

markings is directly proportional to the cloth-body distance, thus making possible the construction of a three-dimensional image from which much should be learned.

It has been said that more will probably be discovered about the Shroud in the next eighteen months than in the previous 2,000 years. Where it will all lead no one can be sure. All I can say is that for me the burden of proof has shifted. I began by assuming its inauthenticity until proved otherwise and then asking how one explained it. On the hypothesis of a medieval forgery, or any other I could think of, this was very difficult. I now find myself assuming its authenticity until proved otherwise—as at any moment it could be—and then asking how one explains it. This is equally difficult. There is as yet no plausible scientific answer. Direct body-contact would only have produced a few marks at protuberant points—not the graduated picture varying with the distance from the surface of the skin. Vignon proposed a vapour-graph given off by a mixture of ammonia and aloes, but this has not really established itself. Some sort of photographic or radiographic process seems more likely, though if we ask whether in a 'flash' of dematerialization or by some slower 'time-exposure' we merely reveal our ignorance. For myself I would assume that we are here neither in the world of sheer unaccountable miracle nor in that of repeatable experiment but in that mysterious realm of paranormal physical phenomena which appear to accompany intense mystical and spiritual states. All one can do is to press on into the unknown with what partial parallels one can find, retaining both the openness and the scepticism which has marked psychical research at its best.

Finally, from the religious and theological point of view, so what? If the Shroud is authentic, it obviously greatly strengthens the historicity of the stories that the grave was found empty with nothing but the linen clothes remaining. That the empty tomb narratives are a late creation has never seemed to me plausible. Why it was empty or precisely what happened to the old body remains, I think, as open as ever. Clearly the Shroud evidence compels us to take seriously the possibility of some molecular transformation which has recorded its indelible mark. But I am not convinced that it rules out the removal of the body after it had left its 'photograph' for the puzzled sleuths of this and every age. And it is after all a picture of the dead Jesus, however majestic, rather than of the living Christ. There is no knock-down proof of resurrection—and faith would not wish to have it so. But if in the recognition of the face and of the hands and the feet, we, like those who knew him best, are led to say, 'It is the Lord!', then perhaps we may have to learn to count ourselves also among those who have 'seen and believed'. Yet that brings with it not special blessing but special responsibility.

I find that when I confess by night to my curious interest among friends and colleagues a surprising number admit that they also have thought there might be something to it. Yet, considering the publicity, the circle especially in Britain of those prepared to take it seriously has hitherto been astonishingly small. *The Ampleforth Journal* ran valuable articles on it in the spring and autumn numbers of 1969. There is, as I said, to be an important new book next year and also a TV film which is sure to stimulate public interest. Before this article is published a high-powered conference, mostly of scientists, will have taken place in New Mexico. 1978 which marks the fourth centenary of the Shroud's transfer to Turin will also see a world congress there in May. For those nearer home the recently formed British Society for the Turin Shroud is arranging a symposium at the Institute of Christian Studies, Margaret Street, W.1, on Friday evening and all day Saturday, September 16 and 17, 1977. Anyone interested should contact the Rev. David Sox, 73 Chatsworth Court, Pembroke Road, W.8.

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ARCTIC 165

The Eucharist and Time

COLIN HICKLING

'In this [i.e. the eucharistic] memorial we do not only recall past events: God makes them present through the Holy Spirit.' So declared the representatives of the Roman Catholic hierarchy and their Lutheran colleagues after their meeting at St Louis ten years ago.¹ It is a remarkable claim; and so is that of the similar statement issued from Windsor four years later, for its language, though ambiguous, invites interpretation in the same sense. 'The Eucharist (is) a means through which the atoning work of Christ on the cross is . . . made effective in the life of the Church'; made effective, we are entitled to think, by being made present. Nearly nineteen and a half centuries, it seems, can be simply cancelled. Unlike Richard II, we both can and do, by celebrating the Eucharist, 'call back yesterday, bid time return'.

