God and His Temple: Reflections on Professor Samuel Terrien’s The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology

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The Elusive Presence:
Toward a New Biblical Theology

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Preface

This small book consists of papers which were given at the third and final session of a consultation on "Theology of Catastrophe." The participants met under the auspices of the American Academy of Religion in New York City on November 15, 1979.

The theme of the consultation evolved from a course, "The Fall of Jerusalem: Jewish and Christian Interpretations," which is team-taught by Asher Finkel and Lawrence Frizzell in the graduate program of Seton Hall University's Department of Judaeo-Christian Studies. The three meetings were chaired by Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher, whom we thank for encouraging the contributors to prepare their papers for publication.

At past annual meetings, Asher Finkel read studies on the theme "The Presence and Absence of God"; three of these will be published separately by the Institute. In early 1978 Professor Samuel Terrien of Union Theological Seminary in New York City published a significant work entitled The Elusive Presence: Toward a New Biblical Theology in the esteemed series "Religious Perspectives" edited by Dr. Ruth Nanda Anshen (Harper and Row).

The Jewish and Christian traditions offer responses to various crises in the world which result in evil and suffering. They perceive everything through faith in God whose presence affects the world in a dynamic, though seemingly elusive, manner. We thank Professor Terrien for sharing his learning on this central feature of biblical faith. The reflections of his colleagues relate either to the concept of God's presence or to the place of the Jerusalem Temple in the life of the Hebrews, the Jews and the early Christians.

This collection is published to stimulate further discussion of Professor Terrien's insights and synthesis. We express our gratitude to the participants and to the Foundation of Judaeo-Christian Studies for making the publication possible.

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THE SECRET OF GOD’S REIGN

Introduction
Consultation on "Theology of Catastrophe"
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John M. Oesterreicher

An unwritten Rule seems to demand of one who chairs a Consultation like ours that he or she first welcome all present and then have them undergo an endurance test. Usually, they are made to listen to what the chairman thinks those who will follow are going to say, or what he or she wishes they would say.

May I welcome all of you, first Professor Samuel Terrien, author of The Elusive Presence, the book that brought us together, then all speakers and listeners, members of the American Academy of Religion or Society of Biblical Literature, and no less the friends and students of Seton Hall's graduate Department of Judeo-Christian Studies.

Having discharged this most pleasant duty, I would like to bend the convention I just spoke of and have you listen, not to me, but to an Israeli scholar, a lawyer become theologian. In my opinion Israeli thinkers are all too rare; thinkers are all too rare. Though the voice you will hear is mine, the thoughts are those of the late Johanan Bloch, Professor of the History of Jewish Thought at Ben Gurion University, Beersheba. I think his approach most original and fruitful; hence I would like to relate to you part of a lecture he gave at a symposium on St. Paul, in Munich, in the winter of 1976. In that talk he discussed, among other things, some of Jesus’ parables - of which I would like to select two. Bloch calls them the "Parable of the Talents Entrusted" and "the Seed that Grows by Itself." Some exegetes think of parables as vehicles of ethical maxims like "Use your gifts as best you can!" Johanan Bloch sees them not as general moral directives, but as symbolic speeches, orientations toward the eschaton.

The Parable of the Silver Pieces has come down to us in two differing versions: Matthew 25:14-30 and Luke 19:12-27. Bloch assumes that the original core ran somewhat like this: A man journeyed overland. Before leaving, he entrusted to his servants his funds in various amounts. In the master's absence, two of the servants invested the money so as to return it to him with interest, while the third one hid it as one does a treasure. When the latter gave back no more than had been lent him, he tried to justify himself: "My Lord, I know you are a hard man. You reap where you did not sow and gather where you did not scatter. Out of fear, then, I went off to bury the thousand silver pieces in the ground." This justification, however, turns out to be no
justification at all. The master replies: "Your own words condemn you." Not only does the lord take the money from this servant, he also rejects him.

If we assume (contrary to luke) that, before his departure, the master had not given an express order to put the money to work, the third servant did not act unreasonably; in fact, he was much more prudent and correct than his fellows. Seen in this light, his rejection seems "hard," but dare we speak of hardness when the parable's lord is no other than God? Are we not giving offence? No. However absurd the servant's justification may be, the master confirms its real content. This should convince us that there is no way in which to rationalize the stances of the Lord. God departed from the world, the servants remained behind alone, left to themselves. Yet, their abandonment is knit to the coming of the Lord, the Coming of his reign.

The servant is taken by surprise, Bloch continues; the master wants to reap, to "harvest" -- the "harvest" being God's reign -- but the preparatory work is left to Man. Man is to prepare a kingdom that is not "his" but God's. This is hard -- an expectation that is incomprehensible, a demand that is excessive in every aspect. Bloch admits that his exegesis may be extremely daring but he finds it amazingly confirmed by the Parable of the Seed that Ripens by Itself in Mark 4:26-29. That parable looks quite simple, as if it referred to a matter of course: A man sows, the earth brings forth fruit, the crop is ready, the season for harvesting has arrived, and the farmer yields the sickle. What startles us right at the beginning is the introduction: "This is how it is with the reign of God" (4:26).

The narrative is unusual because of the features it stresses. The farmer does not simply sow; "he scatters seed on the ground" (4:26). This seems utterly careless, and so do the actions that follow: "He goes to bed and gets up day after day" (ibid). The story continues: "all the seed sprouts and grows, without the farmer's knowing how it happens" (4:27). Finally, we are told that "the soil produces of itself..." (4:28). All this is not quite plausible, remarks Johan Bloch; things are not really that way in farming. A farmer is not unconcerned and, within the limits of human knowledge, knows fairly well that seed grows and how it happens. Never does the earth produce fruit "by itself." As a rule, the farmer plows, fertilizes, weeds, hoes the soil and irrigates it.

Our parable, however, describes a farmer who does exactly the opposite -- no doubt, on purpose. Yet, to know that this inverted, not to say topsy-turvy, picture of farm life is intentional is not to solve its enigmatic character. The parable becomes even more problematic when we remember that it is to disclose the secret of God's reign, of its coming. Is it possible that God scattered the seeds of the Kingdom carelessly? Or that he knows nothing about its growth? Or, if Christ is the harvester, how and when did he plant the Kingdom? Has he been unconcerned about its ripening? We cannot understand the parable's paradox unless we see it as analogous to the earlier parable. The sower is like the "hard man." One starts out on a journey, the other does not seem to concern himself with what is going to happen to his seed. The "hard man" wants his servants to give their all and increase his fortune so that he can pocket the total. The role played by the servants of the first parable, goes to the earth in the second. It "itself" must bring forth fruit.

If by looking at the two parables we try to gain insight into the mystery of the kingdom, we will come to this realization: God laid the foundation of the kingdom. He wants it to come. And it is certain that it will come. But he "departed" from his world. He left men and women to themselves. Their "abandonment" is, as it were, part of the "hardness" of God. The true mystery is that in the abandonment the advent of the kingdom is prepared. Strange to say, it is the task of the abandoned to bring it about. "Abandonment" is in a manner "nearness" to the kingdom, service for the kingdom. Is this not the reason why Jesus says: "I was sent to the lost sheep of Israel" (Matt 15:24); "It is the sick who need a doctor, not the healthy" (Matt 9:14); "Blessed are the poor, the kingdom of Heaven is theirs" (Matt 5:3)? Bloch finds an analogy to "abandonment" as the situation in God's kingdom in Matthew 11:12, which he reads as "the kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and violent men seize upon it," also in Luke 16:16: "...there is the good news of the kingdom of God, and everyone forces his way in." How? Bloch asks. Surely, through praying and knocking, through travail, turning, through the keeping of the Law, through the love of God and neighbor.

"My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34), this last word on the cross confirms, so to speak, the belief that in Man's abandonment the reign of God is brought near, Bloch holds. Even as he seems near despair, the hope in God's triumph is still with him. Jesus' outcry is itself a secret sign that the kingdom of the Father is near. Yes, it "has come," it is "upon us," it is present, but present as something hidden. The reign of God is thus present and hidden.

The role Jesus assigned to abandonment was not something that appeared all of a sudden, abruptly. Bloch tells us that it was prepared, as it were, by the proclamation of the Second Isaiah: The God of Israel is a god who conceals himself (Isa 45:15). The vision of the God who hides himself (see Terrien, The Elusive Presence), is equally as tremendous and mysterious as that of the God who "left" this world. And wonder of wonders, the God who hides is the One who saves and redeems.
I trust that, with the help of Johanan Bloch's boldness I have set these proceedings in proper motion.

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It is not surprising that one who has struggled valiantly with Job should discuss the hiddenness, the seeming absence of God from the arena of human life and history. Terrien makes use of Emil Feuerbach's God's Presence in History: Jewish Affirmations and Philosophical Reflections (Harper & Row, 1972).

Undoubtedly he too has reflected long on the tragedies of the Nazi era. This is a point of focus for much modern Jewish thought, by biblical scholars and theologians such as André Neher, and by writers such as Elie Wiesel. Several recent American essays react to Wiesel's books, undoubtedly because he is a story-teller in the long Jewish tradition that dramatizes confrontation with God and evil, as in the book of Job.

As Asher Pines pointed out in our 1977 consultation, a certain spiritual climate or atmosphere can stifle the relationship between the morally demanding God and human beings. A characteristic element of a society which lacks this sense of personal freedom with social responsibility is myth-making. At Mount Sinai, Israel broke with the mythopoetic worldview as a response to God's call to Covenant and commandments. When Wagner and Nietzsche laid the foundations for a worldview which interpreted reality in the light of Teutonic myths, they provided an alternative to the Jewish and Christian traditions which was exploited by the Nazis. Then they rejected the search for openness to the creative and demanding Word of God, with the terrible results that weigh upon us all. The cooperative effort of Jews and Christians to deepen their faith in God's Word is a noble task which is served well by scholars of competence and spirituality as Samuel Terrien.


4 Three of his essays on the presence and absence of God according to Biblical and rabbinic traditions are being published by the Institute of Judaic-Christian Studies.


1. The Bible and the Ancient Near East


2. The Bible and Christianity


3. General Contemporary Theological Discussion


Samuel E. Karff, Agada: The Language of Jewish Faith, Cincinnati, HUP (1979), distributed by Ktav.

4. Theological Reflections on the Holocaust

Harry J. Cargas (editor), Responses to Elie Wiesel, New York: Persea Books (1978).
Faith can be either placid or dynamic. If the teachings of the faith have become so much "knowledge," with no room left for the wonder of mystery, then faith is placid. The believer is then protected from the surging tides of opinion by the invisible walls of a sacred tradition. Whatever it means to be "saved" in any tradition, placid faith "saves" the believer from the turbulence of doubt and the dangerous quest of new horizons of wisdom.

Dynamic faith is an event, a temporary experience of the rhythmic pulsation of trust and doubt. Belief is experienced as a subjective decision; "It is I who make the decision," hence it is an act that is time-conditioned, culture-conditioned, a way-station on the infinite ascent to "the mountain of the Lord." In the faith-event, negation and affirmation are one, as in every act of becoming; hence, 'the ambivalence of the sacred.' Mircea Eliade points out the widespread recognition of the polarity within the holy:

"... sanct can mean at the same time accursed and holy. Eustathius notes the same double meaning with hagios, which can express at once the notion "pure" and the notion "polluted." And we find this same ambivalence of the sacred appearing in the early Semitic world and among the Egyptians."

We may add that in Hebrew the roots, bhkh, qis, qdhk, mean respectively both blessing and cursing, worship and ridicule, the holy and the unholy. An awareness of the two-sidedness of religious belief, which distinguishes it from knowledge, is implicit in this linguistic phenomenon. The prophet Hosea lists the several stages of commitment, leading to the "knowledge of God"—loyalty forever, moral action, faith (Hosea 2:21, 22). In the Gospel of Mark, the father of the epileptic child cries out, "Lord, I believe; help my unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Here, faith is affirmed and negated at the same time.

"A consideration of faith in the Old Testament cannot overlook the astonishing fact that two basically different and even contradictory groups of meaning are used for man's relation to God, fear on the one side and trust on the other." We may add that in many a Psalm, faith in the "nearness of God" and the feeling of having been abandoned by him are expressed in contiguous sentences. (Psalms 30; 40; 44; 73).

The revelation-experience of the literary prophets is but a more intense form of the faith-event that occurs to all or most people. At times, we are minded to sing of the Glory of God in our lives and then again we experience moments when our life appears to be devoid of meaning. We, who are ephemeral, confront an eternal reality; we are elated by this encounter and also downcast by its transience. We are touched by eternity, but it eludes our grasp.
The "word of God," in the mind of the prophet, imposes a mission, a task that would "save" the community from an impending disaster. In the faith-event, the divine imperative is the echo of an echo. There is the Affirmation — you are called to be of service; you embody a transcendent value, "the image of God"; you are invited to become "a partner in the work of creation." There is also the "Mysterium tremendum," the mystery of not knowing the specifics; the Negation which reminds us more and more insistently that the will of the Infinite cannot be compressed into so many words; that our task is part of an endless and collective adventure; that our horizons are open-ended.

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts
Neither are your ways my ways, says the Lord
For as the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are my ways higher than your ways
And my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isa 55:8,9)

The faith-event is integrated into the value system of a society and its cultural expressions. In the biblical religion, it was structured within either the love of God or the Law of God.

In the former case, the faith-event is interpreted as an act of divine love and the human response as dedication to the love of God. The recognition of God's unity leads to the command, "you shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might." The command to love is itself an act of love, and the response to God's love (Deut 6:5) is to yearn for more of his love. In the rabbinic commentary to this verse (Sifrei, 32) this precept is interpreted to mean "you shall cause him to be beloved by all men, as did Abraham." Love is expansive both horizontally and vertically. The love of God issues in the love of men and in the longing for "the nearness of God." In turn, that longing is interpreted in rabbinic comments as the task of rendering one's own self to be "a dwelling place for the Divine Presence (Naon lahekhnah)." The social version of this ideal is to share in the building of the Kingdom of God, "to improve the world by means of the Kingdom of the Almighty" (from a prayer attributed to Rab, third century Babylonian sage). The personal quest for divine "nearness" is inseparable from the social ideal of seeking to prepare the world for the Divine Presence.

In the latter case, the faith-event is viewed within the perspective of lawfulness. All of creation is enchain by the bonds of law, which were established by the Divine Will. Man is free to be either wayward or obedient. He is called to fall in line with the laws of God, which are as irrevocable as the laws of nature.

Thus says the Lord,
who gives the sun for light by day
and the fixed order of the moon and the stars for light by night
who stirs up the sea so that its waves roar
the Lord of hosts is his name.
If this fixed order departs
from before me, says the Lord,
Then shall the descendants of Israel cease
from being a nation before me forever. (Jer 31:35-36)

The people of Israel consists of those who abide by that Law of God, which will one day become the constitution of mankind as a whole (Isa 2:2-4).

The presumed contrast between the Law and the Gospel has become a theological cliché. The Law is as constitutive of rabbinic Judaism as love is of Christianity. Indeed, the basic difference is like a fork of the road. If the perspective of love prevails, the growth of rituals will center round the infinite grace of God, with metaphors of word and deed that stress God's boundless mercy. In the perspective of lawfulness, the proliferation of rituals will reflect the scrupulosity of divine law — our earthly law must reflect "the higher law" of the Creator. "Torah is the earthly, lowly form of the higher wisdom" (Genesis Rabba 44).

However, love for all its spontaneity is a quest as well as a possession. As such, it will generate a dynamic restlessness, a yearning for higher levels of perfection in the life of society as well as in the personality of the believer. The Protestant movement did not create the messianic ideal as a creatio ex nihilo; it merely liberated that drive. It is also natural for the pulsations of love to be structured in law, a dynamic, progressive law. Similarly, a system of laws aiming at the transformation of the "natural" society into one living by the transnatural law of the Creator cannot do without the support of the love of God, trust in his infinite mercy and forgiveness and dedication to the messianic drive to build God's Kingdom on earth.

In both aspects of the faith-event, the sense of an infinite outreach will be expressed in a perpetual questioning as well as in a series of affirmations. In both communities, fixed forms for the feelings, thoughts and actions of their respective worshippers will be maintained, but there will also be a dynamic drive for the transcendence of these forms. The inner dialectic of faith may be temporarily halted by the reification of faith into rituals and dogmas. The transient and the concrete may be idolized as if they were themselves divine, not metaphors for the divine will. It is the function of the negational component of the faith-event to keep the processes of inner development and social advancement from grinding to a halt.
Biblical religion is an excellent illustration of the dynamics of faith. Gerhard von Rad, the great biblical scholar, defended the view that the Hebraic faith (Yahwism) was expounded by three concurrent interpreters (Jer 18:18) — priests, prophets, and sages. The priests taught the traditional ritual, the prophets addressed themselves to the issues of the day, the sages treasured the distilled wisdom of human experience and the revelation of God in nature. Of the three teachers, the prophets represented the cutting edge of progress. While the priesthood guarded the tradition, as it took shape in the distant past, and the sages nurtured the embers of nascent rational reflection, the prophets focused attention on the moral implications of contemporary issues and projected the vision of the redeemed human order of the future. The prophets said both "yes" and "no" to their tradition, preserving the ritualistic framework, while endowing their heritage with deep moral fervor and sensitivity. They became the sponsors of moral dynamism, by negating the absolute import of religious rituals and ethnocentric myths.

