

108. St. Hilary, *In Mt.*, 14, 3 (PL, 9, 997B): "interioris intelligentiae ratio." St. Gregory, *In Cant.*, 2 (CCL, 144, 4): "interiorem intelligentiam." See note 38 above.
109. H. de Lubac, *L'Écriture dans la Tradition* (Paris, 1966), 7.
110. In this connection, see what we say in our article, "La lecture de l'Écriture Sainte 'dans l'Esprit,'" cited in note 102 above.
111. Cf. P. Toinet, *Pour une théologie de l'exégèse* (Paris, 1983); and the general conclusions of the 1985 Extraordinary Synod of Bishops.
112. See above. Cf. particularly the studies of Rigaux and Harrington, cited in note 2 above.
113. See also what we said above when discussing the actual text of *Dei Verbum* (p. 248 above).
114. R. Guardini, *Auf dem Wege. Versuch* (Mainz, 1923), 59f.; H. Urs von Balthasar, *La gloire et la croix*, I (Paris, 1965), 450; H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London, 1979<sup>2</sup>), 155–156.
115. Subtitle of *Histoire et dogme*.
116. J. Ladrière, "Postface," to T. Tshibangu, *La théologie comme science au XXe siècle* (Kinshasa, 1980), 224–229.
117. *Tischreden*, WAT 5, 26, n. 5246. This phrase is cited as an epigraph at the beginning of the second part of Gadamer's work *Truth and Method*, 151.

# CHAPTER 9

## Old and New Testament Participation and Analogy

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### Summary

Taking its inspiration from some texts of St. Irenaeus, particularly Book IV of the *Adversus Haereses*, the present study tries to show how one can conceive the relationship between the Old and the New Testament, starting with the idea of a full salvation present in the Old and in the New Testament, in which both historical periods share, and which manifests itself equally in both Testaments.

### Introduction

The relationship between the Christian Church and the Old Testament has not been an easy one.

The modest place given for centuries to the Old Testament in the Catholic eucharistic liturgy before the reform inspired by Vatican Council II, its rare use in homilies, its notable absence as a constructive element in dogmatic theology, the widespread lack of knowledge of the Old Testament, which most of the Christian faithful and not a few of their pastors suffer from, and the lack of personal motivation for the study of the Old Testament, which effects the average student in theology, are only some of the eloquent signs of the uncertain place of the Old Testament in the theology and the life of the Church.<sup>1</sup>

With clear spiritual intuition, the Church has always rejected the temptation to get rid of this difficulty that is constitutive of her existence, though she has not always found the most apt formulas to express the importance of the Old Testament, the reasons that demand its presence, and the type of relationship that exists between the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Non-Catholic Christian confessions have shown a special sensitivity to this problem, and have contributed, with many successful efforts, to an adequate formulation of this difficult relationship.<sup>2</sup>

The Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* devoted its fourth chapter to the Old Testament.<sup>3</sup>

In number 14, the "permanent value" of the Old Testament is founded on its character as witness to the *oeconomia salutis*, in which we find her "praenuntiata, enarrata atque explicata."

In number 15, there is a step forward in relation to number 14 in two ways. On the one hand, it makes clear the meaning of economy in the Old Testament, i.e., to prepare for the coming of Christ, announce him prophetically, and indicate him through various figures. On the other hand, the description of the function of the Old Testament books is more generic than the earlier formulation. The terms *praeparare, nuntiare, and significare* are not used. The Old Testament books, it is affirmed, manifest men's knowledge of God, and God's way of working with them. This manifestation is characterized as in accordance with "the state of mankind before the time of salvation established by Christ." Because of this, the books of the Old Testament may contain some things that are imperfect and transitory.

Finally, number 16 describes the relationship between the Old Testament and the New Testament in St. Augustine's proverbial phrase: "The New Testament is hidden in the Old Testament, and the Old is made manifest in the New." The books of the Old Testament "acquire and manifest their full meaning in the New Testament . . . illustrating it and explaining it at the same time."

Notwithstanding the depth of the doctrine proposed, it is possible for the Christian reader or, for that matter, the Jewish reader of these documents, the theologian, and the exegete of the Old Testament to feel uneasy. Lastly, the central expressions of this chapter of *Dei Verbum* seem to consider the Old Testament as a poor relative of the New Testament, a habitual guest yet an unwelcome one.

Nonetheless, it affirms the perennial value of the Old Testament; however, the description of its function as "to prepare, to announce, and to indicate" suggests a subordinate and temporary function. Why should the Old Testament continue to prepare and announce with figures what is already a present reality and which is evident?

If the Old Testament as economy of salvation has an exclusively propaedeutic function, it is legitimate and necessary that the proclamation of the definitive salvation brought about by Jesus Christ replaces the narrative of that economy of salvation.

If these objections were irresistible, one would have to conceive the Old Testament like a pedagogue who has to leave the house when the son has reached adulthood. Perhaps one can still accept him in the house, as a recompense for the role he has played, and one can even consult him, but his services are basically terminated.

At any rate, the formulations of *Dei Verbum* (and also the majority of the studies in both Catholic and Protestant circles) justify the possibility and the right of the Christian community to preserve and use the Old Testament, but they rarely refer to the necessity of such use, to the reasons on which it is founded, or to the fruits derived from it.

An expression of *Dei Verbum* states the essential permanence of this "pedagogue" even more decisively than the others. The Old Testament, it says, "sheds light on and explains the New Testament" (No. 16). If this shedding of light is permanent and necessary, one can never renounce the Old Testament in principle or in practice.

But in what does this shedding of light and explanation that the Old Testament brings consist? Is it purely technical, i.e., to inform, as a dictionary does, about the meaning of some words, or, as an encyclopedia does, to clarify the cultural background of personalities and institutions of the New Testament? If this were the principal contribution, the Old Testament would have no more intrinsic value for the Christian than the documents of Qumran or any other writing related to the times of the New Testament.

Or is the contribution of the Old Testament essential, that is to say, to explain and illuminate the New Testament *inasmuch as* it witnesses the salvation that we have received in Christ?

The following reflections are the tentative contribution of an

exegete, who, faced with the wealth of patristic writings, and basing himself on some of Irenaeus' insights, is trying to clarify the problem, bringing together certain elements that Book IV of *Adversus Haereses*<sup>4</sup> provides about the relationship between the Old and the New Testament.

Notwithstanding the privileged place that other conciliar documents give to the writings of Irenaeus<sup>5</sup>, this is a source that has been relatively little used in dealing with this problem.