A consensus about the relation of the eucharist to the death of Jesus exists in a good deal of writing, both Catholic and Protestant during the decades previous to the statements from which these quotations

¹ The text of their statement (*Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue, III: The Eucharist as Sacrifice*) and of the Windsor Agreed Statement is quoted from *Modern Eucharistic Agreement*, SPCK, London, 1973, pp. 38 and 27 respectively.

have been taken.¹ This consensus is open to serious criticism for having neglected the vulnerability to philosophical (and indeed to common-sense) objections of the claims about time that are implied in its affirmations, of which the above statements are representative. For the paradox of a past which is made present is, on the face of it, unintelligible: what has 'passed' is by definition irrecoverable. To be as one was five years ago is ruled out; how much less can one experience an event sealed off in a much remoter past, and in a cultural milieu to which we cannot even imagine what it would be like to gain access? The authors of the affirmations in question owe philosophers, and indeed all of us, at least some indication that they are aware of their temerity in depriving so long an interval of lapsed time, and so large a sum total of cultural variation,² of their usual power to interpose distance between things as they once were and ourselves.

In another and quite different respect, too, the consensus expressed in the St Louis statement is open to adverse criticism. It would appear that eucharistic theology has been one of the few areas in doctrinal studies to have learned from recent Old Testament Scholarship; but the lesson has been taken over uncritically. The central term *anamnesis* ('memorial') has been related to claims put forward by some Old Testament theologians in such a way as to make it bear a heavy weight. But it has not been noticed that the claims in question—i.e. that the Exodus and other past events were thought to be rendered present in the cult and solemn recitals of Israel—can only be made with some hesitation.³ Similarly, the authors of the Windsor Agreed Statement were surely building on inexact exegesis when they interpreted 'the notion of memorial as understood in the passover celebration in the time of Jesus' as 'the making effective in the present of an event in the past'.⁴

¹ Some of the protestant works in question are mentioned in E.L. Mascall, *Corpus Christi*, London, 1965, pp. 155-73.

² See, e.g. D.E. Nineham, *New Testament Interpretation in an Historical Age* (Ethel M. Wood lecture for 1975), Athlone Press, 1976, pp. 7 ff. On the contentions of the 'new hermeneutic' school about the temporal conditioning of language generally, cf. P. J. Achtemeier, *An Introduction to the New Hermeneutic*, Philadelphia, 1969, pp. 90 ff., and K. Kienzler, *Logik der Auferstehung: Eine Untersuchung zu R. Bultmann, G. Ebeling and W. Pannenberg* ('Logic of the Resurrection...'). Freiburg, 1976, pp. 69f., 72 ff., 180 ff.

³ See the recent article on *zakar* ('remember') by Eising in the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, much more cautious in this respect than that of Schottroff, s.v., in Westermann's *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (1971). S. J. DeVries, *Time and History in the Old Testament*, Grand Rapids, 1975, is a recent example of the kind of writing here called in question: inadequate note is taken to the strictures against a 'mystique' about time peculiar to the Hebrew mind offered by J. Barr, *Semantics of Biblical Language*, Oxford, 1961, especially pp. 78ff. D. Gregg's *Anamnesis in the Eucharist* (Grove Liturgical Study, 5), Bramcote, 1976 is also open to criticism in this respect.

⁴ See my 'Eucharistic Theology and Eucharistic Origins', Part I, *Liturgical Review*, IV, 2, 1974, p. 25, note 8.

Whatever authority is claimed for the affirmations we are discussing, it should not be that of the alleged beliefs of Israel and of the Jews of the time of Christ. And even if these beliefs can be shown to have existed, it remains to be argued what value they might have for ourselves.

Nevertheless, a 'nexus' has long been believed to exist 'between the sacrifice of Christ and the eucharist'.¹ How can it best be elucidated? Two approaches suggest themselves (not necessarily as mutually exclusive options). The first is that the doctrine of eucharistic sacrifice is to be subsumed under the general category of New Testament hermeneutics. The second invokes the concept of a special or 'sacred' time in which the death of Jesus took place, and into which the eucharist affords re-entry.