We can best appreciate the nature of the prophetic enterprise, when we view it historically as a continuous battle against pagan idolatry. The pagan priests sacralized both the varied forces of nature and the intricate structure of society, from the family to the tribe, to the nation, to the empire. The gods formed a hierarchy, with those of the highest rank and ultimate reality merging into the impersonal iron rule of fate. The gods to whom cults were dedicated were anthropomorphic and immanent in nearly all things. The sacred was reified and trivialized. In the pagan mentality, the "yes" of the faith-event was celebrated in a total sanctification of the here and now. The line between the human and the divine was blurred since there was hardly any gap in the "great chain of being" extending between heaven and earth. The "no" of faith, the transcendent dimension of the holy, was ignored in the public cults and left for the solitary meditation of philosophers.

The prophets recognized the dynamic interaction between the transcendent One God and his immanent Presence to the moral-spiritual intuition of man. Hence, while only the One God is worthy of worship, he must not be reified. He is not in material things, but his "image" is reflected in the human personality at its best. This paradox is stated most clearly by Deutero-Isaiah:

Thus says the Lord:
'Heaven is my throne

and the earth is my footstool

what is the house which you would build for me,

and what is the place of my rest?

All these things my hand has made

and so all these things are mine,

says the Lord.'

But this is the man to whom I will look,

he that is humble and contrite in spirit,

and trembles at my work'.

(Isa 66:1-2)

God is beyond all limitations and even conceptualizations, but his "nearness" is best felt in compassion, in humility, in pieté.

The prophet's objection to the building of a "house of God" was anticipated by Samuel, who stopped the practice of bringing the "Ark of the Lord" into the battlefield to insure victory. So, too, the prophet Nathan opposed the building of a Holy Temple by King David (1 Sam 7:5-17). The prophet Elijah does not seek God in the Temple of Jerusalem. Instead, he goes back to the wilderness and to Mount Horeb. The Lord appears to him not in the fire, not in the storm, not in the earthquake, but in "a still, small voice" (1 Kings 19:12). Isaiah rebukes the people for their naive trust in the efficacy of sacrifices and pilgrimages. Amos maintains that the work of the Lord reverberates in the hearts of all men and women. His confrontation with the high priest of Beth El is paradigmatic of the perennial conflict between those who hear the Word in their conscience as against those who enshrine it in rites and institutions (Amos 3:8; 7:10-17). Jeremiah carried the anti-Temple campaign to a fresh summit, when he exclaimed:

"Do not trust in these deceptive words: 'This is the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord'."

"For in the day that I brought them out of the land of Egypt, I did not speak to your fathers or command them concerning burnt offerings and sacrifices" (Jer 7:4,22).

The essence of God's Will is justice, love and humble trust (Micah 6:6). Continuing this prophetic tradition, Jesus combated the self-righteousness of some Pharisees, even as did the Pharisaic teachers themselves (b Sotah 22b. Berakhot 9:5).

* * * * *

As champions of Hebraic monotheism, the prophets combated the pagan mentality by saying in effect: "Yes, but." So, they acted in reference to the cosmos, the land, the people, the ritual and the shape of the future. Their negation was new, their affirmation was not.

In respect of the cosmos, the pagans postulated not only a diversity of gods, but also a state of incipient warfare among them. As they saw it, the gods created the world, but each god was limited to one aspect of creation. How else could they account for the natural disasters which afflicted mankind from time to time? The prophets assumed a unity of divine power — hence, an undergirding harmony and an invincible stability. "For underneath
are the everlasting arms" (Deut 33:27), and "the gods who did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens" (Jer 10:11).

The cosmos is made by the divine power, but this Power is above and beyond the powers of nature. Hence, the holidays, which were originally related to seasonal changes, were reinterpreted as celebrations of the work of God in history.

The land is holy to a god—this was a common axiom. Centuries passed before the worship of the Baals was exterminated in Israel. The prophets agreed that the land of Israel was holy to the One God, the Master of the universe. But in their view, this quality of holiness could not be organic, an intimate bond between soil and divinity. It could only be conditioned on the behavior of the people living on it. The colonists settled by the Assyrians reflect the pagan ways of thought: they did not know "the custom of the god of the land," who afflicted them by means of lions (2 Kgs 17:25). The Israelites encountered the One God in the wilderness of Sinai. He was not bound to any particular soil. But his design embraced the land of Israel as the habitation of a holy people. So, the land was holy, yes, but not in itself, only as a mark of favor to a people.

In the pagan view, there was an intimate bond between a god and his people. Again, the prophets interpreted this bond as a conditional relationship, which applies to all men and women. The Israelites are not holy, by nature, as a biological datum. They are called upon to become holy (Lev 19:2). And all men and women are similarly called. One day, they will hear that call and come for instruction to the "mountain of the house of the Lord." The prophets fought against the natural narcissism of the Israelites. The "chosen people" is but a loyal "remnant" (Isa 10:20, 21). Assyria and Egypt, Israel's neighbors and oppressors, will also be "God's people" and "the work of his hands" (Isa 19:21-25).

The "covenant" between God and the Israelites replaced the natural organic bond between a people and its deity. The covenant is conditioned on the loyal observance by the people of a specific ritual. But this Covenant belongs to the temporal order. In time to come, the true Covenant will come into being, the one written on "the tablets of the heart" (Jer 31:31-34). The prophetic vision of the future was the core of their message to their own contemporaries. The "new Covenant" of the future supplements the vision of a united and redeemed mankind, drawing its inspiration from the Torah of Zion. In every aspect of that vision, the negation of a pagan axiom provided the cutting edge of spiritual growth.

In the near Eastern world, the King was the link between the gods and the people. With the rise of David to the throne of Israel, some of the same rhetoric is employed by the prophet Nathan.

"I shall be to him as a father and he will be to Me as a son..." (2 Sam 4:14). But, the prophet immediately sets conditions for the favor of God. In a sense, all Israelites are classed as "sons of God" by the Deuteronomist, but the son of David is more so.

Henri Frankfort contrasts the concept of Hebrew Kingship with that of the Near Eastern world as follows:

"Kingship too, was not for the Hebrews anchored in the cosmos. Except by way of contrast, it has no place in a 'study of ancient Near Eastern religion as an integration of society and nature.' The Hebrew King, like every other Hebrew stood under the judgment of God in an alien world, which as the dying David knew (2 Sam 23:3-4) - seems friendly only on those rare occasions when man proves not inadequate."3

* * * * *

The emphasis on divine transcendence is apparent in the revivalist efforts of Ezra and Nehemiah. They draft a "firm covenant," but they no longer dare to attribute their work to God. It is representative of Nehemiah, the system of ordinances which governed the life of the Jew. The "firm covenant" is a voluntary undertaking. God is in the background; his prophets are suspect. We sense the feeling of the leaders that their generation is not worthy to receive the direct Word of God through the agency of a prophet. In later literature, we encounter frequently the remark that so-and-so would have received the Holy Spirit, if only the age were worthy of it.

Yet, the immanence of God was not forgotten in the post-biblical world. In the Targums, this aspect of the Deity is almost but not quite hypostatized as the Presence of God (Shekhinah), his Glory (Yaqra), his Word (Wemra). God in himself is above and beyond the concepts drawn from our experience; yet, his power and presence are projected into our lives.

Philo attempts to explain this paradox. As a mystic, he felt the Divine Presence in the ideas that flowed into his mind as a rushing mountain stream. But as a philosopher, he asserted that God was "unknowable." Indeed, he brought the concept of the unknowability of God into the mainstream of religious philosophy. Both the "yes" and the "no" of revelation were well exemplified in Philo's thought.

* * * * *

We have argued in behalf of a concept of revelation which recognizes the subjective component of belief and removes the aura of absolutism from particular bodies of rites and dogmas. This concept is manifestly consistent with the ecumenical out-reach
that is the most promising religious movement in our time. Religious communities are divided by their subjective traditions of faith and deed, but they are united in their arduous quest of the divine. We recognize the indispensability, the sanctity, even the uniqueness of the different traditions, but not their title to the exclusive possession of all truth. We affirm this proposition as men of faith, not as agnostics. We assert the sanctity of the humble quest of piety, even as we deny the absoluteness and the exclusiveness of any claim for the possession of the final goal.

What are the practical consequences of this concept? First, it guards against all tendencies to fill the vacuum left by the naive absolutization of fundamentalist theologies. In recent years, secular ideologies, at one end of the spectrum, and exotic cults at the other end have rushed to take the place of the historical faiths. The unity of faith and doubt was shattered by pervasive secularism, with the hunger for faith ready to be slaked by the "fast foods" of the cults. A dynamic concept of revelation puts all form of fanaticism under a question mark even as it nurtures man's hunger for "the nearness of God." By pointing to the infinite source of all ideals, the tendency to idolize fragmentary formulation is checked.

In our contemporary world, ideologies have taken the place of the ancient idols. Such are the folk, as a mystical entity, or the Race, or the Class, or the State - all new, Molochs, on whose altars millions of human beings may be rightfully sacrificed. For this reason, a dynamic faith performs the same function as the anti-idolatry crusade of the monotheistic faiths. Worship of the One God rejects the absolutization of partial truths as a sin and a prelude to disaster.

Second, the affirmative connotation of a dynamic faith is the assurance that all true ideals are mutually consistent. We need not sacrifice the logic of the mind for the logic of the heart, or freedom for security, or ethnic greatness for humanity, or the happiness of the present generation for the future of mankind, or vice versa in respect of any of these goals. All true ideals can be blended harmoniously. "Peace is the Name of God" (Taanit 4:2).

Third, the faith-event sets a supreme purpose for the life of each individual and supreme tasks for the historical religious communities. We are all part of one enterprise - "the improvement of the world through the Kingdom of the Almighty." The contribution of each person and each community is unique and irreplaceable. "Therefore, every person can say - 'for my sake the world was created!'" (b Sanhedrin 37a).


3 Quoted in Milton Konvitz (editor), Judaism and Human Rights, p. 98.

I suggest that Claus Westermann in his Theologie des Alten Testamentes in Grundzügen (see the English version more briefly, What Does the Old Testament Say about God?) has in many ways pursued the same theme and made the same correction, though perhaps not with the same boldness. Westermann's controlling dialectic, already anticipated in 1971,2 is that of deliverance/blessing. For Westermann, deliverance and intrusive "might acts of God" have dominated our study. And some of his most suggestive work is to assert the other neglected element, that of blessing, creation, which witnesses to the continuing and abiding structure of reality.

In a parallel way, Rainer Albertz's recent work on official religion and familial piety, Persönliche Frömigkeit und Offizielle Religion3 (which is in some sense derivative from Westermann) also seeks to recover that tension. In Albertz's case, it has been the public, royal-dominated, temple-oriented religion which has controlled study, both in the "credo hypothesis" of von Rad on the early traditions and in the "festival hypothesis" of Novinoki on the Psalms. Albertz proposes, alongside these public practices, to observe a family piety concerned with family agenda of birth and death and which (following Gerstenberger)4 practices its own "Kleinkult" with its own functions and functionaries.

With a very different agenda, Paul Hanson, Dynamic of Transcendence5 has constituted a very similar dialectic between what he calls the "teleological" (for which he might better have said "eschatological") and the "cosmic." For Hanson as well, the teleological (which presents history as moving on a line toward a consummation) has dominated interpretation. In an appeal to the entire theological community in the academy, he urges that with this dialectic there is room for and need for everyone to make a contribution. Specifically with the cosmic vector, there is need for and room for those who have felt or been excluded on the basis of the teleological vector.

Now my first purpose is to point out this striking convergence from very different directions. The publication of those various studies does not come abruptly, for there have been ample hints in this direction. Nonetheless, such a convergence is an indication of what time it is in the climate where Scripture is studied. I suggest it would be useful to consider the demands and permissions in our context which evoke such a dialectical approach. In any case, Terrien's book (along with the others mentioned) introduces a very different paradigm, one on which I presume there will be no going back. For a time of consolidation now, the new paradigm would seem to make writing a more definitive Old Testament theology nearly impossible. But that is the way of a new paradigm.

In my comments, I wish to note four areas of hermeneutical and interpretative concern that have occurred to me in reflecting on the new modeling of Old Testament theology.
II

First, the dialectic of ethical/aesthetic deliverance/blessing teleological/cosmic, presented respectively by Terrien, Westermann and Hanson, opens us up to a fresh way of thinking about Israel’s relation to Ancient Near Eastern religion in general. It is, of course, no longer possible, in light of the strictures of Albrektson and Barr, to insist upon history as a distinctive category in Israel. And, indeed, it is not too easy to identify any such mark of distinctiveness.

Nonetheless, it is the case that these texts and traditions characterized by "ethical/deliverance/teleological," in short, those Terrien designates as "covenantal," borrow and appropriate in a way very different from the texts and traditions we may characterize as "aesthetic/blessing/cosmic." Borrowing happens in both cases, but in a very different way. Thus, the "sea myths" are utilized very differently in the creation and Exodus traditions, though both borrow. One appropriates in the context of social consolidation, the other as an act of social criticism. It is likely that the borrowing of the covenantal tradition is likely to be more restrained and critical, whereas the other trajectory, generally under royal sponsors, borrowed and appropriated more eagerly and uncritically. Thus, when scholars are inclined to stress the commonalities, there tends to be appeal precisely to those texts concerned with cosmic, aesthetic and blessing motifs. For example, witness the long attention to the creation and flood narrative parallels.

All the traditions of Israel borrow. But the borrowing and utilization is done very differently by different kinds of traditions, depending on their social function. I suggest that this dialectic creates fresh possibility for thinking about Israel and the nations, about syncretism and faithfulness, about the "common theology of the Ancient Near East" and Israel’s delicate and varied relation to it. The ways and extent of borrowing and appropriation need to be seen not in terms of uniqueness or syncretism but in terms of social function.

III

Second, this dialectic raises fresh questions about scholarly methods of interpretation. As is well known, there is now a shift in scholarly concern away from historical precision of an objective kind to literary criticism which is attentive to aesthetic matters. The shift in perspective and method is not unlike the move from Wellhausen to Gunkel at the turn of the century, for Wellhausen was first of all an historian and Gunkel was interested in the artistic elements in a way that permitted him the label “romantic.” Since this is a symposium on Old Testament theology, we may observe that there is little more room for theological passion in the new literary criticism than in the older historical objectivity. In either case (or perhaps in every case), there is a tendency to methodological imperialism, that the same method must apply to all texts.

But this dialectical mode raises this wonderment: could it be that texts placed differently in this dialectic may require different methods so that they may be genuinely heard? In our "methodological monotheism," perhaps we do not always honor the plurality of texts and the methods they require. The differences among texts may not be simply of literary genre but of theological intentionality. So if Terrien rightly contrasts "ethical passion" and "emotional contemplation," are we as interpreters required to be passionately ethical at some points and contemplatively emotional at others? It is clear, I believe, that the articulation of the New Criticism in the 1940’s was made with reference to certain kinds and even certain periods of literature. And its original articulators did not intend that it should become the method for every kind of literature. But now in our field, there is a tendency to apply it indiscriminately.

In getting freed of the ethical passion of "the Biblical Theological Movement" preoccupied as it was with covenantal mandates and mighty acts, I have the impression we are now moving toward an aesthetic neutrality. Such a perspective, already in method and before any conclusions are drawn, deadens or levels the scandal of some texts. That is, the new criticism, which admittedly is more sensitive to aesthetic concerns, tends to reduce every text to a closed system in which the rawness and abrasion of scandal must be explained away. My suggestion is that if this dialectic of Terrien holds, then perhaps we are required to pursue a methodological dialectic, in each case more attentive to the social, theological intentionality of the text. Or, put another way, there are some texts which are more obviously "cool." But in each case, we are required to find a method which respects and responds to the temperature in the text.

IV

Third, in reviewing these various forms of what I regard as the same dialectic, I was struck with the way in which the sociological implication of each pole was generally ignored. Terrien alludes to the matter, suggesting we must attend to epistemological presuppositions (cf. 263), and he speaks of an "epistemology of faith" (317). Several times he indicates awareness of the social implications of the various epistemologies.
The theologoumenon of presence through the name was being displaced by the theologoumenon of presence through the glory; such a displacement carried with it ominous consequences in the realm of political ethics (171).

The ark has become totally incompatible with the Mosaic notion of covenantal peoplehood, with its classless ideal of corporate solidarity. The political implications of the theologoumenon of glory are irreconcilable with those of the theologoumenon of the name (175).

But other than these hints, the issues of epistemology are kept removed from questions of social freedom and political power. In his study, Albertz draws some conclusions about the practice of ministry with familial piety but draws no conclusions about social implications and indicates no awareness of what is at issue. Hanson, out of his study of Apocalypticism, is surely aware of these issues. But on the whole, he does not pursue them.

I believe that the appearance of sociological studies in both Old and New Testament (and in this Society) is no pet project of a few scholars, nor a passing fad. Nor is the utilization of a Marxist critique simply a partisan or ideological habit. Rather, it is now clear that every theological enterprise, ethical or aesthetic, is likely to be derived from, premised upon and in the service of some particular view of reality. While there is still much work to be done on specifics, it seems likely that the ethical-covenantal tradition of texts comes precisely from those who urge social transformation and redistribution of power, while the aesthetic tradition likely comes from the learned or well-off who have leisure for such an intensely intellectual enterprise. Thus, the language of Terrien (175) which I have quoted concerning "the classless ideal of corporate solidarity" sounds strongly reminiscent of the sociological analysis of Gottwald and Hendel made on very different grounds. I suggest no simplistic "haves/have-nots" antithesis. But I believe that the issues of social location and political intentionality cannot be ignored, as they tend to be in the drawing of these trajectories. Future Old Testament theology surely must be knowingly critical in its use of various texts. It will not do to ignore the social conservatism in texts which incline to be aesthetic and contemplative, which seek order, meaning and healing inside the "system," whatever that system is.