Irenaeus did not deal explicitly with the relationship of the Old to the New Testament. As is well known, his concern was to reject gnostic doctrines, showing "the continuity of the economy of salvation, the progressive development of the redemptive work."<sup>6</sup>

The need to show, when faced with the heresy, that one and the same God is the origin of creation and the source of salvation enables him to emphasize the strict unity existing between the Old and the New Testament.<sup>7</sup>

Our study presents the texts of Irenaeus in four short sections: the first is dedicated to the continuous action of God for the salvation of man; the second considers the function of Abraham in relation to the Christian; the third studies the relation of the prophets to the word of God; the fourth reflects upon the presence of Christ "inseminatus" in the Old Testament.

The concluding part of the study tries to identify the principle of unity existing between the Old and the New Testament and draws some conclusions that follow from this unity.

### The Uninterrupted Salvific Action of God

1. *Adver. Haer.* IV, 14, 1 treats at length of the perfection of God, who, not being in need of anybody, and out of his love and generosity, creates man in Adam to bestow his favors on him and so demands our service in order to grant us salvation.

Irenaeus renders this thought explicit in IV, 14, 2, describing the way God acts:

Thus God, from the beginning modeled *man*  
because of his own bounty;  
and chose the *Patriarchs*  
*propter illorum salutem*;

He formed his *people* beforehand  
teaching the ignorant to follow God;  
again He prepared the *prophets*  
accustoming *man* to carry his Spirit on earth  
and to have communion with God.

The inclusive structure of this paragraph through the use of the word "man" suggests that this modeling does not refer exclusively to the formation of Adam. In this text, "to model" includes the totality of men and the ensemble of the gifts granted to them. The election of the patriarchs, the anticipated formation of the people, and the preparation of the prophets are three aspects of this modeling.

The text does not have a gradually ascending classification either in mentioning the stages of the modeling (patriarchs, people, prophets), or in the actions that characterize each of them (to elect, to form, to prepare), or in the aim of such actions (*propter salutem*, to teach, to accustom), or, finally, to the addresses of such actions (*illorum*, the ignorant, man).

Still, *illorum* can hardly refer to the patriarchs themselves. In neither of the other two members of the text does the instrument of God's action identify itself with the addressee of the action. Thus, *illorum* must take into account as antecedent *man*, who in this case, as we have already suggested, must be understood complexively: man, including comprehensively Adam and the patriarchs, the people and the ignorant, and the prophets.<sup>8</sup>

Irenaeus thus presents us not with a sketch of the progressive history of humanity, but with a portrait of humanity valid for all times. Looking at humanity from different angles, Irenaeus explains to us who is man, and how God works with him at every moment.

This reading of the text finds confirmation in the expressions that sum up God's action and its aim. God bestows his *koinonia* to (all) those who need him, and sketches the building of salvation for whoever pleases him.

Irenaeus exemplifies the salvific action of God with three events in the history of Israel (the guidance of the people in Egypt, the bestowal of the law in the desert, and the gift of the land). He then completely changes the type of affirmation and mentions the gift of the better garment for he who returns to the house of the Father (cf. Lk. 15:22-23).

Father, is the God of the living, who spoke unto Moses, who was also manifested to the Fathers" (IV, 5, 2).

The argument starts with the affirmation of Jesus: "Abraham saw my day and he was glad" (Jn. 8:56).

Irenaeus identifies "to see the day of Jesus" with the faith of Abraham, of which Romans 4:3 speaks. What was the content of Abraham's faith? To believe that the one God was the author of heaven and earth, and believe in the posterity that had been promised to him.

There are three implications to this belief, emphasized and linked by a triple *juste* ("justly," IV, 5, 3-4).

It was just and reasonable that Abraham should leave his earthly kin, to follow the word of God, becoming a foreigner along with the word in order to become its fellow citizen. In some way, Irenaeus tells us, Abraham perceives the command to leave his kin and follow as an expression of the word.

The way the text continues requires our attention even more. Rightly did the apostles also, having their birth from Abraham, leave their boats and their father, and follow the word. And finally: rightly then likewise do "we," having the same faith as Abraham, take up our Cross, as Isaac did his Wood, and follow the same word.

The apostles are united to Abraham through a triple link: as descendants according to the flesh, renouncing their fathers and their possessions, and following the word. Even "we" are tied to Abraham through a triple bond: the same faith, submission to suffering, and following the word.

Following the word then implies a strict relation to Abraham, which is made explicit in the renouncing of possessions (fatherland, family, possessions) to make oneself a cocitizen of the word.

*Juste* ("to be reasonable") suggests more than to appreciate the convenience of certain means to reach determined aims. It is the perception of the will of the word, a logic that derives from the nature of things. Abraham having believed in God and in his promises, accepted the consequences: abandoning his family and following the word.

In a similar manner, whoever recognizes himself as belonging to the family of Abraham, like the apostles, must set out to follow the word. And, on the contrary, whoever follows the word (like "us") recognizes his consanguinity with Abraham.

Thus, one arrives at the extraordinary conclusion that Irenaeus proposes: in Abraham, *man* had learnt beforehand and had grown accustomed to follow the word of God (IV, 5, 4).<sup>15</sup>

Two affirmations in this paragraph are beyond dispute; they belong to the content of Christian faith: the unicity of God (as against the gnostic theory of the difference between the God of the Old Testament and the "Father" of Jesus), and the presence and activity of the word united to the Father from all eternity.

But the relation between Abraham and the believer includes other points of view whose richness has not yet been definitely incorporated into Christian spirituality.

To affirm that in Abraham *man* (as such) had learnt in anticipation to follow the word of God is to affirm an almost mediatory role on the part of Abraham for all believers. Abraham is presented not only as a religious model for the believer, whom one must imitate, nor solely as a "figure" of the believer (as an historic anticipation), but—in some way—as an efficient cause for the faith of the believer.

In like manner, to the Pauline affirmation that in Adam we have all sinned and in Christ we have all been saved, it is affirmed here that in Abraham we have *all* received the faith. Abraham thus acquires the stature not only of a far away and dignified ancestor who believed "before," but of an authentic father of the believer, whom one must recognize so in order to participate in the faith.

This also seems to be the implication of the reference to the apostles. They left their father's boat (as Abraham had left his father Terah) and followed the word not only *like* Abraham but *because* Abraham had already followed the same word. The faith of Abraham made the faith of the apostles possible, and the faith of the apostles, in following Abraham, made that of all believers possible.

Abraham foreshadows by justification obtained through faith without circumcision, and by the alliance of circumcision, all believers, both the circumcised and the uncircumcised, and so he firmly establishes all believers on the cornerstone that is Christ (cf. IV, 25, 1).

2. In IV, 21, 1, Irenaeus comes back to the centrality of Abraham in the process of the faith of the believer, stating that in him our faith is "prefigured," that Abraham is patriarch and prophet of our faith, and also father of those among the gentiles

who believe in Christ. And he concludes with the admirable affirmation: "his faith and ours are one and the same faith." This statement refers not only to the subjective act of faith, but to its object: "He indeed believed in things to come as already being accomplished, because of the promise of God, and we in like manner by faith contemplate the inheritance which is in the Kingdom."