First: it is not accidental that Bultmann used language strongly reminiscent of eucharistic terminology in asserting that the content of Christian preaching becomes actually present as it is proclaimed.² The eucharist, as a *verbum visibile*, is an occasion of communication, and what it communicates is the death of Jesus in its significance for us. What is distinctive in the eucharist is the particular kind and intensity of the communication.

Does this approach, in the end, reduce the eucharist to the *nuda commemoratio* of Zwinglian teaching? Is the language of presence in relation to the past event indicative merely of the intensity with which it is remembered? Should the 'nexus' between past and present here be acknowledged as, in the last analysis, exclusively subjective and cerebral? One consideration suggests that, even when the eucharist is understood in the terms just sketched, more can be said than this.

For what takes place in the eucharist is a *corporate* remembering, and this, though not an altogether straightforward concept, is one to which a relatively clear and generally acceptable meaning can be given. This corporate remembering is part of what constitutes the Church's identity: from the beginning (1 Corinthians 15.1-3) the Church has been a body which remembers the crucifixion and acknowledges it as saving. Thus the liturgical commemoration of Jesus' crucifixion publicly articulates what is centrally constitutive of the Church's self-awareness—or at least, of the self-understanding to which the Church has tried to be loyal.

There are secular analogies, including some contemporary ones. The identity of some national and political bodies has been constituted by an episode in history (as reconstructed by their members). The corporately remembered past exercises power in the present because that past created the present. Indeed, the power exercised by the

¹ The Windsor Agreed Statement, *Modern Eucharistic Agreement*, p. 27.

² Cf. e.g., 'General Truths and Christian Proclamation' in 'History and Hermeneutic' (*Journal for Theology and Church*, 4), Tübingen and New York, 1967, p. 154.

remembered and interpreted past has been deliberately conserved and repristinated by methods which have not excluded secular rituals, in which the community reaffirms its identity—the continuity of each generation with its predecessors—through emotive and interpretative evocations of the past. Each new generation is thus encouraged (in J.S. Dunne's phrase)¹ to 'pass over' to an archetypal moment in the past, and to derive from this a more potent realization of its own identity.

The usefulness of these analogies is indeed limited. The time-span involved for the Christian Church is far greater than in the case of most of the secular examples one might quote. Further, identification with a secular body is less searching in its implications—in some ways, at least—than identification with a religious one. It must be added that the Church has classically seen its origin to lie, not in *one* event—the crucifixion (or crucifixion-and-resurrection) of Jesus—but in the whole salvation-history from Abraham onwards. This last, however, is not a real difficulty, since the events constituting the 'paschal mystery' are generally seen to form the culmination of the biblical salvation-history. How far, then, can these analogies take us?

They indicate, surely, that what has power to create and maintain corporate identity is neither a past event in itself, nor each group or individual's attention to that event across a gap, as it were, in which nothing significant happened. On the contrary, there is no gap. Each generation's response of adherence and allegiance has been directed to the founding event *as remembered by its forebears with the same adherence and allegiance* to what the event stands for. There has been a continuous chain of appropriation of a corporate memory, carrying with it the reaffirmation of a corporate response.

Bishop B. C. Butler's exposition of the idea of ecclesiastical tradition is helpful at this point. 'The Christian tradition', he says, 'is not . . . to be simply identified with . . . the external "monuments of tradition" and the public preaching and teaching of the Church. Its core is an inner reality communicated, with the help of external means, from heart to heart.' This 'interior reality', which is 'the inner history of believing humanity and its members (beginning with the Second Adam himself)', constitutes the true continuity uniting the Christian generations.² It is true that Bishop Butler finds the essential constituent of Christian continuity to be the experience of grace, while in the suggestion which is being offered here this essential constituent is the cross as remembered and responded to in faith. But on either showing (and the difference is not great) what has been communicated onwards down Christian history is something that is, in some sense at least, objective: objective, that is,

¹ See his *A Search for God in Time and Memory*, London, 1967, pp. 4 ff.