And for us as scholars, it is not only a matter of reckoning with the social policy latent in the texts. Even our attempt to have a balanced dialectic, to see all parts in a scheme, places us in a "both/and" rather than an "either/or" posture. Now that may be correct for our time, but that is not a neutral social fact.

And it may be that "both/and" nicely represents some texts. But we should not miss that our methodological "both/and" (or even the more jargonistic "binomial") violates the "either/or" which is the claim precisely of some texts of the "ethical" tradition.

Could it be that a methodology which seeks to "balance" these and to hold the two together serves mainly to deaden the scandal of those texts which have heretofore been dominant? Of course, I do not suggest such an intent on the part of any of these scholars. But we must at least face that our time is a time which does not want to honor the scandal which is socially dangerous. There are many ways to reduce the scandal of "either/or" — by comparisons, by value-free aesthetic analysis, and perhaps even by constructing dialectics that stay too neatly balanced. Such an enterprise may reflect the sociology of the interpreter as well as the sociology of the text. Thus, I suggest that a shift in methods is likely never a-political. On the one hand, the construction of neat dialectics and on the other hand the shift from historical specificity to systems of literary containment, may imply more than we are wont to recognize.

Fourth, closely related to that sociological agenda is an ecclesiological one. Most of us who interpret this material do so with one eye on the church or the synagogue. That is likely to be so especially for those who work intentionally at Old Testament or Biblical theology. For purposes of brevity, I shall use the code language of Old Testament. Richard Niebuhr in referring to the issue of Christ and Culture will, though in our context, we had better say "faith and culture." While Niebuhr's classic typology indicated five postures, with our dialectic we may simplify to two: "faith in culture," i.e., a cultural religion, and "faith over against culture," with at least a tension if not an antagonism.

Put another way, I suggest that how one tilts these dialectics may be related to the theme of providence and/or election. "Providence" refers to the overall governance and sustenance of reality by God. It permits a "systems approach" to theology and seeks an ordering of reality, or, with the problem of theodicy, a just ordering of reality. By contrast, election focuses upon historical mission (cf. Hanson's term "teleology") and looks to the transformation of reality through the minority who are bearers of a special mission. I suggest that all three dialectics of Terrien, Westermann and Hanson lend themselves to the theme of "providence/election," which itself bespeaks an important tension. And so the interpreter, as a pre-interpretation question, is inclined to decide for the church or synagogue on the providence/election issue, and that will be a shaping decision. That decision is not so much a cultural as an ecclesiological one. It characterizes the religious community within and over against the dominant community. It identifies the religious community primarily as a legitimater or subverter of the primary community.
We should be historically knowing about paradigms for Biblical theology. Terrien intends to redress the imbalance which stressed the ethical and neglected the aesthetic. And it is now fashionable to dismiss that preoccupation with covenant as the "Barthian" period, as though that dismisses it. Without needing to cling to old paradigms, we should at least be attentive to the social, ecclesiological function of that tradition in a time of testing. That time, in recent ecclesiological history, required an ethical edge, a sense of historic mission in order to maintain critical distance from a religion which, in the name of a providential order, reduced the ethical vision. And how we tilt the dialectic in this time or any time is not unrelated to the maintenance or collapse of critical distance. The question of collapse or maintenance is not an easy one. We are not speaking of revolutionary intentions. But we must not be indifferent to the temptation to "one-dimensional" culture, in which aesthetic religion is contained and robbed of its ethical distance. These are likely to be non-exegetical but hermeneutical decisions.

VI

These are questions for future Biblical theology which I believe Terrien's book makes unavoidable. They are very difficult questions that require answering, both in the academy and in the church and synagogue.

The special advance of Terrien is that he has tried to take into account all of the canonical literature. Indeed, he has an inclusive characterization of the canon concerning "the prophetic vision, the psalmic community and the sapiential reflection" (213). And he does this with peculiar authority. It is this magisterial comprehensiveness which has led to my title, "canon and dialectic." I have presented four issues raised by the dialectical concerning, a) comparative study and the matter of commonality and distinctiveness, b) scholarly method, c) sociology, and d) ecclesiology.

But what of the canon? Is it that nicely balanced so that the dialectic is always symmetrical? To be sure, Terrien can speak of the "corruptibility" of the covenant theology (369) so that it needs correction. And we need no special argument that the aesthetic also can serve ignoble ends. So Terrien can speak of "the corruptibility of the mediating agent" (400), by which he refers to priestly officials and cult. It seems to me we should not be mesmerized by the neat scheme of any of these authors because things are not quite that symmetrical.

1. In the Old Testament, there is canon and we can speak of all the books that way. I have the impression this is the tendency of Childs. But as Clements has seen so well, the Torah is the

Canon by which all else is tested. And while we may locate both ethical and aesthetic in the Mosaic canon, there is no question of its accent. In this regard, the older Biblical theology did come down at the right place, even in a problematic way.

2. The literature must not be removed from its affirming communities. It may be appropriate in the new literary criticism to avoid the genetic fallacy. But these literatures do belong to faith communities who intended something specific in their statements. And when we come to speak of ethical/aesthetic, it is beyond dispute that the synagoge emerges from the redemptive scandal of the Exodus and the unqualified claims of Sinai. That is the formative canon. And the early church emerges from the soteriological scandal of crucifixion and resurrection, for which the Exodus is the type. That is, we do not begin fresh in devising dialectics. We are set in the framework of these affirming communities, which have already made some fundamental decisions.

3. For all his delicate and eloquent work of the dialectic, there are hints that Terrien as well has a kind of visceral reserve about the dialectic, as though in his heart he is not unmindful of the truth of the old covenant movement, even if ill-put. I suggest this is evident in his careful work on the temple and on the Solomonic transformation, in which he speaks of the "ominous consequences" in the realm of political ethics (171, cf. 193). That entire chapter states the tension so well. But is is my judgment that Terrien does not quite conceal his own sound judgment. The new dimension is syncretistic. It is not simply a new balancing but a new transformation (191) which is a perversion. And on the New Testament texts, Terrien concludes that the ethical "triumphs, takes precedence" (425, 436). Is this not a recognition of the claims of the canon within the canon?

4. What is to be made, as theological expositors, of the current sociological placement of our affirming communities? These placements surely influence our scholarly decisions. The phrase now in use which may raise questions for us is "the hermeneutical privilege of the poor." The promises of the gospel - cast in Jewish or Christian ways - are heard differently not only from different texts but in different contexts. I submit that the cerebral concern about dialectic within the canon cannot finally be cut loose from the visceral cries in the world. Finally, the aesthetic sense of proportion we may like to stress is abrasively impinged upon by the ethical, which refuses in tight places to be on good behavior. And that reality may make us knowing - and cautious - and critical.

The question of a canonical Biblical theology is made more difficult by Terrien's book. And it stays difficult because canon always poses for us the issue of canon within the canon. I suggest that the only ones not plagued by that question are those who take
only one text at a time and whose passions are other than theological. Those who settle for one text at a time have, either implicitly or explicitly given up any interest in or intention of doing Biblical theology. To them, we cannot finally look for help on this question.

I am not sure about dialectic as a correct way to present the dynamic of the Bible. I wonder if, rather, there is a primal normative statement (canonical?) derived from which there are a long series of forays, ventures and experiments. But those forays, ventures and experiments are never posed as full partners in a dialectic, but rather as footnotes, reservations, protests, ad hoc possibilities. And from them the interpreting community always returns to the primal claim. But the return is never the same. The return is now and each time shaken, chastened, illuminated, indeed, post-critical. I suspect, for reasons given, that Biblical theology must return to the texts of the redemptive and soteriological scandal. Those reasons, a) the primacy of the Torah itself, b) the historic posture of the affirming communities, c) the discernment of Terrien about the "triumph" and "precedence" of those texts, and d) the crisis of the world for justice. Biblical theology, I suspect, must return to the scandalous texts, but not to the naiveté of the Biblical theology movement. The aesthetic counterpart has criticized the ethical. And, in the light of the prophetic, psalmodic and sapiential, one must be "post-critical."

By the presentation of this fresh dialectic, the questions have all been shaken up. They are questions of aesthetic power, as Terrien has shown so clearly. But they are also questions of social function, of literary sensitivity and of ethical passion. The questions do not permit simply a critical resolution, for now the interpreting, affirming communities are as much in question as the shape of the text. The intent of the text, the context of the interpreter, and the mode of the Present One are all related to each other. If all of those questions are not kept together, we risk even a wider split between those who exposit in a confessing/affirming community and those whose community of reference is the academy. Future Biblical theology must be attentive to that question of referent.

Notes
9 Alberitz, op. cit., p. 190-211.
13 See the statement of Herbert Marcuse, One-Dimensional Man, Boston: Beacon Press (1964). Though addressed in another arena, Marcuse's comments are pertinent to Biblical scholarship which tends to collapse the critical distance.
14 Ronald Clements, op. cit., argues that the Torah is fundamental for all the other literature, and that the Torah as law has a covenantal character.
15 The phrase is the title of a paper by Lee Corrie, privately circulated. It is published in a form I have not seen in CTS A Proceedings 33 (1978) p. 155-161 ("The hemereneutical privilege of the oppressed: liberation theologies, biblical faith, and Marxist Sociology of Knowledge"-editor).
BOOK REVIEW


It is clear that the major issues in writing an Old Testament theology concern a) the principle of organization and b) the selection of materials to explicate the principle. Scholarship has come to see the necessity of moving beyond the categories of Eichrodt and von Rad. But until now, no decisive freshness has been offered. In this formidable volume, Professor Terrien proposes an alternative principle of organization that is entrapped in neither the systematic categories of Eichrodt nor the historical rubrics of von Rad. His exploration centers around the theme of the presence of God which he characterizes as "elusive." It is the elusive quality of that presence as "coming" and "sitting," as hidden and disclosed, as abiding but free, which provides the argument and dynamic of the book.

Thus the principle of organization breaks quite fresh ground for Biblical theology. Clearly there are no dogmatic categories employed, for Terrien gives little attention to conventional theological issues. And though he organizes his presentation in a generally sequential way, he is not primarily interested in historical categories. The principle of organization has to be the most comprehensive one possible, for Terrien has set himself most comprehensive goals:

1) to offer a study that will seriously deal with the relationship of Old and New Testaments. In this regard he has succeeded in a most suggestive fashion, while avoiding the conventional constructs of law/gospel or promise/fulfillment;

2) to offer a study that will be pertinent for both Jews and Christians. This is no small matter, given his first goal of taking the New Testament seriously. But the largeness of Terrien's vision, his ironic spirit and his sensitivity to nuance make it likely that this comes as close to reaching his second goal as any discussion could, which addresses the first as well;

3) to present a genuinely ecumenical study to which persons of many persuasions may turn. Again Terrien is well-suited for this. He avoids every partisan posture and yet is able to address both the resources

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and problems of modernity and transcendence on disciplined Biblical grounds. Without compromising any of his own passion for Biblical faith, he puts matters so that they have breadth of appeal as well as depth. His manner of presentation is appropriate to the more-or-less "humanistic" series in which the book appears.

The argument of the book is a dialectical one, for which Terrien has a variety of terms. He takes into account the "covenantal" tradition of the Old Testament, on which scholars have normally focused (including Eichrodt and von Rad), but he regards it only as one side of the dialectic of Biblical theology. The other side (and this is a main point of the book) which has been largely neglected is the "aesthetic" dimension represented especially in the Psalms and Wisdom traditions. It is clear that heretofore no one -- not even von Rad -- has found a compelling way to deal with wisdom to give it structural equity in a theological statement. It is Terrien's urging that "presence" in all its dialectical richness comprehends the covenantal and aesthetic materials. Moreover, the comprehensive scheme is important not just so that wisdom and Psalms materials can be included. Rather without such a rubric, the covenantal-historical materials by themselves (which are only a part of the text) preempt the field and appear as the total witness. It is against the domination of those materials that Terrien protests and it is that one-sidedness that he wishes to correct.

Inside that large framework, Terrien develops other dialectics that roughly refer to the same phenomenon, though he is able to show that they occur not only in these two large literatures, but also within specific texts:

1) ear/eye (121, 172, 182, 201, 279, 422, 425, 436),
2) name/glory (171, 312),
3) time/space (170, 280).

In these terms Terrien correlates ear/name/time as the way of the tradition of covenant and eye/glory/space in relation to the royal tradition of Jerusalem. From that he fashions other suggestive pairs, e.g., "emotional contemplation/ethical passion," (278), "ethical demands/spiritual delights" (449).

It is on the basis of that governing paradigm Terrien turns to specific exegesis, for more than either Eichrodt or von Rad, his study consists in an array of suggestive and eloquent exegeses. Though the topics are presented in a series of distinct chapters, we may group the discussion in three parts:
1) The foundational materials, including epiphanies to the fathers, theophanies to Moses and the apparatus of presence (ark, tent, tabernacle, temple) related to the monarchical establishment.

2) The center portion presents the foundations of Judaism in a triad: "...the prophetic vision, the psalmic communion and the sapiential reflection" (213). This is the material in which Terrien is most passionately interested and most superbly equipped. As is well known, his life-time of study in Job and the Psalms makes him the incomparable interpreter of these materials. He has used all his gifts here. Obviously it is these materials which are primary to his main dialectic and a correction to the totalitarianism of the historical-covenantal materials.

3) The concluding portion of the book consists in two chapters on the New Testament which also evidence his expertise, but with an eye made peculiarly perceptive by his Old Testament studies. He explores the three primal moments of disclosure in the life of Jesus (annunciation, transfiguration and resurrection). He indicates how the theophanic traditions of the Old Testament are decisive for the construction of these. He then considers the major metaphors for presence as they are used in the other parts of the New Testament. This section is something of a tour de force, for Terrien traces the outlines of a Biblical theology which fully comprehends both the Old and the New. It is worth observing that to do this, he has had to utilize categories that have not been primary in the study of either Testament.

What is proposed is a radically different paradigm which requires a very different set of perceptions. Because it moves in sweeping summary methodologically (à la T.S. Kuhn, The Structure of Scientific Revolutions), it surely must be refined, critiqued and adjusted. But for all of that, it is this reviewer's judgment that Terrien has made a contribution which is irreversible. There will be no way to return to the more conventional models for Old Testament theology. It remains to be seen how his proposal for the New Testament is received. It is in any case clear that he has made an approach to the New Testament which does not force it into Old Testament categories, but seeks to attend to the material itself.

Several questions arise which are not primarily criticisms of Terrien's presentation but issues that remain to be pursued in terms of the new paradigm.

1) The explicit theme is presence. But that is only a formal reference, taken by itself. The actual topic is the presence of God. As I read, I wondered if what in fact is offered is a fresh discernment of the Biblical God, i.e., a theology proper. At many points where "presence" is used, the term "God" may function as well. Perhaps Terrien has stayed with a more classical subject than he admits. That, however, in no way minimizes his work. For his frame of reference lets us see something about God (ethical/aesthetic) that needs explication and that has been largely neglected. While the theme of "presence" is suggestive, it may be a cover for a much more dangerous and demanding theme, God.

To focus on "presence" may permit a much more "religious" treatment than the firm, passionate theology of Terrien intends. Thus there is some risk that the claims he sets out may be misunderstood in terms of a general quest for transcendence.

2) There appears to be something of an ambiguity in the governing dialectic of name/glory. Surely both are there and Terrien has made that unmistakable. At times he suggests that both are legitimate and they must be held in tension to correct each other. Both are good and to be positively evaluated. But at other times, especially in dealing with the syncretism of the Solomonic temple (186-197), the stress on glory/eye/space, appears to be a betrayal and a distortion. Can it be both an important corrective and a betrayal? Is it that Terrien has not decided about this? Or is it that the Bible itself is unclear and portrayed differently at different times? If the dialectic is healthy, then it supports Terrien's major structure. But if it is a distortion, then are we nearly back to a stress on the ethical/ear/name/time stress of covenant?

In his chapter on the gospel narrative, Terrien tilts in several directions: 1) "The ethical ear allied itself to the mystical eye" (422). 2) The ear "triumphs" over the eye (425). 3) "The ethical ear overwhelmed the mystical eye" (436). "Allied/triumph/overwhelm?! I suggest this is a point for exploration: is the aesthetic/mystical motif a positive partner or a distortion of the ethical?

3) Closely related to the dialectic of ethical/aesthetic and the problem of syncretism, the book may perhaps be faulted that it does not pursue the epistemological and political implications of both sides of the dialectic. Terrien is of course not unaware of these implications (cf. 39, 263, 317 and especially 175). But he gives it almost no attention. It is clear that every theologoumenon has rather direct political implications toward order of justice, toward oppression or freedom. Attention to this issue might aid us in determining if the royal contribution is partner or distortion, for the motif of glory probably matches a political model that is static and totalitarian. More work waits to be done here.
4) Terrien's discussion perhaps urges a reconsideration of the term "covenant." The word has clearly come to mean many things in scholarly discussion. Terrien is clear that he refers to the Mosaic tradition, though he does not insist on the "treaty hypothesis" which is not definitional for covenant in some uses. But by assigning the word only to one side of his dialectic, Terrien may have reduced it excessively to make a point. My impression is that in the Reform tradition of exposition, "covenant" has referred to the fundamental claim that God and God's creature have ultimately to do with each other. That is a claim as pertinent to the aesthetic as to ethical categories. While Terrien certainly would avoid Barth's way, Barth suggests the unavoidable interpenetration of the categories of covenant and creation. I have no brief for that, but perhaps the term "covenant" is now reduced to refer to a narrow element in Biblical faith. As we have surely over-inflated the term in the 60's, care must now be taken not to empty it completely.