Like Abraham, we are set on our way toward the future by faith, which we see as already realized; we follow the word as he did in so far as we renounce our security (our paternal family, our fatherland, our possessions, and our very descentance), and imitate the word, who in Christ had renounced even his father and his fatherland to be able to arrive at possessing them anew and definitively.

The faith of Abraham is not only a suggestive mirror of our faith, on which we can meditate to our own profit. It is as constitutive and as irrevocable to the Christian faith as that of the apostles.

The consequences that follow from this for the relation between the Old and the New Testament are not without importance.

Because the Old Testament is the witness of the faith of Abraham, which is constitutive of our faith as an efficient cause and archetype, the Old Testament cannot be reduced to a mere preparation for, or figure of, the New Testament, but it must be received as truly constitutive of the New Testament. Obviously, a thematic ignorance of the Old Testament does not make the Christian faith impossible, nor can a thematic ignorance of the New Testament make the paths of God with men impossible. And it is also evident that the Old Testament, because it belongs as an entity to the process of faith, must also belong thematically to the content of this same faith.

### The Prophets and the Word of God

1. The rich vision of the prophetic mission that Irenaeus presents has a fundamental nucleus, i.e., the action of the prophets does not consist solely in the announcing of the message received. By means of the prophets, the Spirit indicates the future. To indicate is to establish a system of signs that points toward the

future. These signs are not only the words that the prophets utter, but also the visions, behavior, and gestures that they perform:

quae quidem videnda erant visibilibus videntes,  
 quae vero audienda erant, sermone praeconantes,  
 quae vero agenda erant, operatione perficientes  
 universa vero propheticè annuntiantes (IV, 20, 8).

It is difficult to decide if the verbal forms should be translated simply as future ("that which will be seen," as the edition of *Sources Chrétiennes* translates them) or rather with a sense of obligation ("they performed with acts what [also] was to be achieved in the future").

This interpretation insists on the continuity between the performance of the sign by the prophet, and that in which all participate.

The prophetic action appears as an active and anticipatory gesture in history that introduces a change and calls for the gesture of others, who must continue it.

The prophet is not only an announcer or preacher of salvation, but plays an active part in it; he makes efficient gestures under the guidance of the Spirit, although such gestures must be continued and completed.

A close relation then exists between what the prophet transmits, and the way it comes to his knowledge.

Because an essential element of the prophetic task is to witness to the future vision of God, it is necessary that the prophets have an experience of such a vision. Only this vision enables the prophet to announce God as he who one day will be contemplated by those who remain faithful to the announcement. Moses (Ex. 33:20-22), conceived as a prophet, had only seen "the back of Yahweh." This event manifests two things: that it is not possible to see God face to face, but also that a divine manifestation adapted to men is possible. Such will be the concrete manifestation of Jesus.

In a similar manner, the presence of Yahweh to Elias in the breeze and not in the wind, or the earthquake or in the fire (IV, 19, 11-12), expresses the pacific character of the Kingdom of God in Christ, which has yet to be manipulated.

Contrary to the first impression that the reader might have, these texts do not read allegorically the manifestation of Yahweh

in the Old Testament, starting from the manifestation of Jesus in the New Testament.

Yahweh's manifestation to Moses is the ontological figure of that of God in Jesus. The relationship between Yahweh and the people through Moses is equivalent (one can say analogically proportional) to the relationship between God and the Christian community through Jesus. Whoever meditates from the New Testament the accounts of the visions of Moses and Elias will recognize this analogy quite clearly. But the foundation of this analogy does not remain hidden to those who have access only to the Old Testament texts. Behind the manifestations of God (to Moses, to Elias, in Jesus), there is the word that reveals the Father, manifold and rich like him, and that manifests him not only under one form, nor solely under one aspect, but "according to the working of His several economies" (IV, 20, 11).

In IV, 20, 5, Irenaeus distinguishes three different modes of vision.

God, invisible in his power and his glory, makes himself visible by means of the Spirit in a prophetic way, by means of the Son according to adoption, and in the kingdom of heaven according to the fatherhood. The Spirit prepares man for the Son, the Son leads him to the Father, and the Father grants him the incorruptibility that this vision produces.

But the time of the prophetic vision according to the Spirit does not differ from the salvific nature of the time of the vision by means of the Son.<sup>16</sup>

The prophetic vision that is talked about in IV, 20, 8 extends not only to the prophets, but to "all His members, sanctified and taught the things which belong unto God." This vision allows "man" to be formed and exercised beforehand "in appropriating to himself that glory which shall be hereafter revealed unto them that love God."

Here again there appears the insistence on "man" as the universal addressee of the action of the patriarchs and the prophets, which we have underlined and commented on in IV, 14, 2 and IV, 5, 4.

2. That the prophet takes an active part in salvation is also affirmed in IV, 33, 10:

The Prophets typified all these things in themselves, for the love of God, and for his Word's sake.

"All these things" are persecutions and sufferings. They who are more identified with the word, like the prophets and the early Church, must also share the destiny prepared for the followers of the word by those who reject it.

The sufferings of the prophets are a kind of prefiguration in their own flesh of the sufferings of the word. This helps Irenaeus to extend his doctrine to other prophetic actions, taking up once again the Pauline metaphor of the body and its members.

In a well-structured paragraph (IV, 33, 10), Irenaeus thus presents his doctrine. The prophets, because they were already members of Christ:

uniusquisque eorum . . . et prophetationem manifestabat  
omnes et multi unum praeformantes  
et ea quae sunt unius annuntiantes  
omnes quidem unum praefigurabant  
unusquisque autem eorum  
et dispositionem adimplebat  
et . . . operationem Christi  
prophetabat

The presupposition of the text is that the body manifests itself by the action of all its members, and not by that of only one of them, but in conformity to the proper nature of each member. The prophets are considered in two ways, individually (*unusquisque*) and as a whole (*omnes*); the actions of the prophets fall into two groups: *manifesting*, *announcing* and *prophesying* refer to the proclamation. The other three verbs differ from the first three. They do not express the announcement or proclamation but the performance. This is evident in the case of *adimplere dispositionem* (to accomplish the economy) if we take into account that "salvific economies" are the salvific action of God. The prophet completes in some measure the salvific action of God. This meaning is confirmed by the other uses of *adimplere* that Irenaeus presents in book IV;

- accomplishment of Scripture: IV, 23, 1; 26, 1; 29, 1
- Christ confirms and *adimplet* that which had been announced of him: IV, 24, 2; 34, 2
- Christ accomplishes the Pasch that long before Moses *figuravit praenuntiavit*: IV, 10, 1



13:17: "many prophets and holy men longed to see what you see. . . ."