² 'The Data of Theology', *Clergy Review*, LXI, 5, 1976, pp. 175, 177.

to the attention of each recipient. It is the crucifixion of Jesus, not as a chronologically distant event present only in the very restricted sense that it is being thought of, but as an event continuously remembered and interpreted, in a cumulative witness, by the intervening generations of Christians. The faith of the communion of saints, in other words, confers on the death of Jesus at least one kind of capacity to survive 'pastness' and to become in a valid sense objectively present for us.

Some points made in a recent article by Professor D. M. McKinnon are interesting in this context. Commenting on William Styron's novel *Lie Down in Darkness*, he says that 'for Styron, as for many other writers, the past is encapsulated in the present': 'in such remembering' as is instanced in the structure of this novel 'we . . . organize, imposing form and shape . . . upon the items in our recollected biography. Such an organization is an element in remembering, humanly a very important element, yet always subordinate to a sense of the past as something given.'¹ McKinnon here expresses accurately the ambivalence present in remembering significant occasions in one's experience. The past has a 'quality of sheer inexorable givenness', and yet we are inescapably aware of 'the power of the past to affect the present'.² There is an element corresponding to this ambivalence in the Church's corporate remembering of the cross. The crucifixion belongs to the past and 'cannot be repeated, or extended or continued',³ as is affirmed now by Catholic quite as much as by Protestant theology. Yet the remembering of the crucifixion, 'organized' (in McKinnon's term) through continuous interpretation in the Church's thought and experience, is potent, and incorporates this event in some way—affectively as well as intellectually—into our present.

When we turn to the second line of approach mentioned above, we move into deep waters. What might be meant by special or sacred time? Are those theologians who have spoken of sacred or eschatological time or of 'the time that belongs to saving history'⁴ simply inventing a concept as a way of indicating that what they are talking about is unique? Perhaps they are. But philosophers, at least, have become interested once again in the concept of time, and some of them appear to agree that what McTaggart called 'series A' time—that is, a linear progression from the remote through the more recent past and the present and the immediate future on towards a further future—is not the only kind of

¹ 'On the Irreversibility of Time,' *Epworth Review*, 3, 2, 1976, pp. 93, 95.

² *Ibid.*, p. 95.

³ From the St Louis statement (see note 1).

⁴ Respectively, H.-G. Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, London, 1975, pp. 108 ff., E. Gütgemanns, *Der leidende Apostel und sein Herr: Studien zur paulinische Christologie* ('The suffering Apostle and his Lord . . .'), Göttingen, 1966, pp. 119 ff., Part IV (pp. 282-328), and pp. 386 ff., and K. Rahner, 'Theological Observations on the Concept of Time', in *Theological Investigations*, XI, London, 1974, pp. 290 f., 303 ff.

time we may think of.¹ The subject is surely overdue for fuller discussion by theologians (who may, as suggested above, find only limited help in the contributions already made by the students of the Old Testament among them).

For a full, if necessarily complex, exposition of eschatological time (for this description seems to subsume the others just mentioned), we may consider E. Güttgemanns' important study of Pauline christology.² In the section which concerns us, Güttgemanns is discussing the small but significant group of texts in which Paul alludes to his sufferings in the service of the gospel as affording him participation in the passion of Jesus, and conversely as bringing the passion into present time. Paul writes in this way, Güttgemanns thinks, because, for him, both the passion of Jesus and his own sufferings belonged to a unique kind of time. 'Paul apprehends the cross of Jesus as the event *par excellence* of eschatological time, and he thus apprehends the time characterized by Jesus' death as identical with the time in which the missionary life and work of the apostles takes place. . . . We should not, therefore, speak of the "continuation" of the christological saving event in the missionary preaching, but solely of the "eschatological" *presence of the time of the Crucified* in the apostolic preaching.' And, since 'not only the missionary preaching, but also the whole life and activity of the apostles belong within the "eschatological" time of Jesus, the very sufferings of the apostle are themselves the epiphany of the time of Jesus in the apostle'.³