5) The book will likely be faulted for its selection of material, for it is a sampling on the basis of the theme of presence. On the one hand, it will be important to remember that Eichrodt and von Rad also did sampling though it was a sampling that has become conventional and even "canonical." But on the other hand one wonders, especially in the early part whether epiphanies and theophanies can be treated by themselves apart from their context, e.g., can the encounter at the Jabbok (Gen. 32:22-32) be separated so completely from the encounter with Esau (32:1-21, 33:1-17) which now has been so delicately linked to it? Or can the encounter of the burning bush be considered apart from the political crisis of dismantling the Egyptian "glory"? Certainly the separation must be made in order to see what this book so eloquently shows. Perhaps the next task is to return with that discernment to see the encounters more rigorously in their placement in the tradition.

Because it is a bold programmatic proposal, many issues remain unsettled, as Terrien well knows. But that should not distract from the brilliance of the offering. In addition to its formidable governing hypothesis, the book is characterized by a) a style of eloquence delightfully matching the argument, a study only the urbaneness of the author could give us; b) an erudition evidenced by an exhaustive documentation, and c) rich and suggestive exigesis of a large number of texts. (Among the most suggestive are those on II Sam. 22 p. 283-290 and Phil. 2:5-11 p. 459-464).

This rich gift could only be given by Terrien with his remarkable combination of passion, eloquence and erudition. The worst treatment it can receive is to be consigned to that wearsome list of "centers" proposed for an Old Testament theology. He has not offered us yet one more "center," but a quite new model of rich promise and enormous demand.

THE PRESENCE IN THE TEMPLE: GOD AS TENANT

A Response to Samuel Terrien's The Elusive Presence

John L. McKenzie

All the archaeological and literary evidence that remains indicates that the center of the ancient Near Eastern city was the temple complex. This complex of buildings and courts was the place of residence and employment of several hundred people. It was the palace of the god, the ruler of the city. The central building of the complex was the god's residence. In an older phase of Mesopotamian society the human ruler was not a king but a viceroy of the god. In later times this theology yielded to the view of the king as the ruler chosen by the god. In both views the power that ruled the city was divine in origin and support.

In the older view of the city as the estate of the god, the entire city was sacred space; there was only one ruler and one proprietor. As the space was secularized, room was made for the king and for landowners. But they held power and titles which had passed from the god to them. While these were no longer sacred, they reposed upon the original structure of sacred power. One should hesitate to write an imaginary history of the growth of rationalism in the Early and Middle Bronze Ages. But it is an obvious fact that the god was not a reality and that the power of the king and the power of the city was a symbol of the real power. In the early society the scope of the symbolic power was as wide as the scope of the real power. But as sacred space was restricted, all secular space fell under the unlimited dominion of the secular power; in this area even the symbolic power was recognized as inoperative.

As far as we can reconstruct the religious practices of early Israel, there was no temple of their god Yahweh. This was a religious departure; but it should be seen as part of a cultural difference. Early Israel did not live in cities and was not ruled by kings. The background of this cultural and religious difference between early Israel and most of its neighbors is too complex for treatment here. But we must notice that it was not just the temple that was missing; it was also the palace and the political and social system which was centered upon the palace and the temple. Modern scholars have for some time come to regard the alleged "nomadic" background and the nomadic deity of early Israel as romance rather than history.

The sacred space of early Israel, again as far as we can reconstruct it, was a kind of portable sacred space which surrounded a portable symbol of divine presence. It appears that there were two symbols of divine presence, the box or the ark and the tent.
The origins and the relations of these two symbols are not clear. The ark was probably a throne or a pedestal upon which the invisible deity stood; Yahweh had no image. In early Israel the ark was carried into battle. The tent appears to have been a place to which the authorized oracular person went to receive divine revelation. In the oracle of Nathan (2 Sam. 7) the mobile presence of the ark is clearly contrasted with the confining stability of the temple presence. This is not the mobility of the nomadic tribe, but the mobility of the divine symbol from one tribe of Israel to another. Yahweh was equally at home in any tribe of Israel. The Israel of which Yahweh was sovereign was a tribal league of villages populated by small farmers and herdsmen without a monarchy, a military aristocracy, a landlord class or a merchant class. By the standards of the Early Iron Age it was a culturally retarded community.

The erection of the temple of Jerusalem was the work of the same two men who converted the agricultural village society of Israel to a monarchy dominated by a landowning aristocracy. These two men were David and Solomon. David, even in the literary sources which were ultimately produced by his royal scribes, appears clearly as a professional soldier and a bandit chieftain who became a warlord; in the Early Iron Age, as in other periods of history, it was hard to distinguish these three. He was neither the first nor the last bandit chieftain to found a kingdom and a dynasty, but he could not entirely break the temple from David's political program. The literary sources credit Solomon with the actual building and David with the idea. The explanations offered in the sources for David's failure to build the temple have a ring of devotion which the modern historian finds somewhat incredible; but it is not incredible that David thought he could not directly oppose the Israelite rejection of the temple cult. After all, David did not follow Solomon did not. But when the son and successor of Solomon did experience rebellion, one of the things the rebels rejected was the temple of Jerusalem.

When the temple of Solomon was finally built, it was built in the tribe which Yahweh had chosen in the city which Yahweh had chosen by the reigning member of the dynasty which Yahweh had chosen to rule the people which Yahweh had chosen. If the temple was anything, it was a symbol of election. There are some educated guesses as to why this theme should have been so important. These guesses arise from worrying doubts, never completely resolved, that the tribe of Judah was an original member of the Israelite league and that David himself was of Judahite ancestry. There is no doubt that Jerusalem, often called "the city of David" almost as if it were its name, was not an Israelite or a Judahite city. Thus, three of the four items mentioned in the above enumeration needed election to justify their presence. Terrien has written of the contribution made by the transfer of the ark to the myth of Jerusalem. It was more than the myth of Jerusalem that David created, durable as this myth has been even into Christian hymnody. It was also the myth of the chosen people, the chosen messianic king, and the myth of the presence of Yahweh among his people. For however Yahweh may have been present among the tribes of the Israelite league, he was present in the monarchy and in the Jerusalem temple as the tenant of the king.

We have no archaeology of the temple of Solomon and an unsatisfactory literary description. This description suggests but does not compel the conclusion that the temple was a small and less imposing part of the palace complex. The viewer would be much more impressed by the majesty of the king than by the majesty of the god. It appears - and again we must notice that the literary description is unsatisfactory - that the worshippers could reach the temple court only by passing through royal property; but the temple itself was royal property. The temple priests were royal employees and the sacrifices and other temple appurtenances were furnished from the royal treasury. Whose temple was it, and whose god was it? It could hardly have been possible for Jeroboam and those who followed him, the majority of Israelites, to think that they were abandoning the God of Israel. No doubt they thought they were repossessing him. Could the Israelite take his case to Yahweh if it were a case against the king?

I said above that David is revealed as a professional soldier and as a warlord. It is not revealed, but it is an educated guess that he could have had but a limited role in the early aristocracy which became a landowning aristocracy. This aristocracy clearly appears in the books of Kings and in the pre-exilic prophets; the educated guess is concerned merely with how this aristocracy came into being. There can be no dispute that what appeared under David and Solomon was the political-social-theological system of the Bronze Age Canaanite city-states. As far as we know, Israel itself, a kingdom after all, derived from Judah was the same kind of system. One must admit that the two kingdoms are samples of some of the best systems of exploiting a majority for the enrichment of a minority which history knows. In spite of internal instability and threats from more powerful neighbors, the span of life of the two kingdoms was nearly four hundred years. Anything that lasts that long must have been good for somebody. Shall we say that a component of its sturdiness was that it imprisoned and harnessed the Lord of Hosts to furnish religious and moral support for its oppressive machine?

Most of the prophetic voices were not raised loudly against the temple. Amos and Hosea did not even speak in Judah. Isaiah encountered Yahweh in the temple. In one sentence Micah announced its destruction. Not until Jeremiah do we hear a prophet say emphatically that the temple will be destroyed not to be rebuilt. Whatever Jeremiah saw in the future, he saw no sacred space. Nor did he see in the future any of the religious and political institutions of Judah: no priesthood, no monarchy, no prophecy,
no torah. It is a strange anticipation of a saying of Jesus in the Gospel of John which announces a worship in spirit and in truth without a temple. The primitive Jewish-Christian community seems to have continued to worship in the Jerusalem Temple. But the primitive Christian communities of the Diaspora, whether they were Jewish or Gentile or mixed, had no sacred space, no consecrated place of worship. The only temple Paul recognized was the body of the individual believer.

My own Church has been the greatest builder of temples in the history of Christendom. It has defined sacred space and profane space more clearly than other Christian churches. I do not believe that we have ever lived easily with the words of Jeremiah or of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel or of Paul in the first Epistle to the Corinthians, quoted above. The churches are often a symbol of the establishment; even in modern times beggars cluster around the cathedral doors like Lazarus at the door of Dives, until the police scatter them. They annoy the tourists and degrade the image of the country. The student of the Bible remembers that it was not the beggars that Jesus cleared out of the Temple. Yet a tradition that went back to its builder entitled the merchants to think that the sacred space in which the deity was a tenant really belonged to them. A tradition equally old - indeed older - entitled them to think that they could own the body of the believer which Paul said was the temple. Is there no escape from sacred space?

In asking this question I risk missing the real problem, which is not sacred space but the men who invent sacred space. It is not sacred space but man from whom we must escape, and that means we must escape ourselves. In this discussion we have made the problem more specific. We have defined it as the problem of sacred space, by which man confines the effectiveness of his belief in deity to a limited area in which he admits that the deity is present. If I have read much of the New Testament correctly, not only the primitive church but Jesus also rejected the theologumeno of sacred space as a means of communication with God. I suggest that this portion of the New Testament has not yet reached the church.

THE THEME OF GOD'S PRESENCE AND THE QUMRAN TEMPLE SCROLL
Asher Finkel

For the past two years in connection with the Consultation on the Theology of Catastrophe chaired by Msgr. Guterresche, I offered papers on the theme of God's presence and his absence in the apocryphal and apocalyptic works, in the early rabbinic and early Christian texts with reference to Qumran, Josephus and the accounts in Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History. I was particularly delighted to see in print the recent major work of Samuel Terrien, after I had the occasion to hear his paper in Walter Brueggemann's Section on the Presence of God (SBL, San Francisco, 1977). The present Consultation indeed attests to the significant contribution made by Professor Terrien to Biblical Theology.

Terrien sees the reality of God's presence as the center of biblical faith, a presence which remains elusive (the title of his book). It is the distinctiveness of the Hebraic theology of presence rather than the ideology of the covenant which provides a key to understanding the Bible. He convincingly demonstrates that the theme of presence is primary and that of covenant is secondary. For the religion of Israel, of post-exilic Judaism and early Christianity is permeated by the experience, the cultic recollection and the prophetically appropriated expectation of the presence of God among men. The author offers an analysis of the biblical literature in its religio-historical development, from the patriarchal legends on epiphanic visitations to the Mosaic theophanies, and its branching out into the prophetic vision, the psalmodic communion and the sapiential reflection. He notes in particular the tension between the theologoumena of the presence through the Name and the glory, as well as the movement from the spatial to the temporal, from the physical Temple to its spiritualization.

This examination of the various theological expressions of presence conforms to an evolutionary pattern and to dialectics. However, an exploration of the post-biblical literature reveals that the writers were relating different aspects of or responses to God's presence in terms of encounter (individual or collective experiences), communion (a fellowship in God's presence during the pilgrimage and the celebration or at a liturgical occasion) and consciousness (different levels of reverential knowledge or affective faith). The person may enjoy a sense of God's presence through reflection or prayer. He may deepen or alter his consciousness through dramatic participation in recollected events of God's presence. He may be open to communion through preparatory discipline of pilgrimage and liturgical fellowship. Or he may relate experiences of an encounter in vision or audition. After all, the subject of investigation of this literature is the faith or attitudes of the writers and redactors of the biblical and
post-biblical periods and not the reader's. They preserved responses to God's presence in the past and reflect the experiences of the present worshiping community, which they wish to transmit as authentic expressions for the future generations. The witness of the text cannot be separated from the divine reality which Israel testified to have evoked the response.

Terrien recognizes that the post-biblical literature of the Second Temple period uses the different theologoumena of presence interchangeably with reference to God himself or his indwelling. Yet he has left unexplored the intertestamental literature, the bridge between the Jewish and the Christian Bible. He also did not pay attention to the canonical history during the intertestamental period. The canonical process reflects hermeneutical dynamics of a worshipping community throughout the Second Temple period. For the formation of the biblical canon involves a process of theological reflection within Israel arising from the impact which certain writings continued to exert upon the community life through their religious usage. These scriptures shaped the faith and formed the consciousness of the community. They determined its social structure and human conduct in transpersonal, interpersonal and subpersonal relationships. They offered evaluation of its historical experience and the vision of hope for its future. Towards the end of the canonical process, Israel continues its hermeneutics through Targum and Midrash in order to address changing needs. This body of literature, however, is set apart from the sacred text.

A modern interpreter must confront the complete history of the growth of the Old Testament, as history of biblical literature and history of canonical texts. The dynamic development from one to the other occurs precisely in the post-exilic period. Terrien did not deal with the canonical forces at work in the formation of the traditions into Scriptures during the post-exilic period. Rather he sets up the New Testament's relation to the Old in an analogy to his description of the pre-exilic growth of the Hebraic tradition. Terrien is definitely right in viewing the presence of God as the dominant force in the formation of the Gospel literature. However, the evangelists' theology of the presence must also be judged in light of the canonical process. After all, the presence of God through Jesus was confirmed by the disciples' own response to the Sacred Scriptures of Israel as fulfillment of Torah, Prophets and Psalms (the canonical works mentioned in Lk 24:44).

The Qumran literature of the intertestamental period offers a fine example for the study of the canonical process in the life of the worshiping community as well as the resultant hermeneutics dynamically translated into faith and practice, and in the formation of a new socio-religious entity. It indeed offers a unique opportunity for the exploration of the extant literature of both the Vorgeschichte and the Geschichte of the Essene community during the Hasmonean and Herodian times. Historically these works appear prior to and during the period of early Christianity and Pharisaic Judaism. The literature of the Essene community assumes the forms of Serekhmin and Pesharim, i.e. manuals of and scriptural projection on the self-exiled community in the desert and the future community in the end of time. These works depend on the authoritative text of Torah and Prophets, though reflecting a particular recensional history. These scrolls also echo the teachings of earlier religious writings and they even refer to them as books (e.g., Sefer hehaqay in 1QSa1:6; CD 10:6; 13:2; 14:6 and Sefer Mahagot ha'titim, i.e., Jubilees in CD 15:3). Yet these works are distinguished from the canonical texts as books (Sefer ha-torah; Stfres hanebi'tim), which are cited authoritatively and introduced as peisher.

Fortunately two key works can now be identified and studied as proto-Qumran writings: the Book of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll. They share a common understanding of the Pentateuchal legislation, the same fixed liturgical calendar of a solar year and the similar emphasis on the earthly Temple and the eternal Temple built by God in the end of time. Jubilees relates the Mosaic legislation to the narrative of the books of Genesis and Exodus, ending with the biblical account of the event and legislation of Passover. The book offers an apologetic on the significance of the Sabbath year (which is its theme), and the legislation on the sabbath on the calendar year. In particular it stresses (50:11) that only the designated sacrifice for the Sabbath can be brought in the Temple. This rule governs the first part of the Temple Scroll. The Scroll appears to be picking up where Jubilees closes. Exodus 35 juxtaposes the Sabbath legislation on to the account of offerings for the construction of the Tabernacle. Jubilees completes its presentation in light of Ex 35:1-3 and the Temple Scroll opens with a rewritten account of Ex 34:10-16 leading to 35:4ff. It presents legislation on the construction of the Temple, the sacrifices and the festivals, the rules of sanctities and purities - paralleling the priestly code and ending with the Deuteronomic laws. It is the human response to God's presence in the Temple and Jerusalem, which governs the legislation in these two works and both present the rewritten Pentateuchal material as the speech of God.

The Temple Scroll was not considered to be canonical text by the Qumran community, as Yadin assumes (Temple Scroll I, p. 300). This can be established on two grounds:

1) The clear reference to a Torah text or a Prophetic writing is separated from its midrash or its peisher in the Essene literature. Proskynes in the Temple Scroll cited as authoritative support, even when such opportunity occurs. The literary history of Qumran indicates how the community adopted the legislative interpretation of the Temple Scroll in the interim period and its des-
The Temple Scroll serves the community as the proper guide in the unveiling of God's intention in the Scripture.