His argument here once again has a Pauline flavor: the desire presupposes the knowledge of what one desires. This knowledge, not being of things present, and thus acquirable through experience of reality, must have been received beforehand. Thus, it is the same word who revealed himself in multiple ways to those who believed, who at one time converses with Adam, at another time gives the Law, sometimes exhorts, frees the slave and adopts him as son, and in due time bestows the inheritance of incorruption upon man (IV, 11, 1).<sup>17</sup>

In this text, the action of the word is not exercised in favor of individual personalities known in the Old Testament. In compliance with the expression of Matthew, "many prophets and holy men," Irenaeus uses universal formulations that allow him simply to include all men.<sup>18</sup>

2. The Son is not only revealer of the Father since the beginning, inspirer of prophetic visions and bestower of graces and ministries (IV, 20, 7), he is at the same time, already in the Old Testament, the object of this revelation: "The Son of God is as seed scattered everywhere in His Scriptures" (IV, 10, 1).

The presence of the Son ". . . sown" in the Scriptures has a pedagogical function. The patriarchs and the prophets:

also prefigured our faith, and announced throughout the earth the coming of the Son of God; who and of what sort he shall be, so that men who were to come . . . might easily receive the coming of Christ . . . (IV, 23, 1).

The purpose of this sowing, according to the following examples, is to offer to the personalities of the New Testament witness (of the Old Testament) that will help them to accept the paths of God. Joseph can accept the incomprehensible pregnancy of Mary through the mediation of Isaiah 7:14; the contemporaries of Jesus are prepared to accept him on the strength witness of Isaiah 61, which Jesus himself cites in the synagogue at Capernaum, and the Ethiopian in Acts 8 finds himself prepared for the preaching of Philip through Isaiah 53 (IV, 23, 2).

On the contrary, Paul's activity among the gentiles is rendered more difficult because these are not prepared, and for them Paul must preach "to the Gentiles in discourse without scriptures" (IV, 24, 2).

3. But it is in IV, 25, 3 that Irenaeus takes a decisive step in his doctrine of the patriarchs and the prophets as "sowers" of the word that concerns Christ:

For it was meet that some things should be foretold (*praenuntiari*) in a fatherly way by the Fathers; others should be typified (*praefigurari*) in a legal way by the Prophets; others again should be fully traced (*deformari*) after the delineation of Christ, by those who have received adoption" (IV, 25, 3).

Which is the way proper to the patriarchs of announcing beforehand? An answer should be offered in IV, 21, 1-3, which considers the stories of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, searching for their "Christian meaning."

It is said of Abraham (IV, 21, 1) that in him our faith was prefigured.<sup>19</sup>

In the story of Isaac (IV, 21, 2), not only "the actions of the patriarchs," but above all the birth of Esau and Jacob as the origin of two peoples, one a slave the other free, constitutes the prophetic action.

In the story of Jacob (IV, 21, 3), Irenaeus states that "his acts" are "full of providential turns" (*plenos dispositionum*).

There is a progressive allegorization of the interpretation of the "acts of the patriarchs." In the Scriptures, Abraham is truly the starting point of Israel's faith and consequently of the Church, by means of the apostolic community; Isaac is—according to the patriarchal tradition—effectively the origin of two peoples, which represent freedom and slavery according to their relationship to Yahweh's will.

But to find in Jacob's birth a figure of the birth of Jesus, according to the text in the book of Revelation, "he comes out as a winner and to win"; or to compare the salary received by Jacob, the many-colored sheep, with Christ, who has as "salary" men of different nations reunited under the same reign of faith, is to enter decidedly into allegorical elaboration.

The general conclusion holds nevertheless in the solidly theological line we have already followed in other passages:

And so far indeed He (the Logos?) was through His Patriarchs and Prophets prefiguring and foretelling (*praefigurans et praenuntians*) things to come, exercising beforehand His part in

God's ordained ways, and training His heritage to obey God, and to be strangers in the world, and to follow His Word, and to presignify (*praesignificare*) what is to come. For with God nothing is void, nor without significance (IV, 21, 3).

On these theological premises and with a different exegetical mentality, Irenaeus could easily have shown how Jacob performs in a paradigmatic way (prefigures) the path of man enclosed in himself and used to dispose of all things, who must learn through a painful process of guilt and suffering to follow "the word of God", from injustice to reconciliation.

The affirmation that the acts themselves of the lives of the patriarchs have an objective connection with the mystery of salvation (which is always achieved through Christ), and from this point of view such acts "announce" Christ, is then always valid.

Other things, continues Irenaeus in IV, 25, 3, were prefigured by the prophets in the way proper to the Law.

"To announce" and "prefigure"<sup>20</sup> do not seem to be applied in this paragraph more specifically to one subject rather than to another. In IV, 20, 1, the acts of the patriarchs (and not of a prophet) are those that "prefigure"; in IV, 21, 3, to prefigure and foretell are applied both to the prophets and to the patriarchs. The prophets therefore prefigure the teaching of Jesus and also the exhortation to the accomplishment of the Law.

But it is above all the third way of "the sowing of Christ" in the Scriptures to which IV, 25, 3 alludes that is the most difficult to comprehend.<sup>21</sup>

Oportebat enim . . . quaedam vero deformari secundum formationem Christi ab his qui adoptionem perceperunt.

Several times in *Adver. Haer.*, "adoption" refers to divine filiation obtained in Christ.<sup>22</sup> But of particular interest for our context is IV, 8, 1: God has introduced into the Kingdom of heaven:

Abraham et semen eius quod est Ecclesia, per Christum Jesum cui et adoptio redditur et hereditas quae Abrahae promissa est.

As careful comparison between V, 32, 2 and IV, 8, 1 would show, this is not an adoptive divine filiation, but "the adoptive

filiation in relation to Abraham: through Christ the gentiles were converted into adoptive sons of Abraham (cf. IV, 25, 1) and have a part in his inheritance."<sup>23</sup>

In the Latin text *cui* refers not to Jesus, but to *Ecclesia*. The latin translator of the text invariably introduces the relative pronoun into the proposition governed by it, instead of putting it before it.

It is likely that Irenaeus used the concept of filiation in relation to Abraham to refer not only to the gentiles but also to the Hebrews who obtain it through blood, even though partially. The full adherence to the faith of Abraham enables one to be a true son of Abraham.

Whoever wishes to arrive at adoptive filiation in the fullness of times (cf. III, 21, 4) must pass through the Abrahamitic filiation, which the Hebrew receives through his adherence to the faith of Abraham, and the gentile in Christ Jesus.