It is tempting to substitute 'the eucharist' for 'the apostolic preaching' and 'the apostle' (and indeed, as we have seen, the eucharist is among other things a form of the proclamation, cf 1 Corinthians 11.26). For, just as Paul, in Güttgemanns' view, could only do justice to his *experience* by apprehending it (Güttgemanns speaks of his *Denkakt*, 'act of thinking') as belonging to the 'eschatological time' of Jesus' own suffering, so it is the experience of participation in the eucharist that has—to some extent, at least—necessitated and validated the belief that, in the eucharist, Christians are enabled to transcend the ordinary sequence of 'clock time'.

None of this, of course, necessarily legitimizes, let alone imposes, exploration of a way of thinking about time which is more complex than the one we take for granted. Many would affirm, and with good reason, that we are under obligation to use only the conceptuality we share with non-believing contemporaries, and that categories of thought such

¹ Cf. J.M.E. McTaggart, *The Nature of Existence*, Vol. I, Book V, Cambridge, 1927, ch. 33; R.M. Gale, 'Tensed Statements', *Philosophical Quarterly*, 12, 1962, pp. 53 ff., and idem, *The Language of Time*, London, 1968, especially pp. 103 ff. I owe these references to my colleague R.R.K. Sorabji (Department of Philosophy, King's College, London). Cf. also J.R. Lucas, *A Treatise on Time and Space*, London, 1973.

² See note 13.

³ Op. cit., pp. 321 f. (italics in the original).

as those just indicated—even if once existent—must be reduced to re-expression in terms with which our contemporaries are at home. All we are permitted to do, on this view, is to discover how to convey in rationally acceptable terms the supreme significance of past events occurring in the only time we can easily talk about.

Those, however, who are reluctant to accept defeat in this matter are likely to turn again to the actions and words of the climax of the eucharist. For Christian experience has for the most part insisted that these words and actions are not merely symbolic counters in an ultimately cerebral communication, but that by their means 'Jesus gives himself, as a person, . . . to his disciples'.¹ It is this self-communication by Jesus that creates the continuity between the Last Supper, the cross, and successive eucharists; and since it is by its nature more 'objective' than 'subjective' (we do not control it, or have it at our disposal to annul by simple disregard) the eucharist may indeed be thought to have a significance for which our ways of speaking about time are inadequate. The remembering of the cross in a uniquely potent way is part of that significance, but does not exhaust it.

Do we not need, then—in order to understand not only the eucharist but also, relatedly, the resurrection as protracting (or installing in some new dimension) the once observable particularity of Jesus as a human being—a clearer recognition of the qualitative, as opposed to the quantitative, aspects of time? The distinction implied in Güttgemanns' words between eschatological time and—so to speak—'neutral' or 'clock' time corresponds, if remotely, to the distinction, real enough to all of us, between the 'neutral' time during which one waits for a train or dictates routine letters, and what might be called significant time, the time during which one fell in love or got the idea for a novel, the time of

the moment in the rose-garden,

The moment in the arbour where the rain beat,

The moment in the draughty church at smokefall.

Manifestly, the whole of that 'cluster of interrelated historical events' through which Christian faith 'apprehends the irruption of the super-historical . . . into history and as a particular history'² falls within a kind of time that is significant in the highest degree—and with a significance that, as with the moments in one's personal history just mentioned, is apprehended as 'given', as having been 'there' independently of ourselves. May we not move along some such lines as these towards doing descriptive justice to eucharistic experience without resorting to mere

¹ H. Patsch, *Abendmahl und historischer Jesus*, Stuttgart, 1972, p. 229; language such as this seems preferable to the traditional word 'presence'. A suggestive definition 'presence' in this context as Christ's 'unmediated authority' is offered by J.H. Schütz *Paul and the Anatomy of Apostolic Authority*, Cambridge, 1975, p. 70.