2) The Temple Scroll is marked by the peculiarity of God speaking in the first person. This is a particular feature of midrash-torah employed by the Essene teachers, paralleling the use of pesher for prophecies as dream interpretation. For it seeks "to excavate" or "to forge" (so Cd 6:2-9) the deeper connection of God's words through conflatio, juxtaposition and harmonization of the Torah texts. These are precisely the redactional methods used by the Temple Scroll writer. He employs exegesis of Bible by Bible, a form of Midrash also reflected in the canonical shaping of the biblical works themselves. Indeed, the Temple Scroll can be identified as the Final Midrash Torah (40De and 40Dd in relation to Cd 14 end).

The major critical tension is not between the original event and the biblical record but between the earlier Torah tradition and the reshaped composition of the Temple Scroll. It is governed by the Kanonbewusseins (canon consciousness), which affects the process of interpretation of the accepted Scriptures upon the successive generations of the community. This Kanonbewusseins is rooted in the theology of God's presence: God's presence is to be encountered in the word and in the proper hearing and doing his intention. This consciousness is formed and maintained by the liturgical event of reading the Scriptures in a public assembly. Such is the canonical extent of the Deuteronomistic work (compare 3:3-4 with 29:13-14 in light of 31:10-13), the historical setting for covenant making in the days of Ezra and Nehemiah (Neh 8-10; Apocryphal Ezra 9:36-55) and the annual ceremony at Qumran on the occasion of the first encounter with God's word at Mount Sinai (40Dc).

A redactional examination of the Temple Scroll reveals the intention of the writer, which is identical with the reshaping of the Pentateuchal text. To be in God's presence indeed affects the midrash torah of the Scroll. For it reiterates in an interpolated way the Pentateuchal promise of God's indwelling in the Temple and among his people. It offers key canonical texts without distinction between God, his name and his glory. A close analysis of the rewritten Pentateuchal material, arranged along given topics, reveals three distinct sections of the Temple Scroll (Cols. 2-29; 30-51:10; 51:11-66:17). Each section is governed by the theme of God's presence, in the opening and closing statements and particular stresses. The first section closes with a key text (29:3f):

In the house where I cause My name (to dwell) upon it ... I favor them and they will become unto Me a nation and I will be present to them forever. I shall dwell with them and I will sanctify the Temple with My glory, where I will cause My glory to dwell upon it...

The Temple derives its holiness from the presence of God's glory and this presence affects a particular attitude and conduct for those who live in Jerusalem near the Temple, the practice of purity and holiness. The text continues:

...Until the day of blessing (i.e. the end of time) when I shall create the Temple to establish it for Me eternally, in accordance with the covenant made with Jacob at Beth El.

This reflects a correspondence between the heavenly sphere with the earthly realm, as indicated by Jacob's vision of the ladder (Gen 28:12). This view is rooted in a panentheistic model of God in relation to the cosmos. It maintains the eternity of God the creator who duratively exists in a metamundane realm while his creation on earth is limited spatially and temporally. God transcends his creation yet he makes his presence felt immanently. A God who acts in history also reserves the freedom to hide his face. The removal of his presence affects the course of history resulting in evil. The Essenes restrict the dualistic account of the tension order in the cosmic order human forces to the earthly history of mankind (so 1QS 3:13-4:26). This micro-macrocospic correlation dominates Essene thought, especially in the correspondence between the heavenly realm and the earthly Temple. This correspondence affects in particular the apocalyptic writings and it seems to be rooted in the prophetic visions of Isaiah (6:1-3) and Micahah ben Imlah (1Kgs 22:19ff.).

One of the main concerns of the Temple Scroll is to offer instruction for the construction of the Second Temple in imitation of the divine pattern for the structure. The Tabernacle in the time of Moses was constructed in accordance with divine instructions (Ex 36:8-38:20 following 25:8-27:19; note the stress on"tabinith"). The first Temple in the days of Solomon is said to be built in accordance with a divine blueprint (1Chr 28:11). Yet the second Temple of Zerubbabel was not constructed in accordance with Ezekiel's instruction. This prophetic vision was seen as a utopian plan following the defeat of God's enemies, the final construction of God's Temple. The author of the Temple Scroll is inspired by the Tabernacle tradition in view of Ezekiel's vision. It addresses a newly established theocratic community, which gained its independence under Simeon the Hasmonean after Acra was secured and Simeon was acclaimed publicly High Priest and Sat Am-5L on the 18th of Ellul, 140 B.C.E. (so 1Macc 14). Yadin has shown (Temple Scroll, I ch. 8) that the Scroll was written during the reign of Simeon's successor, John Hyrcanus (135-105 B.C.E.). The split with the community in Jerusalem occurs at the end of the reign and the Qumran literature refers to events during the rule of his son,
Alexander Jannaeus. The refusal by the established community to adhere to the midrash torah of the true teacher was seen by the Essenes as a severe religious crisis, causing the pollution of the Temple and effecting the concealment of God's presence. A similar crisis befell the earlier generation in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes, namely pollution caused by the introduction of the abomination in the Temple (so Daniel). Now the Essenes came into conflict with a larger community of Pharisees and Sadducees, who are depicted as the renegade tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh respectively.13

The Essene departure to the desert as the remnant of Judea and Jerusalem and their refusal to participate in the sacrificial service did not result in a renunciation of the Temple as the abode of God's presence, so argued by B. Götter and accepted by Terrill.14 The Essenes consciously translated the biblical paradigm of the past into the present practice and future hope for the community. They established for themselves a socio-religious structure of encampment in the desert, as in the days of Moses. This is to be maintained in the interim period prior to their restoration in Jerusalem. For they awaited a final confrontation with the enemies of God, which will result in a triumphant return to the divinely rebuilt Temple in the end of time. This particular eschatological timetable reflects the successive events of the biblical past. As in the days of Moses and the time of David and Solomon, first Amalek, the enemy of Israel, is defeated and then a Tabernacle or Temple is built. The end-time, when God's presence will be manifested publicly following the defeat of God's enemies, corresponds to the remembered time when God's presence was enjoyed collectively by the people of Israel. In the meantime, the religious crisis of God's absence from the Temple affects the biblically oriented life of the Essenes in the desert.

The scriptural traditions of the Mosaic covenant and the Davidic covenant both determine the eschatological model of redemption and revelation. These two trajectories shape the socio-religious reality in the present time and a vision of the future community. It promotes a radical break with the dominant urban culture. The Mosaic example offers such a conscious rejection of the established forms and effects a new social organization. This was true for the interim period, the preparatory period for the final restoration of the Temple, the Davidic king and the Zadokite High Priest. God's presence in the Temple acts as a legitimator. Thus, the task of world construction by the Essenes takes the form of questioning the legitimacy of the established order, which is sustained by a theology of God's presence in the Temple. It points to the nonconformity of the microcosmic Temple with the divinely ordained construction or with the established calendar cycle from the fourth day of creation, the day of the luminaries.16

The Essenes pose a tremendous threat to the established Hasmonean order, which in turn seeks to eliminate the new priestly organization (sons of Zadok) in the desert. The new group draws a tight circle around itself and it insists that it radically separate itself from the corruption (mammon) and the pollution of the established order (the three nets of Belial, CD 4:15). Furthermore, the Essenes assume a radical, world construction paradigm of their biblical past, the Mosaic example of encampment. They maintain legitimacy in a fellowship with the angels on earth. The new community awaits a final epiphany following a physical confrontation with the opposition. Then a permanent order will be established and sanctioned by the divinely built Temple. The new order will be headed by a duumvirate of high priest and king, which will permanently resolve the tension between the two. This agenda is fully described in the Serahkim of the Qumran community, while the pesharim reflect on the historical situation of conflict with the established order in Jerusalem. The Temple Scroll offers the basic interpretative differences with the Pharisees and the Sadducees for the newly formed theocratic state. These differences in attitudes and in practice led to the physical separation from the Temple and Jerusalem by the Essenes, who gave rise to a theocratic society in the desert.

Notes

1. These papers will appear in a separate publication by the Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University, 1980.

2. See the recent study by Brevard Childs, Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979) and compare the historical outline of the canonical process by James A. Sanders, "Text and Canon: concepts and methods" JBL 98(1979) p. 5-28.


4. The Hebrew text is edited by Y. Yadin (Jerusalem: Hekhal Ha-Sefer, 1977). Lawrence H. Schiffman questions the Qumranic origin of said work and supports his position with a linguistic analysis (SBL, Qumran Studies section Nov. 20, 1978). The detailed comparison with the Qumran text and Jubilees, as offered by Yadin in his introduction and commentary, indicates a common tradition, in contrast with the Pharisaic or proto-Mishnaic tradition. The linguistic similarities with Mishnaic Hebrew only indicates a development from classical Hebrew during the period of the Hasmonean revival of the Hebrew language.

6 The Temple Scroll offers the rewritten Pentateuchal legislation in the first person singular as God speaking. So the first chapter in Jubilees opens with a theophanic address to Moses in the first person.

7 For example on monogamy CD 5:2-4 refers to the Scripture (Deut. 17:7) and to "unveiling" of the text by Zadok, while not citing the Temple Scroll, 57:17-18. Similarly on marriage to a niece, CD 5:9-10 cites Scripture and derives the prohibition while not citing the Temple Scroll, 66:16-17.

8 Temple Scroll 45:12 forbids a blind person to enter the city because of God's presence. So is the restriction for the community in fellowship with God's angels (1QSa2) and in the end-time (Midrash of Last Days).


10 Compare the studies on Ezekiel by W. Zimmerli and T. Willis' examination of the Chronicler's exegesis of the earlier biblical works. See B. Childs, Introduction, p. 647ff.


12 Yadin noticed this particular phenomenon in the Temple Scroll, Vol. 1, p. 216; Vol. 2, p. 136, note 13-14. Yet he did not subject the composition to a redactional analysis in light of these stresses.


16 These are the basic differences with the Pharisaic tradition. The Pharisees supported an intercalated calendar, based on eye witnesses' account and court's decision. See A. Finkel, The Pharisees and the Teacher of Nazareth (Leiden: Brill 1974) p. 70. The Pharisees also are said to have supported the rebuilding of the Temple by Herod (Babylonian Talmud Baba Bathra 4a) and the Tannaim have preserved the blueprint of said Temple in the Mishnah Middoth.


THE JERUSALEM TEMPLE IN THE FIRST CENTURY*
John T. Townsend

Part I: The Temple and the Jews

It is difficult to determine what Jews believed about the second temple in terms of a particular theology. In the first place, there is little reason to assume that learned Jews of the period were busy establishing theological norms. Secondly, reliable references to a theology of the temple in the period before its destruction are few, at least apart from the group at Qumran. What evidence does exist seems to take for granted that the divine presence dwelt in the temple (cf. e.g., Josephus, Jewish War 6:299f). After the destruction, positive references to an elusiveness of presence in relation to the temple become more frequent over the centuries. Occasionally there is a denial that God's presence dwelt in the second temple at all (e.g. Targum Hag 1:8), but the following passage from a late midrash is more typical:

R. Samuel Bar Nahman (c. 260) said: "Before the holy house was destroyed, the divine presence was set in the temple. Thus it was said (in Ps 114:4a), 'The LORD is in his holy temple;' After the holy house was destroyed (as in ibid. 4b) 'The LORD's throne is in heaven.' He had removed his presence to the heavens." R. El'azar ben Pedat (c. 270) said: "Whether it was destroyed or not, the divine presence never moved from its place. Therefore it was said, 'The LORD is in his holy temple.' ..." R. Aha (c. 350) said: "The divine presence never moved from the Western (i.e., the Wailing) Wall of the temple. Thus it was said in Cant 2:9, 'Behold, there he stands behind our wall.' Ergo, 'The LORD is in his holy temple!'" (Midrash Tanhuma (Suber), Shemoth, 10; cf. parallels in Exod R 2:2; Yalqut on Kings, 195; Midrash on Psalms, 11:3).

With a dearth of direct evidence on an issue of historical theology, one is tempted to argue by deduction from related issues in order to fill this void. However, history does not always follow logical inference. Jewish literature from the period of the second temple, and even earlier, used sacrificial language in reference to various nonsacrificial aspects of life. These included observing Torah (Sira 35:1-3 (32:1-5)) and living a virtuous life (Philo, Special Laws 1:50 (272); Sacrifices 12 (5); Life of Moses 2:22 (108); I Qen 9:5; cf. Mib. 6:7f), ransoming of slaves (Ep. of Aristeas, 19, 37); martyrdom (Dan 3:38-40, LXX & Theodotion; 4Macc 6:27-29, 17-22); prayer (CD 11:21); repentance (Dan 3:38-40, LXX & Theodotion; Ps 51:17); praise (IQS 9:4f); etc. One might be tempted to argue that those speaking thus regarded the Jerusalem cult as unnecessary except that they include authors like Aristeas and Ben Sira who held the temple and its cult in high esteem. Similarly, various writers, particularly at Qumran, referred to their community as a temple; but it is dangerous to use such references as evidence that those who composed them had rejected the Jerusalem temple in principle.

While evidence may be lacking for a theology of temple and cult in the years before the destruction, it is possible to show that the Jerusalem temple was considered to be an essential element in Judaism during this period. Unfortunately, it is common practice to argue that the temple and its cult had become useless appendages to which most Jews scarcely gave a passing thought. This view was first popularized by Wilhelm Bousset in the first edition of Religion in Judaism, notentstanden von J. Geilgud (Berlin, 1903) p. 91-102. He argued that the temple had become relatively unimportant before its fall for the following three reasons:

1. The Essenes were regarded in wide circles as models of piety; yet they did not take part in the temple cult, at least not in the animal sacrifices.

2. Jesus spoke comparatively rarely against the "excesses and immoderate esteem (Überstreichungen und übermassige Wertschätzung) for the sacrificial cult." Had the temple been of any real importance to the Jews, he certainly would have displayed greater opposition against it.

3. The Jewish religion was "scarcely shaken (kaum erschüttert)" by the loss of its cult in the year 70.

Bousset's second argument is particularly interesting. Behind it lies the assumption that Jesus would certainly have rejected out of hand whatever was cultic. It apparently never occurred to Bousset that, if Jesus did not oppose the cult, he may have...
refrained from doing so because he had no essential disagreement with it. Bousset apparently was viewing the ancient world through the eyes of a nineteenth-century, German Protestant and confusing his own values with those of Jesus.

In spite of the obvious bias in Bousset's reasoning, his view of the Jewish cult spread rapidly, often in a more extreme form. Among those who followed him directly or indirectly were Scholander, Bertholet, Herford, Knopf, Emslenny, Gulgenbert, Lods, Simon, Pfeiffer, Moore, and McKelvey. Particularly influential was Wenschkewitz, who used Bousset's three arguments in his classic work on the spiritualization of the cult in the ancient world. There were, however, several scholars who did not follow Bousset's hypothesis. They include Lagrange, Bonsirven, Lohmeyer, Phythian-Adams, Riesenfeld, Doeve, Selensticker, Ehrenhardt, Farmer, and Klemperer. Nevertheless, the hypothesis of Bousset is widely held to this day.

Bousset's first argument, that the Essenes rejected animal sacrifices, at the very least, needs qualification. The discoveries at Qumran are showing that Essene views on animal sacrifice and the Jerusalem temple were more complex than a simple rejection of the two in principle. Moreover, the Essenes were apparently a fairly isolated sect, and there is little reason to assume that their views about the temple would have reflected the thinking of most Jews.

In regard to Bousset's third argument, the fact that Judaism was able to survive the loss of its temple does not necessarily mean that the temple was relatively unimportant in the period before its fall. That Judaism did survive was due to various factors, such as the leadership of men like Yohanan ben Zakka. It was also due to the hope that a new temple would be built and that adjustments required by the destruction would be temporary. The temple had been rebuilt after the first destruction; surely it would be rebuilt again. The hope was expressed in various ways: in keeping the priestly courses repeated prayer, "May the temple soon be restored in our time"; in the careful preservation and development of the precepts governing the cult, and in stories of various sages awaiting the restoration to fulfill ritual obligations. There are even hints that some activity continued on the temple site after the destruction. Of course, in time the hope for a restored temple lessened, and was incorporated into the expectations for the Messianic Age. However, up through the rebellion of Bar Kokhba, there was the hope that the temple would be rebuilt without undue delay.

Apart from the weakness of Bousset's arguments, there are several positive indications of the central place that the temple occupied in Judaism before the destruction. The regular payment of the half-shekel temple poll tax made it difficult for any Jew, even one far removed from the Land of Israel, to forget the central shrine where the daily sacrifices were being offered up on his behalf. Moreover, the myriad pilgrims thronging Jerusalem at festival time regularly bore witness that Jews throughout the whole country had not forgotten the temple. In the years before its destruction, Jews repeatedly demonstrated their devotion to the temple. They did so when Caligula attempted to place his image in the Holy of Holies. They did so during the last days of the siege of Jerusalem by continuing the daily sacrifices which used up the food that might have helped the starving city. They demonstrated their devotion at the very end of the siege by making a last-ditch stand before the temple rather than in the more easily defended upper city. Whenever the slightest desecration threatened the temple, there was never a lack of men to lay down their lives in its defense.

Bousset (p. 91-97) noted several of these points, but insisted that they represented a meaningless continuation of what had formerly been of significance. He came to refer to the Jewish cult as a mere "Religion der Observanz," and his use of this expression may not have been entirely incorrect. Unfortunately, Bousset misjudged the significance of his own expression. Traditionally, Christians have treated theologically what they consider important, but such was not the case among first-century Jews. For them, in a sense theology was secondary, and there was little attempt to achieve any theological consensus. More important was observance of God's Law, cultic or otherwise. As long as one walked according to God's Law, he might exercise latitude in the theological justification of what he did.