With these presuppositions, *qui adoptionem perceperunt* in IV, 25, 3 will mean whoever by his faithfulness to Abraham has agreed to belong to his people, and not simply was born into it. Because this group comes immediately after the patriarchs and the prophets, and because its function is "to conform certain things to Christ," one can conclude that the Hebrews are this anonymous group, before Christ, who had "conformed the things to Christ," that is to say, had interpreted and lived the laws, the institutions, and the events of history in such a way that through them one day the figure of Christ would be recognized.

This interpretation corresponds to the general drift of the paragraph (IV, 25, 3). After the references to the three groups (patriarchs, prophets, *qui adoptionem perceperunt*), which from the Old Testament "announce" Christ, and only after mention of Abraham—who is the synthesis of the two alliances—and in opposition to those who have sown are those who have "reaped" (that is to say, the Church) introduced. The Church as such cannot be identified in the paragraph with *qui adoptionem perceperunt* because the function assigned to the latter is not to "reap."

If our painstaking interpretation is correct, with IV, 25, 3, the number and the function of those who even in the Old Testament have "sown" Christ without having known, it is extended.<sup>24</sup>



### Participation and Analogy

1. The reading of the texts of Irenaeus leaves us with a handful of rich theological suggestions, and numerous questions and worries.

We have already stated the importance that the unity of the Father's, the word's, and the Spirit's action from all times has for Irenaeus.

The richness and multiplicity of the divine action is expressed adequately with the images of the symphony and of the multiple waters.

This action is carried to completion in the first Testament by the patriarchs and the prophets, as well as by means of the whole people, and always to the benefit of all men.

The patriarchs and the prophets do not carry on a merely didactic or kerygmatic activity, proclaiming a message or announcing events that will have to be verified later on. There is an ontological continuity between the faith of Abraham and our own, just as there is a continuity between the action of the prophets and that of those who receive the message. The prophets and patriarchs (particularly Abraham) appear as actively engaged in a salvation that at every moment is fully achieved.

It does not seem that Irenaeus had attained the complete synthesis of the two tendencies that appear in his writings, i.e., consideration of the prophetic, patriarchal, and "popular" activity as announcement, and consideration of this same activity as participation in the salvific activity of the Father and of the word. At times, the expressions *praeformare* and *praefigurare* suggest the synthesis between *annuntiare* and *adimplere*.

The outline "prefiguration—accomplishment" to express the relationship Old Testament—New Testament is so dominant among Christian theologians, and, particularly, among Catholics, that we run the risk of reading only this approach to the problem in the writings of Irenaeus, and overlooking what may be his true and rich contribution to its solution.<sup>25</sup>

2. *Advær. Haer.* IV, 33, 15, the text that probably best synthesizes what we can call the Trinitarian structure of the relationship between the Old and New Testament can serve as a point of departure for our conclusive reflections.<sup>26</sup>

The importance of this text is also underlined by its place in Chapter 33, which has as its general theme: "The truly spiritual

disciple judges all men, and is not judged by anybody" (1 Cor. 2:15).

In the first section of the chapter (paragraphs 1 to 7), Irenaeus looks back upon the errors of the heretics who did not understand the Scriptures. In numbers 8 to 10, he describes the spiritual disciple who participates in the true gnosis. Finally, in numbers 11 to 14, he exposes the meaning of certain texts of the Scriptures that only the spiritual disciple is capable of understanding adequately. He concludes with paragraph 15, the words of the prophets:

he who is truly spiritual will interpret, pointing out to which aspect of the Lord's providential work each one of the things which have been said belongs, and exhibiting the entire Body of the work of the Son of God: always knowing the same God; and always acknowledging the same Word of God, though He be but now made manifest unto us; and always recognizing the same Spirit of God, though in the last times He be newly poured out upon us, and upon mankind itself from the creation to the end of the World: from whom such as believe in God, and follow His Word, obtain the salvation which is from Him.

The text is structured with the precision of the paragraphs where Irenaeus synthesizes an important doctrine with complete clarity.

The recognition at every moment (*semper*) in history, of the same Father, word, and Spirit, even if they manifest themselves in different ways, belongs to the nucleus of Irenaeus' antignostic thought. This affirmation is taken up by Irenaeus several times.<sup>27</sup> Peculiar to this text are, on the other hand, the first and the last affirmation.

God exercises his salvific activity on the whole of the human race from the beginning till the end of time. Man is the place of revelation, and where there is humanity there is salvific action. The function of the truly spiritual man is then to recognize the modality of this salvific action in each period of history and in each man.<sup>28</sup>

In this context, the first paragraph does not refer to the capac-

ity of the spiritual man to discover correspondences either material or allegorical between the action of Jesus and the prophetic texts. Irenaeus demands true spiritual discernment to discover in each prophetic action which aspect of the economy of salvation is achieved (not forgetting that even the patriarchs, the judges, and the kings are prophets), that is to say, in each act and word of the Old Testament. The salvific economy of God includes not only the works that the word performs, starting with his presence in mortal flesh in the world, but also those that the word accomplished before the incarnation, and those that he continues in the resurrected Christ.

Hence, to discover which feature of the economy of salvation corresponds to an action or prophetic word does not mean establishing a correspondence between the thing foretold and what has been fulfilled, but between the whole structure of salvation and a particular fulfillment, independently of whether such fulfillment happened in the time of the Old New Testament.<sup>29</sup>

This thought is well brought out by the expression *integrum corpus operis Filii Dei ostendens*. But how is the whole structure of salvation discovered?

By means of particular fulfillments. The action of God on individuals and peoples presents us each time with an aspect of salvific action, which we integrate into our total vision of salvation. There is a process that goes from the particular to the whole, which at the same time recognizes an aspect of the totality in the particular. The relationship that is established between the Old and New Testament cannot then be conceived as a temporal one of before and after, but more correctly through the category of participation. The full salvation that the Triune God carries out at each moment of history, at an ontological level, is part of the whole action of salvation.

The "degree" of salvation included in the consoling word of a prophet is no less than that which is encountered in the word of Jesus; God's being present to Isaiah is no less effective than his being present in Jesus to the disciples; the suffering of the "saints of the Old Testament" is truly redemptive, although its efficacy is part of Christ's redemptive action; the divine indwelling in the temple of Jerusalem is as real as the eucharistic presence.

If salvation in the order of acts must be understood through the category of participation (the salvation exercised in the Old and New Testament participates in the whole single plan of

salvation), the knowledge we have of such salvation is best expressed through the category of analogy.

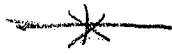
Our act of faith, the only way in which one can "verify" the salvific action of God—"here is salvation!" in a particular case (Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan woman by Jacob's well)—leads us to discover salvation in other acts (God's encounter with the people through Moses who grants living water to the people) and thus to recognize progressively the "whole plan" of salvation.

