10)
APPENDIX

A way not to conduct research: This appendix is meant to deal with an issue which appears to impinge on our present study. The issue in question is the reappearance of the theory of commensality which I advanced in 1980 in a Ph.D. work recently awarded by the University of London. It is the manner in which it reappears in the latter work rather than the fact that it does which necessitates my present attempt to use the forum of this appendix to re-defend the originality of the M.Phil. work and, consequently, the references to it by our present study.

It is obvious that the materials contained in pages 119 to 141 of the Ph.D. work is a plagiarisation (that is to say, a re-representation with slight modifications) of the whole of chapter two of the 1980 thesis. This re-presentation includes the theory and its presentation; and the diagrams, the references and footnotes relating to that presentation. Yet we read in page 119 of the Ph.D. thesis, "In this study I am advancing the...notion of commensality"; in page 120 "My theoretical framework draws from Quinn's concept of commensality". As a matter of fact the only reference to Quinn made in the Ph.D. work is no more than my own reference to his definition of commensalism. Again, in page 122 we read,


"My endeavour in this section is to demonstrate the role of commensality ...and show the validity of my theory." The basic points I am concerned to make are: firstly, that Mordi has clearly failed to acknowledge his source; secondly, he has instead proceeded to claim that source as his original work. These two points are significant mainly because the unacknowledged materials are in fact the foundation upon which the remaining parts of his Ph.D. work are erected.

However, he does make reference to my article in *Africana Marburgensia* XIV, 1, 1981, entitled 'Inter-religious Encounters in the Context of the Theory of Commensality with Particular Reference to 'Southeastern' Nigeria', when he says: "Okafor in his study of inter-religious encounter and commensality..." Nevertheless, what is striking (and to my mind a totally unacceptable style of scholarship) about this reference is the freedom with which he proceeded to modify the original title of the article to suit his purposes. In the Ph.D. work it is given as "Inter-religious encounter, commensality and the process of dislocation - the case of South Eastern Nigeria, in *Africana Marburgensia*, vol. XIV, Mabura/Lahn, 1981." This deplorable surgery has removed (among other things), "in the context of the theory of". At any rate his criticism of the article is, "While Okafor raised some good points in his discussion, it is my view that his work was narrowed down to religious encounters only. He failed to note that despite the disruption of commensality it is alive not only in traditional communities but also in the urban centres. His usage of Igbo was limited to the Igbo of southeastern Nigeria, thus excluding Igbo of mid-western Nigeria. He failed to consider the non-physical aspect of commensality as part of commensal ideology" (p.140).

On the question of his criticism of my account of commensality what I may point out and emphasise is that the position from which he criticised the short article in *Africana Marburgensia* is the chapter two of my M.Phil. which reappeared in his Ph.D. work. So I have nothing to defend or retract. On the totally unfounded charge against my usage of the word
"Igbo" I may also point out and stress that there is nothing in either my M.Phil. work or my article which can possibly lend itself to such a charge. As a matter of fact the M.Phil. work clearly states:

"In this study we are specifically concerned with the Igbo, Ibibio and Ijo peoples of Southeastern Nigeria. However, such a delimitation has no politico-cultural grounds for not including, especially, the Igbos and Ijos of the eastern side of the Niger other than that it is more realistic to examine the effects of social change in the context of a limited area of comparison. The choice of 'Southeastern' Nigeria is arbitrarily determined by such a view; yet what we have to say about the area does have implications for the whole of Igboland, Ijoland, and the whole of Nigeria, if we may say so." (pp. 21-22)

I may therefore conclude this appendix by saying that Mordi's Ph.D. work as far as it relates to my own study is far from being honest scholarship; and may be said to be openly misleading.
### Manuscript Materials.

(a) Church Missionary Society  
(Archives at the University of Birmingham - Heslop Room).

(b) Methodist Missionary Society  
(Archives at the School of Oriental and African Studies).

### Books and Articles by Named Authors

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ABSTRACT

The perception of God, man and salvation, which are related notions, are further bound up with the question of cosmology.

A given primary interpretation or revelation (i.e. the meaning) of the world is the raison d'être of a given religious system. God is meaning; meaning is whatever God (or 'God') is to a given religious system or culture-world; for instance, life (hence our term, ankhological), or mind (hence our nousological term).

To both Jewish and traditional African religions God is life. This understanding pervades the biblical data. Jesus is its greatest expresser.

The earliest Jewish Christianity had kept to this ankhological perception of God despite the disagreement over whether the Father is still the immediate source and focussor of meaning; Paul and Hellenistic Jewish Christianity maintained that Jesus is, since his resurrection, its immediate focussor; Palestinian Jewish Christianity rejected this 'modification'.

The initial mass conversion of the Gentiles meant an inevitable clash between the ankhological and the nousological perceptions of God; the nousological perception was the bequeathment of the Greek world. The Gentile Church's insistence that the biblical data be brought within the nousological terms of reference gave rise to heresies, and to the undermining of the ankhological standpoint.

Saint Augustine was a great believer in the nousological re-interpretation of the biblical data. The Western Church was converted to his viewpoint. But the scientific spirit has marginalised both the nousological interpretation and the Western Church.

African mission Churches are obviously nousologically structured. And contextualisation theology is a misleading attempt to adapt African cultural data to the nousological viewpoint. Misleading, because African congregations are primarily informed by the ankhological meaning. Instead what is demanded from African Christian theology is the recovery and the holding up of the ankhological revelation as the criterion of Christian theology, African or otherwise.