Those who argue that the temple was of secondary importance in the first-century Judaism usually suggest that it had been replaced by the synagogue as the center of Jewish worship, but it is incorrect to place the two institutions in opposition. Rather the synagogue was a means for Jews outside Jerusalem to take part in the temple cult. The synagogue services corresponded to the temple liturgy. Throughout the world Jews met in synagogues when the regular sacrifices, which they had paid for, were being offered in the temple. In their synagogues they recited prayers from the temple liturgy as they were being uttered in Jerusalem. Synagogue worship was a continual reminder of the Jerusalem temple both before and after its destruction.

The veneration that a diaspora Jew could have for the temple is reflected in the writings of Philo. Philo is well known for his allegorization of Scripture, including the parts dealing with temple worship. The latter may have helped to preserve the veneration of his veneration for the cult as actually practiced. In fact, Philo specifically denounced those who would treat the literal observance of Torah with an "easy-going neglect" (Migration of Abraham 16(89-93)) and singled out the precepts on the cult and
the sanctity of the temple as examples for such literal observance (ibid. 16(92); Special Laws 1:12(67)). Moreover, in his de
Legatione ad Gaium he speaks of the sanctity of the temple as some-
thing that he and his fellow countrymen would be willing to die for.

Boussenot maintained that Jesus was not interested in opposing
the Jewish temple and cult because they had become relatively
unimportant. If Boussenot was wrong in his assessment, as the above
argument suggests, then one cannot assume that Jesus or any early
Christian was anticust when he was silent on the matter. In fact,
if first-century Jews held the temple in high esteem, one might
suppose that some Christians would have done so as well. Boussenot
spoke of the historical Jesus not opposing the temple and its cult.
Unfortunately, since Boussenot's day biblical critics have learned
that it is difficult, if not impossible to separate the teaching
of Jesus from early Christian tradition, much of which reflects a
post-70 point of view. There is, however, one Christian writer
who flourished some time before the destruction of the temple and
whose writings would certainly be one example of what Christians
taught while the temple was still standing. That writer was the
Apostle Paul.

Part II: The Temple and Paul

Although the genuine Pauline epistles constitute the only
certain, firsthand evidence of belief and practice among pre-70
Christians, these writings contain few direct references either to
the Jerusalem temple or to its cult. What little there is has been
the subject of extensive studies which generally have concluded
that for Paul the real temple was the Christian community.29 Only
occasionally has anyone suggested that, like Saul the Pharisee,
Paul the Apostle continued to regard the Jerusalem temple as the
temporary temple of God; yet his epistles do not contain a single
word against this temple. On the contrary, Rom 11:26 probably
speaks of Christ coming from the temple mount; 2Thess 2:4 refers
to the Jerusalem temple as "the temple of God"; and Acts 18:18;
21:17-29 report that Paul was willing to take part in its cult.

Those who insist that Paul had turned his back on the Jerusa-
lem temple base their conclusions mainly on the following two
arguments:

1. In at least two places (1Cor 3:16f.; 2Cor 6:16) Paul referred to the Corinthian Church as a
temple.30

2. When Paul used sacrificial language, he was
generally referring to the crucifixion or to
some aspect of life under the new covenant.
He only mentioned the Jerusalem cult as part
of the old covenant (Rom 9:4; 1Cor 10:18).

The Christian offerings are what he
depicted in sacrificial terms.32

In addition to these two arguments there is a third which, while
generally not cited by writers on the temple in Paul, is so
obvious that it must have played some part in shaping their con-
clusions. The argument is this:

3. Paul regarded the law as a custodian to which
at least gentile Christians were no longer
subject. Since it was the law that ordained
temple and cult, they could have no meaning
for those not under the law.

At first glance these arguments appear to justify the
assumption that the Jerusalem temple meant little to Paul. On
closer examination, however, they are less convincing. That Paul
in at least two places calls the Church of Corinth a temple does
not necessarily prove that he had substituted the Church for the
Jerusalem temple. In the first place, Paul used the word "temple" to
depict, not only the Church of Corinth, but also the individual
soma within that Church (1Cor 6:19). In each case the Apostle
gave the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (or God in 2Cor 6:16b) as
his reason for calling them a temple. Then Paul proceeded to
argue that, as a temple, the Church of Corinth (or the individual
soma) is holy and must not be defiled. Such inconsistency suggests
that Paul was using "temple" as a casual metaphor and not as part
of a doctrine of a new temple replacing the one at Jerusalem.33

The second argument, that Paul's sacrificial language denotes
the crucifixion or various aspects of life under the new covenant,
also fails to show that he denied the continuing validity of the
Jerusalem temple. Even if it were true that the Apostle saw the
various animal sacrifices replaced under the new covenant, he may
well have accepted the validity of the temple in other respects.
Apart from the matter of sacrifice, the temple was the dwelling
place of the Most High. Moreover, while sacrifice played a large
part in the Jerusalem cult, there was much in the cult that was
not sacrificial. For example, in the temple celebrations on the
feast of Tabernacles special sacrifices hardly played the central
role; and a dominical saying calls the temple "a house of prayer
for all nations" (Mark 11:17 and parallels).

It is not necessarily true, however, that Paul believed the
temple sacrifices had been replaced through the work of Christ.
Paul applied sacrificial terminology to Christ's death only
infrequently. Apart from a few simple references to the blood of
Christ or his death being for (hupēr or peri) us or our sins,34 there
are only two places (three counting Eph 5:2) where the
Apostle actually deploits the crucifixion in sacrificial terms,
Rom 3:25 and 1Cor 5:7; and in these two he is not consistent.
In 1Cor 5:7, written near Passover time, he says that "Christ our
Passover has been sacrificed" because he wants the Corinthians to purge themselves as one purges leaven from the house for Passover. In Rom 3:25, although the sacrificial language is not so explicit, Paul probably wrote with the Day of Atonement in mind\(^9\) in a context of justification, redemption, and the passing over (or forgiveness) of sins. Apart from these two contextual references, the Apostle chooses to depict the work of Christ in such terms as obedience (Phil 2:8), redemption (1Cor 6:20; 7:23; Gal 3:10-13; 4:5; 5:1; etc.) justification (Rom 3:21ff.; 5:9, 18; Phil 3:9; etc.), reconciliation (Rom 5:10; 2Cor 5:18-20; see Col 1:20; etc.), and as a victory over supernatural forces (1Cor 15:24-28; see Col 2:14ff.; etc.). Such a minor and inconsistent application of sacrificial language to the death of Christ suggests that this language represents, not a thought-out theological stance, but a couple of casual metaphors.

This conclusion is confirmed by the fact that Paul did not limit his sacrificial language to the crucifixion. He apparently had no hesitation in applying such language to the moral life (Rom 12:1), a gift from the Philippians to himself (Phil 4:18), their faith (Phil 2:17), his own possible death (ibid.), the Eucharist ([1Cor 10:14-21 and perhaps 11:25]), and prayer (Rom 1:9; Phil 3:3). Such an application of sacrificial language corresponded to Jewish usage, which also used sacrificial language for the virtuous life, prayer, martyrdom, etc. without in any way intending to invalidate the temple liturgy.\(^37\)

The third argument against the validity of the temple and cult for Paul arises from his belief that at least gentile Christians\(^10\) were free from the Jewish law. On the one hand, he maintained that the law was holy, just, good, and spiritual (Rom 7:12, 14, 16). On the other hand, he regarded it as a temporary expedient (Gal 3:6-29), which had been brought to an end in Jesus Christ (Rom 7:4; 10:4; Gal 3:19; Phil 3:4; etc. God had made this temporary arrangement because of human transgressions (Gal 3:10) to make people responsible for them (Rom 4:15; 5:12-21) by giving them a knowledge of sin (Rom 7:7; 3:20) without the power to become free from sin (Rom 3:20, 27ff.; 8:1-4; 9:31-33; Gal 2:16, 21; 3:11, 21). Therefore, the law can only be a human curse (Gal 3:13) and condemnation (Rom 4:15; 8:3ff.; cf. 4:15). It must inevitably lead to death (Rom 6:23; 5:20; 7:7; 11:8; 8:2; 1Cor 15:55-57; 2Cor 3:15). In Gal 4:3-10 (contrary to Rom 7:7, 14) Paul implied that the law belonged to the realm of flesh and of this world.\(^39\) He even hinted that the law incites people to sin (Rom 7:5, 7-11). Thus it is not surprising that he could speak of the law in terms of confinement (Gal 3:23-25) and slavery (Rom 7:6; Gal 3:23; 4:1-9; 4:21-5:3). With such a view of the law, how could Paul have attached much positive value to the temple and cult which the law ordained?

In the first place, Paul nowhere said that one is enslaved to the law by observing its various precepts. Rather he clearly stated that what puts one under the law is the observance of one particular precept, namely circumcision (Gal 5:3, see 6:11-15). Was it not through circumcision that one became a Jew and subject to Torah?\(^40\) Therefore, when Paul warned the Galatians not to become enslaved to the law (Gal 5:1), he singled out circumcision as the precept which gentile Christians must not observe.\(^41\)

The only other precepts of the law which Paul spoke out against were food laws. Then he only did so when they were preventing Jew and gentile from sharing a common table (Gal 2:21-13). Apart from such a situation, where the unity of the Church was at stake, what Paul said about meat offered to idols (1Cor 8:7-13; 10:23-32) suggests that he generally was fairly flexible about observing food laws. Moreover, in putting table fellowship ahead of food laws, the Apostle's actions had a kind of precedent in the life and teaching of Jesus. Church tradition generally represents Jesus as being relatively observant of the law, but with one exception: He was willing to break precepts concerning food in order to maintain fellowship with publicans and sinners (Matt 9:10-13 and parallels; Luke 19:7).

In general Paul did not prohibit Christians from keeping various commandments of the Jewish law (see Col 2:16, if Pauline), as long as they did not regard what they did as a means of justification. The only exceptions were those just mentioned. Therefore, there is no reason to suppose that he would have objected to any Christian, Jewish or gentile, taking part in the worship of the temple in Jerusalem, as Acts reports the Apostle himself having done.\(^42\)

Not only did Paul permit his gentile converts to observe most of the precepts in the Jewish law, if they so desired, he apparently regarded the observance of certain precepts as obligatory. He expected all Christians, Jew and gentile, to exhibit as the fruit of the Spirit (Gal 5:22) certain ethical standards in daily living, ethical standards which corresponded generally to various parts of the law. Thus all Christians were to avoid such transgressions as idolatry, murder, immorality, theft, etc., and cultivate such virtues as honor, purity, justice, self-control (Rom 1:18-2:15; 6:1ff.; 13:8ff.; 1Cor 5:9ff.; 6:9ff.; 10:7ff.; Gal 5:16-23; Phil 4:8; etc.). This expectation that gentiles live up to a certain ethical norm corresponds to a Jewish concept. This concept held that, while Jews were required to keep the law which they accepted at Sinai, gentiles were to keep those commandments given to Adam and Noah, the ancestors of every person, gentile as well as Jew.\(^43\) In other words, Paul expected his gentile converts, even though free from the law's bondage, to observe the same moral standard that Jews had expected of them before their conversion.
In addition to these precepts given to Adam and Noah, known as Noachian Commandments, there was one other group of precepts which concerned gentiles as well as Jews. These were the Mosaic precepts having to do with the temple and its cult. The Jews commonly believed that their temple bestowed blessings, not only upon themselves, but upon gentiles as well. The gentiles in turn had always been required to treat the temple with the proper respect and might at times participate in the cult. Since Paul expected gentile Christians to observe the Noachian Commandments, which Jews had expected them to keep before their conversions, he might well have expected gentiles to treat the temple with the same respect which had always been required of them, i.e., the respect befitting the house of God.

In a sense the laws regarding the temple formed a special class. One could argue that most of the Mosaic Law was not required for non-Jews for various reasons. One might or might not be expected to keep a food law, but the laws concerning the temple reflected the fact that God dwelt there. Not to honor him with his cult would have been blasphemy. Thus in Rom 15:14 Paul alluded to the temple liturgy (latreia) as parallel to, but distinct from, the giving of the law.

In summary of the above, the three arguments which one might use to prove that the temple was no longer meaningful to Paul carry little weight. Paul applied the word “temple” to the Church as to this individual in a figurative sense. The same is true about his use of sacrificial language. Finally, Paul’s attitude toward the law is not inconsistent with the possibility that both he and his gentile converts held the temple in high regard. Therefore, the Pauline Epistles give no ground for assuming that the Jerusalem temple was no longer venerated as much by Paul as it had been by Saul the Pharisee.

Apart from these negative arguments showing that Paul might have continued to hold the Jerusalem temple in high esteem after his conversion, there are three indications that he actually did so. The first is the reference to Zion in Rom 11:26, which cites the following from Isa 59:20 (LXX): “The deliverer shall come out of Zion.” If the Apostle was understanding “Zion” here in a literal sense, he was promising that Christ was to come forth from the temple mount, which retained its special significance. That the Apostle did in fact expect his readers to understand “Zion” literally may be probable, but unfortunately there is no certainty. The context allows one to interpret “Zion” as a metaphor, perhaps for the Church or a heavenly city.

The second indication that Paul held the temple in high esteem is given in a figurative sense in 2Thess 2:4, an interpretation of which is far less doubtful. Unfortunately, however, there is some doubt about the Pauline authorship of 2Thessalonians and,

if one assumes that the epistle is deutero-Pauline, the degree to which the author reflected Pauline thought. Therefore, the implications of the verse must remain provisional.

In 2Thess 2:4, the Apostle (if he indeed wrote the verse) demonstrated his willingness to refer to the Jerusalem temple as “the temple of God.” A few commentators have suggested that these words refer rather to a temple in heaven but offer little supporting evidence, aside from the fact that a heavenly temple and throne are mentioned in the Old Testament. Others understand the temple of 2Thess 2:4, on analogy with 1Cor 3:16; 2Cor 6:16; and Eph 2:21, to be the Church, but this interpretation faces four objections. First, in the few places that the Apostle used naos to mean something other than the naos at Jerusalem, he always explained his special meaning to his readers. There is no such explanation with 2Thess 2:4. Secondly, in 2Thess 2:4 naos has the definite article (“the temple”), whereas elsewhere, where the usage is figurative, the article is lacking ("a temple"). To this pattern 1Cor 3:17 is no exception since the words "the temple" in the verse can easily refer to the Jerusalem temple if v 16f. are translated as follows: “you do not know that you are a temple of God? If anyone destroys the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy as you are holy.” Thirdly, in 2Thess 2:4 “the temple” is the direct object of kathias (to sit down), a verb suggesting some definite place, not an institution. Finally, it is necessary to consider that 2Thess 2:4 is part of a passage describing Dan 11:31-36 (cf. 9:27; 12:11). The temple mentioned there could only be the one at Jerusalem. It is doubtful whether Paul would have alluded to the Daniel temple in a different, figurative sense without giving some indication of the change. Therefore, there is little reason to doubt that the temple mentioned in 2Thess 2:4 is the Jerusalem temple.

This reference to the Jerusalem temple falls within an apocalyptic context. The author is explaining what must take place before the parousia. Following the apocalyptic concept of history, the passage reveals that the forces of evil must be destroyed and that God will return. Then the Lord Jesus will return. However, the one who remains must be revealed (2:6f.). Next the lawless one will be revealed (2:3, 8). Finally, as the climax of his demonic work, he will “take his seat in the temple of God, proclaiming himself to be God” (2:4). Since the author put the desecration of the Jerusalem temple beside the ultimate blasphemy of proclaiming oneself to be God, it can be little doubt of the author’s esteem for this temple. Thus, if the author was indeed Paul, or even one who had correctly represented his thought, the Apostle must have held the Jerusalem temple in very high regard.
The third indication of Paul’s esteem for the temple is from Acts. Apart from the speeches, Acts confirms that Paul the Apostle venerated the Jerusalem temple as much as most Jews. According to Acts 18:18 he cut his hair because of a vow, quite likely a Nazarite vow. Since the completion of the Nazarite vow required a temple sacrifice (Num 6:1-21), Paul would have intended to offer such a sacrifice on a visit to Jerusalem. According to Acts 21:17-29, Paul was actually in the temple assisting others in their Nazarite vows at the time of his arrest.

In summary, there is little reason to suppose that Paul, after becoming a Christian, radically changed his attitude toward the Jerusalem temple or that he was opposed to any Christian, Jew or gentile, taking part in its cult. In addition, there are three positive indications suggesting that the Apostle held the temple in high esteem. Unfortunately, no one of these indications is conclusive. Rom 11:26 is open to other interpretations, 2Thess 2:4 lies in an epistle of somewhat doubtful authorship, and Acts represents a secondary source by an author of doubtful reliability. Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties, the weight of the evidence indicates that Paul did indeed have a high regard for the Jerusalem temple.

Epilogue

Most of the rest of the New Testament probably represents a situation after the Jerusalem temple lay in ruins. The parts of the New Testament which likely do represent a pre-70 viewpoint, namely certain traditions in the gospels and parts of Acts, do not exhibit any pervasive rejection of the temple. Bousset himself recognized that the gospels give little evidence that Jesus was anti-temple to any great extent (above, p. 2f.). In the case of Acts, the narratives about the pre-Pauline church affirm that the earliest Christians had a positive attitude toward the temple. As for the speeches, they probably stem from the author of Luke-Acts, writing after 70, and represent his theology. This judgment includes the Stephen speech (Acts 7) and the Areopagus speech (Acts 17), the former of which contains the most anti-temple passage in the New Testament.