But this process is not effected solely in one direction (from the New to Old Testament). The adequate comprehension of the salvation granted to us in Christ is only fully comprehensible through the Old Testament. The discovery of the analogy of salvation is not confined solely to the events in the Old Testament or in the New Testament. Even contemporary events, the "signs of the times," can and should be read in relation to salvation arising out of either the Old or New Testament, or both taken together organically.

The conception of the structural analogy of salvation in the Old and the New Testament, to which the study of the texts of Irenaeus has led us, seems to fill in the gaps that we discover in the terms announcement—promise/accomplishment, in particular those that refer to the provisional character of, and consequent nonnecessity of, the Old Testament, which follows from this.

The analogical outline has already been presented by G. von Rad in his *Theology of the Old Testament*.<sup>30</sup> Von Rad's critics have over a period of thirty years diagnosed serious flaws in his concept of *heilsgeschichtlich* (historical-salvific). *Heilsgeschichte* apparently implied empiricism and fundamentalism in the interpretation of the history of Israel, illegitimate identification between the history of Israel and *Heilsgeschichte*, ambiguity in the treatment of the concepts of "traditions" and history, linearity in the concept of history, theological rationalism on the pretext of clearly discerning "God's plan," neglecting the proclaimed word in favor of the "history" contained in such word, disrespectful Christian manipulation of the Hebrew Scriptures.<sup>31</sup>

It is possible that the depth of the concept has prevented von Rad from obtaining a perfectly balanced formulation. It is no less true that his fundamental intuition of the structural analogy of salvation is present in his work and compensates for the excesses of "historization," which in some pages might have escaped him.



lated rich thoughts, poetical aspects, but it does not give access to the totality of the work.

If, by some freak of history, we were to return to the times of the *Divine Comedy*, it would take on its full expression.

Something similar happens to the Old Testament.

This masterly work expresses the religious experience of a people. (Therefore, the Old Testament can be described thus inasmuch as it is a literary work.) Its manifold richness is at hand to anybody who approaches it with respect. Whoever approaches the Old Testament, even without faith, obtains a share in its benefits. Whoever approaches the Old Testament as word of God will receive much more. But it is also possible that the point of view of someone who reads only the Old Testament remains incomplete, inarticulate, and inorganic, and that he gets lost in the multiplicity without getting an insight into the unity, in the secondary without grasping the central point, in the transitory without discovering what is permanent.

Whoever approaches the Old Testament through the New Testament, accepting the authoritative interpretation of Jesus and the community that united to him, accepts his interpretation, arrives at the totality of the richness of the Old Testament. Jesus and his community are the historic circumstances that make the full salvation of the Old Testament fully comprehensible. Obviously, this is a valid affirmation only within the Christian faith. The ultimate foundations of all interpretation are cultural a priori and unjustifiable existentials. Thus, one must understand Irenaeus's sentence:

Because every prophesy, before the event, is just a riddle and a question mark unto men: but when the time is come, and the thing foretold takes place, then it admits the most exact interpretation (IV, 26, 1).

Whoever does not have the key to the interpretation of the whole, i.e., the coming of the Son of God as man, cannot arrive at an exegesis of the whole.

A rigorous and unprejudiced reader must close the Old Testament overwhelmed by a magnificent work of inexhaustible wealth and depth, of which the last chapter is obviously missing.

## Notes

1. Lack of clear knowledge of the function of the Old Testament in revelation has made Christian theologians coming from cultures rich with non-Christian religious literature (e.g., in India) wonder whether such literatures could play the "propaedeutic" function in the local Church, and not the Old Testament, which is a foreign reality to these cultures.

2. Cf., e.g., C. Westermann (Hrsg.), *Probleme alttestamentlicher Hermeneutik*, Theologische Bücherei 11 (München, 1960), which brings together various contributions by the most important German exegetes of our time; B. W. Anderson (ed.), *The Old Testament and Christian Faith. Essays by Rudolf Bultmann and Others* (London, 1964), which includes contributions from English-speaking exegetes. Other important studies are J. Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation, a Study of the Two Testaments* (London, 1966); P. Beauchamp, *L'in et l'autre Testament. Essai de lecture* (Paris, 1976); and A. H. J. Gunneweg, *Vom Verstehen des Alten Testaments. Eine Hermeneutik* (Göttingen, 1977). D. L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible* (Leicester, UK, 1976), presents a wide and useful (though necessarily general) review of opinions on the theme, where only a small part treats of Catholic exegetes. The most recent *status questionis* presented by M. Oeming, *Gesamtbiblischen Theologien der Gegenwart. Das Verhältnis von AT und NT in der hermeneutischen Diskussion seit Gerhard von Rad* (Stuttgart, 1985), which omits non-German bibliography, adds very little to what Gunneweg had already said. His own brief reflections are more interesting (pp. 232-241).

3. On the abundant bibliography on *Dei Verbum*, see U. Betti et al., *Commento alla Costituzione Dogmatica sulla Divina Rivelazione "Dei Verbum"* (Milan, 1967). The commentary on Chapter IV is by A. Kerrigan (pp. 155-185); U. Betti et al., *La Costituzione Dogmatica sulla Divina Rivelazione* (Turin, 1967). The commentary on Chapter IV is by A. Penna. Of particular interest is L. Alonso Schökel, *Comentarios a la constitución Dei Verbum sobre la divina revelación*, BAC 284 (Madrid, 1969), particularly pp. 495-532. Here one finds a multifaceted exposition of the terms on which we have briefly commented here.

4. Within the limits of this study, it is impossible to deal with all the problems that in some way concern the relationship between the Old and New Testament in *Adversus Haereses*. We have, therefore, limited ourselves to establish—in the good company of St. Irenaeus—the basis for conceiving this relationship in a different way from the scheme preparation-accomplishment, apparently favored by *Dei Verbum*. This conception of Irenaeus enables us better to expound the theoretical and practical need of the Old Testament for the Christian.

*Adversus Haereses* is here quoted according to the excellent edition of *Sources Chrétiennes*, Volume 100, I-II (Paris, 1965). IV, 1, 1, means, therefore, Book IV, Chapter 1, paragraph 1. In the absence of the original complete Greek text of Book IV, the Latin translation is the most faithful witness. The English translation generally follows that of J. Keble, *Five Books of S. Irenaeus Bishop of Lyon Against Heresies* (London, Oxford, and Cambridge, 1872), corrected when necessary according to the text and translation in the *Sources Chrétiennes* edition.

5. B. de Margerie, *Introduction à l'histoire de l'exégèse* (Paris, 1980), I, 93-94; *Dei Verbum* mentions Irenaeus four times (Nos. 7, 16, 18, 25). On the relation between the Old and New Testament, number 16 mentions *Adver. Haer.* III, 21, 3: "the books of the Old Testament with all their parts were received in their entirety in the proclamation of the gospel."