² B.C. Butler, *The Theology of Vatican II*, p. 153.

paradox, and indeed discover how to articulate, with whatever exactness might prove possible, words from *Burnt Norton* a little earlier in the poem than those just quoted, and peculiarly appropriate to the eucharist?

Time past and time future
 What might have been and what was
 Point to one end, which is always present.

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Letters to the Editors

INCARNATION

Dear Editors,

Brian Hebblethwaite's article 'Incarnation—the essence of Christianity?' (March 1977), is a useful contribution to an important discussion. But one cannot be content with the impression which he conveys that the doctrine of divine incarnation in Jesus of Nazareth is a straightforward and unproblematic notion, about which some theologians have been raising quite gratuitous difficulties.

It has been said often enough to require attention that a human being—one who begins at a particular time, with a particular genetic make-up formed within the biological stream of human life, and who is accordingly finite in all respects, including knowledge, energy and capacity to bring about what he wants—cannot meaningfully be said to be, identically, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity; and that the notion of divine incarnation (understood as a literal and not as a metaphorical, poetic, symbolic or mythological idea) is a self-contradiction—like the idea of a square circle. Against this Hebblethwaite says that 'no case whatsoever has actually been made out for the conclusion that incarnation-talk is self-contradictory'. But it seems to me that a *prima facie* case is already made out by pointing to the different and apparently incompatible sets of characteristics, so that the onus rests upon one who wishes to uphold the traditional interpretation of Jesus as both God and man. For if Jesus began in time, he was not eternal. If he was a created being, he was not the creator of the universe, nor his own creator. If he had limited knowledge, he was not omniscient. If he had limited power, he was not omnipotent. If he was confined to one region of space at a time, he was not omnipresent.

Hebblethwaite, wisely, does not go up the kenotic cul-de-sac. He

takes a different path, and says that since we do not know what either God or man is, we cannot say that they have incompatible natures. And yet although we do not know what God or man are, we can apparently know that God was able to become a man! Surely, if one is genuinely agnostic about the divine nature he will not profess to know either that God can or that God cannot become a man; and accordingly he will not claim to know that God *did* become a man.

But let us for the moment accept Hebblethwaite's selective agnosticism, and suppose ourselves to know that there is no incompatibility between being divine and being human. This principle of the compatibility within historical individuals of the divine and human natures opens up the possibility of degrees of incarnation throughout human life, and leaves the belief that this principle has only been brought into operation once as an arbitrary claim which is not easily reconciled with the universal saving love of God. For if the entirety of the divine nature can co-exist with human nature in one person, then less than the entirety of the divine nature can presumably even more easily co-exist with human nature. It becomes an almost inevitable conclusion that to the degree that other men are Christ-like, to that extent God is incarnate in them also. Incarnation then becomes a matter of degree: God is incarnate in all men in so far as they are Spirit-filled, or Christ-like, or truly saintly. For if incarnation means the co-existence of the divine and human natures in the same person—these two natures being such that they *can* co-exist in varying degrees in the same person—then there is no evident reason why divine incarnation should be confined to one single human being. Thus in affirming the possibility of historical persons being both human and divine, one opens up a much larger prospect than the traditional Christian doctrine envisages.

Hebblethwaite deals with a related though not identical point when he considers in passing the possibility of many incarnations. He treats this as something scarcely to be taken seriously: 'To suppose that God might have several human faces is to lose the real personal revelatory significance of incarnation'. But why is this so? When we remember that at the time of Christ, as well as throughout the preceding and most of the succeeding centuries, human life was lived in separate and largely autonomous streams of civilisation, with only immensely slow interactions taking place between them, there seems to be a strong case for divine incarnations at least in China and India as well as in the Mediterranean world—and perhaps also in Europe, Russia, North America, South America, Africa, and Australasia. If it is possible for God to become a man, would it not have been a greater expression of the divine love if God had incarnated several times, for the benefit of other sections of the human race also?

The traditional doctrine bristles with profound and difficult problems.