After 70 both Christians and Jews felt the need to account for the fact that God had witnessed his enemies destroying his temple. Had the gods of the Romans won a victory over the Almighty? The Jews tended to explain that God had temporarily taken away his temple because of their sins. Christian answers varied. In the speeches of Acts Luke declared that the temple had never been God’s dwelling place but rather a monument to Israel’s disobedience (7:44-51; cf. vss 38-43). The author of the Fourth Gospel believed that, when the temple was destroyed, it had already been superseded by the Resurrection body of Jesus Christ. For the author of Revelation the destruction was temporary, and the old temple would soon be replaced by a more glorious sanctuary descending from heaven. In the meantime, the Christian temple was the Church. According to the epistle to the Hebrews, the Jerusalem temple was no longer needed. Through Jesus the world had access to the true temple in heaven.

Notes

1 As does B. Gärtner, The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament (Cambridge, 1965) p. 4-46. Note that Gärtner interprets passages referring to the community as a temple to mean the community is the temple. Cf. 1QS 5:6; 8:8, 11; etc.


3 Philo, Good Man is Free (Probos) 12(75) is commonly cited to support this view, but the Greek text, as opposed to many translations, fails to do so. Philo merely said that animal sacrifice was not the basis of the Essene reputation for piety.


5 H. Wenschkevitz, Die Spiritualisierung der Kultusbegriffe (Leipzig, 1932) p. 24ff. (88ff.).

7 On the relations between the Qumran community and the Jerusalem temple, see, for example, Kline, p 116-166; J. Murphy-Connor, "The Essenes and their History," Revue Biblique 81 (1974) p 215-241.


10 Taanit 17ab; Sanhedrin 22b; cf. Menahot 68ab.

11 See Baba Mezira 28b; Abot 5:20; Schoeps, p 43. See also the prayer for the rebuilding of Jerusalem in the Shemoneh Esreh. According to a baraita in Berakhot 514 (3c) this prayer was one of three which a reader might not alter, even by accident.

12 E.g., 'Shabbat 11;3; Shabbat 12b; Seidensticker, p 108; Bietenhard, p 162 ff.; Schmitz, p 110.


14 See Schoeps, p 43.


17 Jubilees 6:14; Bonsirven, vol 2, p 118.


19 See Josephus, Jewish War 2:184-187, 192-203; Antiquities 10:261-309; Philo, Legatio ad Gaium, 29 (184)-43 (348).

20 Brandon, p 163; Schürer, vol 2, p 346. See Taanit 4:6. According to Josephus, Jewish War 6:94 the daily sacrifices finally halted for lack of men; but cf. Arakhin 11b, which implies that the cessation was due to a lack of lambs. For other heroic acts in carrying out the sacrifices, see Josephus, Jewish War 1:148-150; 5:14-19.

21 Josephus, Jewish War 6:71 ff. See Farmer, p 111.

22 E.g., the pulling down of the golden eagle from the great gate of the temple (Josephus, Jewish War 1:648-655; Antiquities 17:151-163; Farmer, The Palm Branches in John 12, 13, JSJ N.S. 3 (1952) p 63) and the resistance against Pilate's attempt to establish the Roman statues within the holy city (Josephus, Jewish War 2:169-174; Antiquities 18:55-59; see Brandon, p 174).

See Schmitz, p 192f., who mildly criticizes Bousser on this point.


Cf. Josephus, Against Apion 77.

See Berakhot 11b-12a.


Wenschkewitz, p 111-114; Fraeyman, p 13-19; Klinzing, p 167-182; Gärtringer, p 47-50. Most writers on the subject also include discussions cf. Eph 2:21 and 1Cor 6:19.


For various attempts to explain away this inconsistency, see Wenschkewitz, p 112 (176); Fraeyman, p 27f., see p 15; cf. Gärtringer, p 141.

The NEB has introduced the concept of sacrifice into these prepositional phrases in Rom 5:8; 8:3; Gal 1:4; 2:20. See H. Wein, Biblische Theologie des Neuen Testaments (Tübingen, 1921) p 285, who argues that pler ἁμαρτιά designates a sin offering in the LXX to Lev 7:37, 9:3, 14:13, 22, 31, etc. and should imply a sin offering in Rom 8:3.


Sacrifice is implied by the verb λατρεύω. See Fraeyman, p 81f.

See above, p 2.

W.D. Davies, Paul and Rabbinic Judaism (London, 1955), p 69-74; W.L. Knox, St. Paul and the Church of Jerusalem (Cambridge, 1925) p 100, 122, n. 54; etc.

Bo Reicke, "The Law and this World according to Paul," JBL 70 (1951), p 259-276.

Davies, p 121; Moore, vol 1, p 331. When a gentile became a Jew he was baptized. Since all Christians were already baptized, circumcision alone would subject a Christian to the Jewish law.

A discussion of circumcision occupies two of the most important positions in this epistle. One such discussion is the climax to the central third of the writing. Having explained in chaps 3 and 4 that Christians need not be bound to the law, the Apostle concluded his long explanation by forbidding the Galatians to become bound to the law through circumcision. Another prohibition of circumcision begins the postscript, which Paul wrote in his own hand for emphasis. See also chap 2, which makes clear that circumcision was the main concern of the Jerusalem conference.

See below, p 17.

Davies, p 54ff.; 113ff.; E.P. Sanders, Paul and Palestinian Judaism (Philadelphia, 1977) p 210ff.; Moore, vol 1, p 274ff., especially n. 2 on p 274. On the commandments themselves, see Jubilees 7:20-32; Seder Olam 5; Tosefta Abadah Zara 8:4; Sanhedrin 6ab; Abadah Zara 64b; Bikkurim on Num 111; Gen Rabba 6:1; 24:5; 26:1; 34:8; Exod Rabba 30:9; Num Rabba 14:12; Deut Rabba 1:21; 2:25;

44 See Ep of Aristees 45; Josephus, Jewish War, 2:410; Philo, Special Laws 1:17 (97); 35 (158, 190); Leg. ad Gaum 39 (306) 45(356); Sukkah 55b; Cant Rabba 4:1; Midrash on Ps 109:4; Bonsirven, vol 2, p 116; Schoeps, p 29f.; Riesenfeld, p 35.

45 See 3Macc 1:9f.; Ep of Aristees 28ff., 37; Josephus, Jewish War 2:410; Ant. 18:122; Philo, Leg. ad Gaum 37 (297); 40:317; A. Buchler, "The Levitical Impurity of the Gentiles in Palestine before the year 70," JQR, 17(1925/27) p 31-38.


51 E.g., A. Plummer, A Commentary on St. Paul's Second Epistle to the Thessalonians (London, 1918) p 50f.

52 See 1Cor 3:16 ("You are a temple of God."); 6:19 ("Your body is a temple."); 2Cor 6:16 ("We are a temple."); See Eph 2:19-21 ("The household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the chief cornerstone in whom the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord.").

53 G. Milligan, St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians (London, 1908) p 100; Elgau, p 661.

54 Thus the relative "hôtísus" modifies the adjacent "holy (hagios)" rather than the more remote "temple (naos)."

55 Among those supporting this interpretation are all the ante-Nicene fathers.

56 The word "restrainer" appears twice in the passage, once in the neuter and once in the masculine. What the word designates is unknown. Traditionally commentators have identified the neuter form with the Roman empire and the masculine with the emperor. Several modern commentators suggest that the neuter refers to the Gospel and the masculine to Paul himself.

RESPONSE TO SAMUEL TERRIEN’S THE ELUSIVE PRESENCE

Gerard S. Sloyan

My mysterious "New Testament Topic" is none other than Professor Terrien's, namely the divine presence in the books of the New Testament as Word and as Name and Glory. In a work that deals with the whole Bible (the Messianic canon understood), two chapters out of ten devoted to the New Testament are, it seems to me, a fitting proportion. The first question to be asked is, has the author chosen well, given his self-imposed limits of space? My answer is yes. If I had had the problem, I can see myself choosing important themes, first from the Synoptics and Acts, then from Paul and John as the author has done. Would I have gravitated toward the same themes? I rather doubt it, but this is not a criticism, for I have never set myself to identifying a theology of the whole Bible. The closest I have come was to trace the theme of covenant and law through both testaments in a book published last year, Is Christ the End of the Law? (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1978). In doing so I was much indebted to Professor Jacob M. Myers' Torah and Gospel (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975). The omission of that title from the 1100 or so bibliographical entries in The Elusive Presence struck me as noteworthy. I need to ask: was Professor Terrien unaware of it; did it tell against his thesis so heavily that there was no way to cite it gracefully, or did it simply not seem germane to his main purpose?

All that is a way of saying that I do not feel competent to do what was done in the first eight chapters, namely identify the dominant motif in the Hebrew scriptures as: "Verē, tu es Deus qui salus mundi sed adnue possessor es." That is not modesty on my part. I do not know the collection well enough to choose the self-hidden yet always present God as the Leitmotiv. Yet the choice has been made by page 410 (Chapter 9), indeed, long before, when the plan of the book was worked out. So the selections from the New Testament books were, in a sense, preordained, however much they may have contributed to the overall theme of elusive presence.

Left to myself in deciding on a theology of the New Testament books, I would have come up with: "Spirit in the world," or "Faith in the power of the Word," perhaps even "Self-given to the poor." But I do not trust my hunches because I have not written such a book — only traced one theme of my choosing, not one that forced itself on me as dominant. So I conclude: the divine presence as Word, then as Name and Glory, does not strike me at all amiss. In fact, I consider the last two chapters to be a remarkable synthesis of some widely divergent material, and I can only hail the man who made it.

I have three small objections to lodge, and then I shall underscore some of the outstanding features of the synthesis. The first occurs on page 455 and relates to the Eucharist. There the Dietrichmenn thesis is summarized, namely that the breaking of bread came to be associated with the last supper which Jesus had eaten with his friends. As a result of this, the memorial (anamnesis) of death and anticipation of the return of the risen Lord are put in tension, but not an irresolvable one. Moreover, there "has evolved, a rite of the union of all partakers with the presence which is the new temple" (p 456), the temple of the Lord's risen body. I think that all that can be found in the New Testament with the help of the dozen authorities cited in the footnote (n. 34). I do not think, however, that "the breaking of the bread — originally mentioned alone, without the drinking of the cup" is such a sure thing. That it was mentioned alone "originally" (cf. Lk 24:35; Ac 12:42) depends too much on arguments from silence, it seems to me, augmented by the anything-but-wine rites of various later Christians who took bread and something else: milk, curds, honey.

That Paul alluded often to the universality of the eucharist (p 452) is doubtful. It begins only with Colossians and Ephesians, after the lead provided by 1Cor 12.

I was disappointed in the description of modern "closed communion" as an "elusivistic exercise in esotericism, based on institutional and creedal conformism" (p 466). Surely they are, not on all counts, the exercise in narrowness that these words suggest. Attracted, however, by the idea of "the presence of the risen Lord as the agent of unity in diversity...in the early church," I looked for extensive documentation in support and, lo! there was none. The record shows, I think, mixture of silence and the precise opposite of what is affirmed.

Finally, one finds correctly stated on p 450 that it is not possible to ascertain whether Stephen would have proclaimed that Jesus was "the new temple" before his discourse was broken off by violence. But on the next page, Stephen had introduced the theme of the new temple ca. A.D. 35. I take this to refer to the repudiation of the Solomonic temple in vv 48-50; but this is in a series of rejections of Israel's infidelities, and Jesus as new temple is never in fact introduced.

These observations, however, touch on small matters. My overall response is one of immense respect in the face of the achievement. The author was faced with the fact of the incarnation which was, however, of an untypical because suffering messiah, that gave promise of future glory. He chose to read that incarnation in the language of the Johannean prologue and the Pauline christological hymns. I have some serious regrets that that New Testament christology emerged as dominant but in fact it did, so my quarrel is with history, not with Professor Terrien. Given such a choice
on his part, the three moments of annunciation (understood as the 
Baptist's preaching in Mk, the conception and birth narratives of 
Mt and Lk, and the prologue of Jn), transfiguration, and resur-
rection are pivotal in the gospel accounts. Jesus is indeed the 
angel or messenger of the "presence of the divine reality in a 
peculiar hiddenness" (p 421). I am not sure of the triumph 
of the ear over the eye, the word of command over clear sight in 
the transfiguration and resurrection accounts. But, I repeat, 
they are already there in the book as givens, so the gospel data 
can be seen to yield them without too much pressure. An alterna-
tive case could be made for glimpses of the divine glory, I think, 
the visual over the aural, as the divine means of eliciting human 
obedience. But the road taken is sufficiently clearly marked: 
"He was the reflector of the glory of God, but the reflection of 
this glory led to Jerusalem and to his own death" (p 425).

I found the stress on the appearances of the risen Jesus as 
ever "a mere sighting" especially helpful—always the channel 
of an exhortation, a command, or a commission. Indeed, had I 
not spent much of the month of June in the company of John Alsup 
and his Heidelberg dissertation, The Post-Resurrection Appearance 
Stories of the Gospel Tradition: A History-of-Tradition Analysis, 
with Text Synopsis (Stuttgart: Calwer, 1975). I might not have 
recognized the significance of the Terrien achievement of compression on 
the topic of resurrection alone. Matthew's concluding, 
commissioning pericope is important here, with its candid mention: 
"but some were in doubt.

"The literary type of prophetic vision 
with its call and commission, has (indeed, I say) been inserted 
into the patriarchal-legend pattern of epiphanic visitation" 
(p 429f). The Isaianic Immanuel, "God is with us," is certainly 
Matthew's poetic inclusio at the beginning and end of his gospel. 
similarly transform the presence of the historical Jesus into the 
presence of the risen Lord. While making these epiphanic develop-
ments, Professor Terrien never forgets the itinerant prophet who 
was crucified. The vision of the son of God in glory does not 
oblude the Jesus who had brought about God's nearness to people 
in need. Divine presence for him was always the word and act of 
liberation.

In "We are the temple of the living God" (2Cor 6:14), and 
"All of us, with face unveiled, while we reflect as a mirror 
(katoptrismos) the glory of God, are being transfigured" (2Cor 3:18a), Paul makes clear that he is 
committed to the subtle and subsumed splendor of God's abasement 
(p 458). "Man cannot see God, but there is a most distinctive kind 
of glory in the giving up of the self, and this is the reflection of 
glory which is accessible to all" (p 459).
BOOK REVIEW


This is a landmark book for several reasons. It attempts to extract from, not impose on, the Christian Bible the unifying theme that underlies its two testaments. It does so with a beauty of language that marks few literary analyses of this literature. The volume takes positions on literally dozens of acusae esyegicae, arguing them philologically, literarily and religiously (one risks anachronism by saying theologically) with equal ease. Finally, it is marked by a generosity of outlook toward the more than 1100 scholars and poets cited that makes it a model of scholarly conduct. Those familiar with critical biblical study will know how deadly much of the writing in the field is, hence the measure of Terrien's achievement. Meanwhile, the many more who know that the Bible is a literature and wish to be informed on it dependably will recognize in this volume the only kind of exposition they look for and so infrequently encounter.

The author's main thesis, contained in the title, is arguable. He is aware of the unhappiness in his field with the notion of a "theology" of either testament, let alone of both. (That there are as many as they desire as biblical authors, within certain boundaries, is a widespread view.) The author hopes to dethrone the opinion that enjoys the most popular support as regards the Hebrew writings alone or the whole Christian Bible. It is the one spelled out by Eichrodt (1933-1939) of a covenantal relation with God, first of Jews and then of Christians in contemporaneous succession or, as some think, replacement. E.P. Sanders, by identifying the commandments of the Law as the sign of the Jewish if not always the Hebrew covenant relation, has lately coined the term "covenantal nomism." It is meeting with resistance but it has the virtue of being understood, even by those who think it a bad coinage (nomos as a poor rendering of torah, among other objections).

Professor Terrien thinks that the covenant theme is not sufficiently pervasive in either testament to deserve the identification it gets. Only Joshua in the twelfth century, Josiah in the seventh, and Ezra in the fourth were dominated by it. The prophets were familiar with the covenant as violated but their interpretation of history lay elsewhere. The sapiential literature assigned no role to covenant ideology, while the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha practicly ignored the notion. Aside from being absent from large parts of the Bible and the birth of the church, it is too variously handled when it does surface. In place of

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THE PURSUIT OF A THEME

Samuel Terrien

It is now my privilege to thank all the members of this Colloquium. First, my gratitude goes to Sgr. Oesterreicher, who conceived the idea of such a consultation and whose sustained efforts have brought it to fruition. Second, my debt is heavy toward those distinguished scholars who participated in the panel and tempered the sharpness of their criticism with generosity. Their observations have helped to promote the pursuit of a theme which -- so it appears -- will occupy biblical theologians for the next decade.

Held within a year of the publication date of The Elusive Presence, this Colloquium is a tribute not so much to the pioneering and somewhat adventurous character of the book as to the timeliness of its subject, Dea abscondita atque praesens. Consensus among Jewish and Christian students of the Bible on this point alone constitutes a landmark in the contemporary history of biblical scholarship.