6. P. Evieux, "Théologie de l'accoutumance chez Saint Irénée," *RechSR* 55 (1967) 5.

7. The close relationship between the Old and New Testament has already been pointed out, of course, being a central theme in Irenaeus—in numerous studies. Nevertheless, the type of relationship that exists has not been made sufficiently explicit. The classic study by A. Benoit, *Saint Irénée. Introduction à l'étude de sa théologie* (Paris, 1960), for example, only states that "L'Ancien Testament est le livre qui rend un témoignage prophétique au Christ. En effet, les citations sont essentiellement consacrées à montrer comment le Christ est prédit dans l'Ancien Testament" (pp. 101-102). Other studies consider the way in that Irenaeus interprets the Old Testament (e.g., N. Brox, *Offenbarung, Gnosis und gnostischer Mythos bei Irenäus von Lyon* [Salzburg, 1966], particularly pp. 86-87 on the use of allegory), and above all the theological interpretation that Irenaeus makes of the Old and New Testament texts (e.g., A. Houssiau, *La Christologie de Saint Irénée* [Louvain/Gembloux, 1955]). On the interpretation of the Old Testament by Irenaeus, see pp. 79-92. Although primarily interested in the inspired character and the authority of the biblical texts in the theology of St. Irenaeus (p. 319), D. Farkasfalvi, "Theology of Scripture in St. Irenaeus," *Revue Bénédictine* 78 (1969), 319-333, contains some significant observations on the relationship between the Old and New Testament: "This uniqueness of the source of all revelations establishes the unity of the two Testaments" (p. 321); "the roles of the 'apostles' and of the 'prophets' appear to be parallel" (p. 322); "the Logos was there (in the Old Testament) already revealing himself to the prophets" (p. 324); "Scriptural texts of the Old Testament, says Irenaeus, should be equated with the words of Christ" (p. 326). His next affirmation seems to me less consistent with the preceding statements and not evident in the doctrine of Irenaeus: "Revelation is said to be gradual; the Old

Testament is an imperfect initiation, necessarily partial and incomplete" (p. 327).

A.H.J. Gunneweg, *Vom Verstehen des Alten Testaments*, has disqualified too generally Irenaeus' conception of the Old Testament that "keineswegs dem ursprünglichen, urgemeindlichen Umgang mit der Schrift, entsprach" (p. 165). Irenaeus' conception, notwithstanding its amplitude and richness (p. 148), cannot be maintained, because he is the father of a concept *heilsgeschichtlich* (historical-salvific) of the Scriptures, which for Gunneweg is completely unacceptable (pp. 164-175). See the section beginning on p. 286 in this study. Unfortunately, it has not been possible to consult P. Bacq, *De l'ancienne à la Nouvelle Alliance selon St. Irénée* (Paris, 1978).

8. A slightly different interpretation of *illorum* is proposed by P. Evieux, "Théologie de l'accoutumance," 19: *illorum* seems to include the patriarchs and "ceux dont ils sont les pères dans la Foi. Le choix divin porte sur des individus, mais ces individualités sont des figures universelles."

9. Cfr. also IV, 20, 7: The Son unfolds before men "les visions prophétiques, la diversité des grâces, ses ministères, la glorification du Père *consequenter et compositè*" ("à la façon d'une mélodie bien composée et harmonieuse"). Some translations do not bring out the musical image (cfr., e.g., A. Houssiau, *Le Christologie de Saint Irénée*, 112). If the image is not evident at first, it becomes very clear immediately after:

où il y a composition, il y a mélodie  
où il y a mélodie, il y a temps voulu  
où il y a temps voulu, il y a profit (A. Rousseau).

"Composition" refers to the action of the Son, "mélodie" to the result obtained. The concept of *consortantia* naturally suggests the opposite time (= rhythm). The musical metaphor thus expresses the multiplicity of salvation by the multiplicity of "author," of the means used, the result obtained (the melody), and of the rhythm that the author gives to the melody.

10. However the thought recurs in other texts: IV, 20, 11, the word in all its manifold richness manifests itself and makes itself known not only under one form only nor under one aspect only; III, 10, 6, one God manifests himself and actuates in manifold rich ways; III, 16, 17 mentions the wealth and multiplicity of the Father's will. Cf. also A. Rousseau, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les Hérésies*, IV, I, Sources Chrétiennes 100/1 (Paris, 1965), 236.

11. A. Orbe, *Parábolas Evangélicas en San Ireneo*, I (Madrid, 1972), 243-270.

12. *Ibid.*, 251. Italicized by the author.

13. *Ibid.*, 252.

14. *Ibid.*, 268–270. Italicized by the author.
15. In this study, we emphasize the identification of the believer with Abraham. On the aim of this identification, to “accustom oneself to follow the Word,” see the excellent article, quoted above, by P. Evieux, “Theologie de l’accomplissement,” 9–12.
16. The affirmation that this unique vision is achieved “selon trois modes successifs de plus en plus élevés” (cf. A. Rousseau, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les Hérésies*, IV/1, 251) seems to rely more on the general precomprehension that the New Testament and the realities contained in it must overcome the Old Testament always and in all, than on the text itself. This insists on the unity of vision, only alludes to the succession, and does not touch in any way the quality of the vision, even though it states its entitative difference.
17. The subject of the actions in this text is not clear. Does it refer to the Father or to the word? It seems correct to hold with A. Rousseau, *ibid.*, 227, the ambiguity suggested by the Greek: the participles can refer to God or to the Logos, or to both at the same time. In fact, Irenaeus attributes the different actions here mentioned both to the Father and to the Son.
18. Cfr. supra p.
19. Cfr. supra p.
20. Cfr. supra p.
21. A. Orbe, *Parábolas Evangélicas*, I, 22, mentions this text but does not discuss the meaning of the expression. The affirmation that only a few (the patriarchs and the prophets) had divine knowledge before the coming of the word leads one to suppose an interpretation of “qui adoptionem perceperunt” different from the one we propose.
22. Cfr., e.g., III, 11, 1; 16, 3; 18, 7; 19, 1; 20, 2; IV, 16, 5; 33, 4; 36, 2; V, 12, 2.
23. Cfr. A. Rousseau, *ibid.*, 220.
24. In this context, it would be interesting to discuss III, 6, 1 and III, 19, 1, where Irenaeus comments on Ps. 81:6–7 and identifies the assembly of the gods with those who have received filial adoption (*huiosetia* = the nature of gods), where the Son presides. Does not the way in which Irenaeus reads this Psalm lead us to suppose that the ecclesial community of those who have received filial adoption is also extended to the Old Testament?
25. We do not deny that the scheme prefiguration–accomplishment may be present in Irenaeus. See, for example: “Thus in each instance the Word of God hath a sort of outline of things to come (*lineamenta rerum futurarum*) and hath manifested unto men as it were the special features of the Father’s providences (*species dispositionum*) . . .” (IV, 20, 11). In IV, 22, 2, we read: “For as in those who come first we were prefigured (*praefigurabamur*) and foretold (*praenuntiabamur*), so they in their turn are completely drawn out in us; (*in nobis illi deformantur*), i.e., in the