To be sure, a synthesis which attempts to cover twelve centuries of an ancient near eastern literature and seeks to bridge several disciplines exposes itself to divergence of opinion. Since praise never lacks bite, "quel est l'apologie que tu as pu, ou tout au moins n'a obtenu," I am especially thankful to the participants who have pointed out areas for further discussion.

I

First, the shift of emphasis from covenant to presence. I knew that such a reversal of the trend which has dominated biblical science for almost fifty years would startle many and leave some unconvinced. I did not, however, slight the importance of the covenant motif for the history of ancient Israel's religion or for the interpretation of Hebrew faith among early Christians. I referred only to the use of covenant ideology and ritual as a structure for biblical theology.

It is obvious that prophets and psalmists, for example, have at times favored forms of speech that were derived from the covenant -- especially the law-suit pattern -- in order to communicate to their listeners the divine indictment of the nation's betrayal. However, this is precisely the point. The covenant motif was used as a rhetorical device for expressing a far more inclusive and profound reality -- the abandonment of Israel by Yahweh, his absence from the human realm, and the conditions for the renewal of his presence. In some periods of the biblical era, including the ages of Qumran and the primitive church, covenant ideology may have been mentioned, but it did not constitute the determining factor of the religious question or of the divine disclosure. Whenever the covenant was a living reality, as in the time of Josiah or Ezra, it did not occupy the center of the theological ferment. That center was always a reaction to presence. The force which dominated the religious thinking of Israel and of early Christianity was not the covenant but the memory or the anticipation of divine proximity.

The author of The Elusive Presence never intended to dismiss "rather cavalierly" the covenant motif. On the contrary, by appraising the nature of the covenant and its function, he joined all those who acknowledge that such a ritual and its ideology aimed at offering an instrumental apparatus of duration. Its purpose was a relational maintenance "from generation to generation." However, the fact that there were covenant renewals, probably not on a yearly basis but here and there across the centuries, indicates the fallibility of the instrument. In addition, the conflicting views of the covenant -- historical and ethical (Mosaic) or superhistorical and mythical (Davidic) -- as well as the absence of covenant concern in many circles, especially those of wisdom, strongly argue against the primacy of this motif in any elucidation of biblical homogeneity.

II

A study of the theology of presence in the Hebrew Bible and in the New Testament might well have included the analysis of a much larger number of pericopes than it did. Space limitations prevented me from mentioning many items relevant to the topic. For example, the Flood story, the Joseph cycle, several traditions of the Exodus and Sinai theophanies (notably Exod 34:5-11a), the epic of the conquest, many prophetic discourses, various elements of the Deuteronomic pseudepigraphic literature (especially the Book of Jubilees), and of the Qumran documents, and of numerous passages of the early Christian writings.

It should not be forgotten, however, that The Elusive Presence merely points "toward a New Biblical Theology," which remains to be written. Selectivity was the essence. The discipline of biblical theology, in any case, should not be confused with the history of comparative religion, or even with the history of the religion of Israel and the primitive church. On the one hand, the religious historian seeks to describe the customs and beliefs of the populace as well as those of leaders and influential classes. On the other hand, the biblical theologian is not bound to be exhaustive -- although he must, of course, pay rigorous attention to the complexity of religious diversity and change. His task is both historical and
para-historical, for his responsibility lies not only toward the past but also toward the present and the near future. He intends to serve modern theologians. He is a minister of the Word for modern interpreters of the faith.

While the biblical historian deals with the cultural environment of the biblical literature, the biblical theologian -- grateful beneficiary of the biblical exegete and of the biblical historian -- deals with Scripture. This does not mean in any way that he is a biblicalist in the pejorative sense of the word, or a fundamentalist who refuses to acknowledge the conditions of historical relativity which preceded over the inception and the growth of the biblical literature. This means that he must attempt to discover the nerve of continuity and the nexus of thematic flowering which produced through selection the sacralization of this literature and transformed it into Scripture. Biblical theology operates from the perspective of canonical dynamics of literary selectivity.

There are moments when a new approach, method, and synthesis, are possible and expected. We are entering one of these moments. The time is ripe for a new theology of the entire Bible -- not just an Old Testament theology, even less a New Testament theology, but a Biblical Theology, a theology of Scripture.

III

Biblical theology will not be a didactic expose of religious "ideas" found in the Bible, according to the old structure of God, Man, and Salvation. Scriptural authority is not that of a static textbook of religion and morals. Such a view of the Bible is today intellectually dishonest, for it is based upon an artificial isolation of the faith from the historical relativity of the biblical origin and development. The strategy of proof-texting a dogma or an ecclesiastical practice, whether it is perpetrated by Jews, Roman Catholics or Protestants, represents an abuse of Scripture as well as a misunderstanding of it. A biblical theology for our time will acknowledge the sweep of historical movement and reaction, its progress and its momentary regress, as well as the multifariousness of religious thrusts which have motivated the ancient Hebrews, the Israelites and the Judahites under the monarchy, the exilic and postexilic Jews, Jesus of Nazareth, and the early Christians.

A few scholars have come to think in the past twenty years that biblical theology is in eclipse. A confusion of nomenclature seems to have clouded the issue. Brevard S. Childs, for example, attacked the so-called American Biblical Theology Movement, and he was right in suggesting that such a movement was passing through a crisis, but he did not sign the death warrant of a theology of the Bible. In a similar vein, J.J.M. Roberts hailed "the decline, if not the demise of biblical theology" (in "Myth Versus History, Catholic Biblical Quarterly 38 (1976) p. 1), but he apparently failed to distinguish between biblical theology and the American Biblical Theology Movement, which grouped together not biblical scholars as such but a number of younger theologians also known as "neo-orthodox" and influenced by a disparate array of thinkers like Barth, the two Niebuhrs, Tillich, Eber, and also Kierkegaard, Dostoyevsky, Heidegger and Sartre! If such was the American Biblical Theology Movement, requiescat in pace!

It is imperative to remember that for the past forty years, the disciplines of Old Testament theology and New Testament theology have been actively alive in many parts of the world. What arises now over the horizon of biblical scholarship is a committed approach to the canonical dynamics of the entire Bible. The church needs to be cleansed of its traditional Marcionism -- a theological form of anti-Semitism -- which has been revived in modern times by Schleiermacher, Harnack and Bultmann, among others. A committed approach to the canonical dynamics of the entire Bible will scrupulously respect the results of scientific exegesis. It will not seek to read the New Testament back into the Old, but it will show that the New Testament does not stand by itself. The New Testament is the fourth canon of the Bible, after the Pentateuch, the Prophets, and the Hagiographa.

IV

The task of the biblical theologian being different from that of the religious historian of ancient Israel and of the early church, it goes almost without saying that a work like The Elusive Presence had to narrow down not only the scope of its investigation but also the volume of its scholarly apparatus. A number of studies have not been mentioned in the bibliographical notes, for the simple reason that some of these appeared only after the typescript had been sent to the publishers. Others had to be eliminated on account of space limitation dictated by mercantile considerations. This was particularly true of older articles and monographs, many of which are still of inestimable value.

Apart from these restrictions, which concern externals, one must also point out that judgment may vary as to the choice of the biblical texts which received some exegetical attention. No apology is therefore needed for the absence of allusion to many parts of the Old and of the New Testament. Again, it was not possible, within the scope of the book, to offer scientific support for decisions which had to be made on literary, form-critical, and tradition-historical problems. The reader has found these decisions "rather conservative, in the Albigensian tradition." Not at all!
They reflect rather the rigorous methodology of the various French schools, represented by Adolphe Lods, Edouard Dhorme, René Dussaud, Maurice Goguel, and their numerous successors. It is precisely on account of a critical approach to the literary and historical problems of the Pentateuch, of the Prophets, and of the Hagiothrapha, as well as to those of the Gospels and Epistles, that the biblical theologian is able to discern the interrelation of the forces which produced canonical selectivity.

With the exception of a few Old Testament books discussed at Jamnia and of some Christian writings which hovered on the border of acceptance among the churches of the early centuries, the canonicity of the Bible as Scripture was not the product of synodal, conciliar, or episcopal decisions: the Torah, the Prophets, the Hagiiographa, and the New Testament imposed themselves. Discussion remains legitimate on the status of the "deutero-canonical" rather than "apocryphal" books, and the significance of the Pseudepigrapha and other documents of the so-called intertestamental period. The fact remains that neither Jubilees nor the Temple Scroll nor the Manual of Discipline (IQS) nor the Hodayoth belongs to Scripture. The same remark applies to the Nag Hammadi Library.

V

A distinction between Northern and Southern traditions within the Pentateuch -- the validity of which has not been successfully challenged -- remains basic to the study of canonical dynamics.

By and large, Northerners associated the theologoumena of presence with an elusive Deity who would not become the property of a dynasty, a shrine, a hierarchy, a geographical center, or an ethnic group. The disclosure of the divine name, with its insistence upon ethical obedience, led to the Mosaic and conditional covenant, which in turn inspired a passion for social justice and the respect of communal solidarity.

In contrast, the Southerners yielded, mainly on account of the policies of David and Solomon, to the static comforts of the theologoumena of presence through a shrine. The Davidic covenant assumed the mythical use of divine power by favored classes (royal princes and functionaries, including the Jerusalem temple clerics) at the expense of the common welfare. It was the myth of Zion, of Canaanite-Jebojusite origin, which played havoc with the theological integrity and the ethical sharpness of Mosaic Yahwism.

A few scholars have sought to ignore the malevolent consequences of the Zion myth by disregarding its well-authenticated manifestations: chthonian, opidian, and solar rites, male homosexuality, hierogamy, bi-sexual features of temple ornaments, the sacredotal function of the queen mother, and the many references to the worship of the Northwest Semitic earth goddess. Yet, it cannot be denied that David's choice of Jerusalem as a political capital received in the course of years a religious justification, and that the same character of mythical permanence was eventually ascribed both to the temple site and to the Davidic covenant.

While the trauma of the exile led the school of Ezekiel to subliminate the Zion myth into an other-worldly eschatology, the Second Temple restoration resulted in a neo-spiritualization of the theologoumenon of presence, and this process coincided with the transfer of the unconditional aspect of the Davidic covenant from the Davidic dynasty to an eternal people. Sacred topography and exclusive ethnicity combined to confer on postexilic Judaism an ambiguous complexity with an unresolved tension between the claims of a special election and the demands of a universal mission.

The history of the growth of the Pentateuch and of the Prophets shows that a synchronistic relationship links together the first two canons of the Bible. The first canon may not be separated from the second nor may it receive a distinctiveness of superior authority. The Prophets stand in judgment together with the Torah. Far from being the immutable and absolute Law of Moses, the Torah, like the Prophets, reflects six or seven centuries of tortuous labor. The Torah, like the Prophets, is the story of Israel under both the grace and the rebuke of her God.

Respecting the results of literary and historical criticism, canonical dynamics enables the biblical theologian to view both the Torah and the Prophets as interacting documents of the Heilsgeschichte. This history of salvation, however, becomes intelligible only in the light of the conflict between two opposite theologoumena of presence, with their ensuing contradiction of a conditional versus an unconditional covenant. A biblical theology confined to the Torah and the Prophets is faced with an unresolved and unresolvable tension between these two conflicting interpretations, unless it takes into constructive account the theology of wisdom.

VI

The phenomenon of canonical growth -- as distinct from the canonical closing of a list of sacred books -- compels the biblical theologian to pay due regard not only to the Torah and the Prophets but also to the Hegiographa. It is the failure to integrate within the structure of biblical theology the wisdom literature which has rendered obsolete a number of notable treatises of Old Testament Theology published in recent years. The question is no longer whether a biblical theology is possible or desirable, but rather, "What is the biblical center?"
The word "center," translated from the German die Mitte, is in some ways unfortunate, for it suggests the inappropriate image of a static circularity. We might be happier with the metaphor of a spiraling force, poetically given to the se'olah or whirlwind which bore Elijah in its chariots of fire or from which Yahweh questioned the man of Uz. Whatever the exact word should be, there is little doubt that an irresistible force was at work over several centuries to produce a people's book, the Bible.

First, this force led the ancient Hebrews to preserve selectively their cultic traditions -- those stories of epiphantic visitations to the Patriarchs and of the Sinai theophanies which conveyed specific theologies of presence. Second, it caused the Deuteronomists and the Jerusalem priests to write down legal precedents and to compose hortatory narratives as paradigms of worship and behavior at the end of time. Third, it led the disciples of the great prophets, waiting for the day of Yahweh, to preserve the deeds and words of their masters as authoritative blueprints for the changing conditions of their own experience of delayed eschatology. Fourth, it inspired the psalmists to edit their anthology of hymns and laments, and the schools of wisdom to publish Proverbs and the Jobian drama. Before any institutional decision established a catalogue of sacred books, a spiral force attracted -- sucked in, so to speak -- from oblivion a certain type of literature which imposed itself upon the continuing generations of the communities of faith.

It is well known that the wisdom literature poses a problem to biblical theologians. In the phrase of Zimmerli, "Wisdom has no relation to the history between God and Israel." Although many of its themes present close affinities with Yahwism, its perspective is universal and broadly human. The humanism of wisdom, however, finds its raison d'être in God, for the ultimate power of Job, Proverbs, and even Qohaleth, lies in a triple response to divine presence. First, the theocentricity of sapiential humanism eventually places in a new light its eudaemonistic quest and even its prudential interest. Job yields only to the intervention of Yahweh from above, and beyond the amenities of cultus or the claims of morality. The so-called Jobian theophany represents a sapiential transposition of the archaic Gattung represented by the Epiphanic Visitations to the Patriarchs. Second, Qohaleth risks the airing of his paraphilosophical doubts only because he knows that in the end God "acts in such a way that men may fear in his presence" (Qoh 3:14). Third, in the poem of Proverbs 8, it is personified Wisdom who seeks man, rather than man who seeks God. The theocentricity of sapiential humanism, like that of the Sinai theophanies or of the Prophets' visions, appears in Wisdom's call and initiative. It is she who invites man to come to her in order to receive the fruits of her bounty. The movement is not anthropocentric. It arises from beyond the human realm.

The personified figure of Wisdom, playing in the presence of the Creator, resolves the tension between the conflicting theologoumenon of presence which emerge from within both the Law and the Prophets. Wisdom offers delights to God, but finds her own delights in the company of the children of men. Her role is to mediate presence. While Genesis 1 uses the myth of creation to expiate the sabbath as a sacrament of communion with the Lord of the universe, the poem of Proverbs 8 uses the myth of creation in order to substitute for the sabbath the personified figure of Wisdom as the mediatrix of presence.

VII

The figure of Playing Wisdom occupies a unique position in the canonical dynamics of Scripture, for it provides a field of force which lifts to a new realm the old antinomy between the restrictive aspect of election and the open inclusiveness of the mission toward "all the families of the earth" (Gen 12:3b; Amos 3:2; Ps 47:10). It is the personified figure of Wisdom which, through Ben Sirach and the Greek Book of the Wisdom of Solomon, led early Christians to interpret the historical person of Jesus as the Logos made flesh, "sojourning as in a tent among" men (John 1:14) -- an entirely novel theologoumenon of presence. It is the personified figure of Wisdom which enabled early Christians to transpose her invitation to the children of humankind into a call issued by Jesus himself, "Come unto me..." (Matt 11:28; cf. Prov 8:32; Sir 24:19). It was the sapiential speculatio on the transcendence of wisdom which inspired the apostle Paul's meditations on divine wisdom in the context of the gospel (1Coz 1; etc.).

The Qumran sectarians separated themselves from the Jerusalem temple because it was a seat of corruption. Whether the notion of "a spiritual temple" applies to them or not remains a subject for legitimate discussion. Bertil Gärtner, however, did not propound the thesis of an absolute spiritualization. On the contrary, he carefully noted that only "a measure of 'spiritualization' had taken place" (The Temple and the Community in Qumran and the New Testament, Cambridge, 1965, p 18). The Qumran sectarians remained Jews through their strict observance of the Law.

Thanks to a bold exegesis of both the Law and the Prophets, Jesus himself offered an hermeneutical paradigm through which the early Christians could define his living body as the new temple. The hieros topos has become the hieros anthropos.

It was this revolutionary theologoumenon of presence which permitted the primitive church to be free from the ritual legislation of the Pentateuch and to preach its gospel to the pagans. The hieros topos was now open to all.
The intertestamental literature does not constitute a bridge between the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Rather, it offers a historical link between the Judaism of the Persian and Hellenistic periods, on the one hand, and the Judaism of the Hasmonean and Roman times, on the other. The biblical theologian whose vocation is to serve the church will therefore differ at this juncture from the Jewish historian who operates within the phenomenon of historical continuity from temple to synagogue. They differ, but the distinctiveness of their aims need not separate them in their parallel functions.

VIII

Much work remains to be done in the pursuit of the theme. The personified figure of Playing Wisdom, as turning-point or pivot in biblical theology opens up further possibilities of disquisition on the complex of presence and absence, the "Yes" and "No" of revelation. Recent studies on the phenomenon of play, psychological, philosophical, and theological, such as those of Hugo Rahner (1949 and 1963), Eugen Fink (1960), Jacques Henriot (1969), Jürgen Moltmann (1971), Louis Marin (1973) and Erik H. Erikson (1977), indicate a line of inquiry which is likely to have an impact on the discipline of biblical theology in the near future.

This Colloquium has helped to cement communality of concern and to stir the need for mutual exchange among all the heirs of Abraham.