Church. . . .” The note of A. Rousseau, *Irénée de Lyon. Contre les Hérésies*, IV, 1, 256, insists on this scheme. The concept of reciprocal immutability, which is also used to explain the text, is nearer to the scheme of salvific analogy than to that of prefiguration–accomplishment; they do not seem to coincide strictly. In the same text, Irenaeus starts out with his fundamental thought of the one God who leads the patriarchs in their “economies,” and who justifies the circumcised *ex fide*, and the uncircumcised *per fidem*. In fact, the whole paragraph is dedicated to the salvation that the Father and Christ exercise in favor of “all men altogether who from the beginning, because of their excellence in their generation, have both feared and loved God, and conversed justly and piously with their neighbors, and desired to see Christ and to hear His Voice.” The text also establishes a relationship between the “first” (the men who came before the coming of Christ?) and “us.” The problem goes further than the relation between the Old and New Testament.

26. Among contemporary authors, J. Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation. A Study of the Two Testaments*, 153–154, has emphasized (without reference to Irenaeus) the importance of the Trinitarian structure of this relationship: “. . . Our approach to the Old Testament is Trinitarian rather than Christological. The direction of thought is from God to Christ, from Father to Son, and not from Christ to God . . . ; where we have a Trinitarian structure we can proceed to a Christological one . . . ; it is less clear that we can begin from a Christological approach.” D. Farkasfalvy, “Theology of Scripture in St. Irenaeus,” speaks of the Trinitarian structure of Revelation: “the unity of the two Testaments is affirmed . . . by showing in both Testaments the similarity of structure with regard to the future” (p. 324).

27. See, for example, IV, 6, 6; 20, 4; 20, 11.

28. See, for example, the parable of the vine-dressers (IV, 36, 7) and the exegesis of A. Orbe, *Parábolas Evangélicas* I, 439–441, on the “cinco horas” of the call: “De los cinco tiempos, cuatro pertenecen al AT; uno al Nuevo. Eso basta para urgir contra los herejes la unicidad de vocación (resp. salud) y de Amo en los dos Testamentos” (p. 441).

29. Texts like IV, 32, 2, which even seem to give a theoretical precedence to the scheme announcement–accomplishment, should be discussed in more detail. We simply observe how the two Testaments are put in *parallel* (not subordinate one to the other), addressed to two peoples at different times, to accomplish both the work of faith in both; the “first Testament” is designed to bring about the service of God in men for the benefit of men; it is the figure of “divine things” (not necessarily of those of the New Testament); it prefigures realities of the Church (a function that it partially shares with the New Testament); and contains a prophecy for the future in a less-precise sense. Here Irenaeus proposes an apologetic aim for this function: “that man might learn God’s universal foreknowledge.”

30. G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testament*, II (München, 1961; 1968<sup>5</sup>), 376–396. The study of A.H.J. Gunneweg, *Vom Verstehen des Alten Testaments* (Göttingen, 1977), which devotes much space to von Rad and his concept of *heilsgeschichtlich*, has not explicitly recognized his contribution to this discussion. One notes his absence in pp. 178–180.

31. These are the fundamental chapters containing criticism of von Rad. This is not the place to evaluate his contributions nor the value of the criticism. The above-mentioned study of M. Oeming, *Gesamtbiblischen Theologien der Gegenwart*, can serve as a starting point for such an assessment.

32. A.H.J. Gunneweg, *Vom Verstehen des Alten Testaments*, 159–180, quoting E. Fuchs, *Hermeneutik* (1954), 201.

33. D.L. Baker, *Two Testaments, One Bible*, 251–272, presents a documented and useful *status questionis* on the typology, as well as some opportune remarks.

34. A brief but important study (often overlooked) on typology is the article by P. Beauchamp, “La figure dans l’un et l’autre Testament,” *RechSR* 59 (1971), 209–224. Beauchamp tries to explain the structure of the “activité figurante,” of which typological exegesis (even if it is not completely identical with it) is at least one form. Here are two of his enlightening points of view: “la visée de l’activité figurante est de donner un réel à cette totalité passée, dont elle ne supporte pas qu’elle soit passée” (p. 214); “Il y a un compte à régler entre la parole qui reste, et le fait infirme qui s’évanouit” (p. 218). My thanks are due J.-M. Carrière, who called my attention to this article.

35. H. de Lubac, *Exégèse Médiévale. Les quatre sens de l’Ecriture, Seconde Partie*, II (Paris, 1964), 179. See the scholarly exposition in this volume on the use of allegory by the Fathers, pp. 125–181. On allegory, see also the important study by R.P. Hanson, *Allegory and Event* (London, 1959). It does not seem that, among the majority of exegetes, there has been a clear assimilation of the distinction between allegory as literary *tropos*, and typology as a theological presupposition. There is no graduation between the two concepts of “more” to “less,” or of the “reasonable” to the “exaggerated.” Allegory as such does not allow a positive or negative evaluation. A typological concept can be developed on the basis of historical premises, as well as by means of allegorical elaborations. Neither one nor the other development jeopardizes the value of the typological concept.

36. A different interpretation of this image is proposed by G. Wingren, *Man and the Incarnation. A Study in the Biblical Theology of Irenaeus*, trans. R. Mackenzie (Edinburgh/London, 1959), 73–74. In IV, 34, 3, Irenaeus adds another answer that corresponds to the scheme announcement–accomplishment: what has been announced by the prophets is fully verified only in Christ.

# CHAPTER 10

## Historicity of the Gospels (*Dei Verbum* 19)

### Genesis and Fruits of the Conciliar Text

José Caba, S.J.

#### Summary

The present article endeavors to study the conciliar text on the historicity of the gospels (*Dei Verbum* 19) as regards its origins in the past and its fruits in the present. Following a long historical account of the previous declarations of the Church, the conciliar text was developed and brought to a conclusion in the course of the evolution of the five drafts through which the Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation passed. The main influence it was subject to was the document *Sancta Mater Ecclesia* of the Pontifical Biblical Commission. The fruits of the conciliar text can be seen in the principal directions taken in the abundant exegetical literature on the theme, which, while examining tradition in the gospels, anchors itself in Jesus, who is their original source, and goes on from there to the writings of the authors. The future of the conciliar text is promising, especially if to the historical-critical study of the text of the gospels, we add the vision of faith that recognizes it to be the word of God; and if the exegete, instead of being locked into the “pure primitive text” of the gospel, uses it to reach the riches of its theological context, as manifested in the very life of the Church.



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