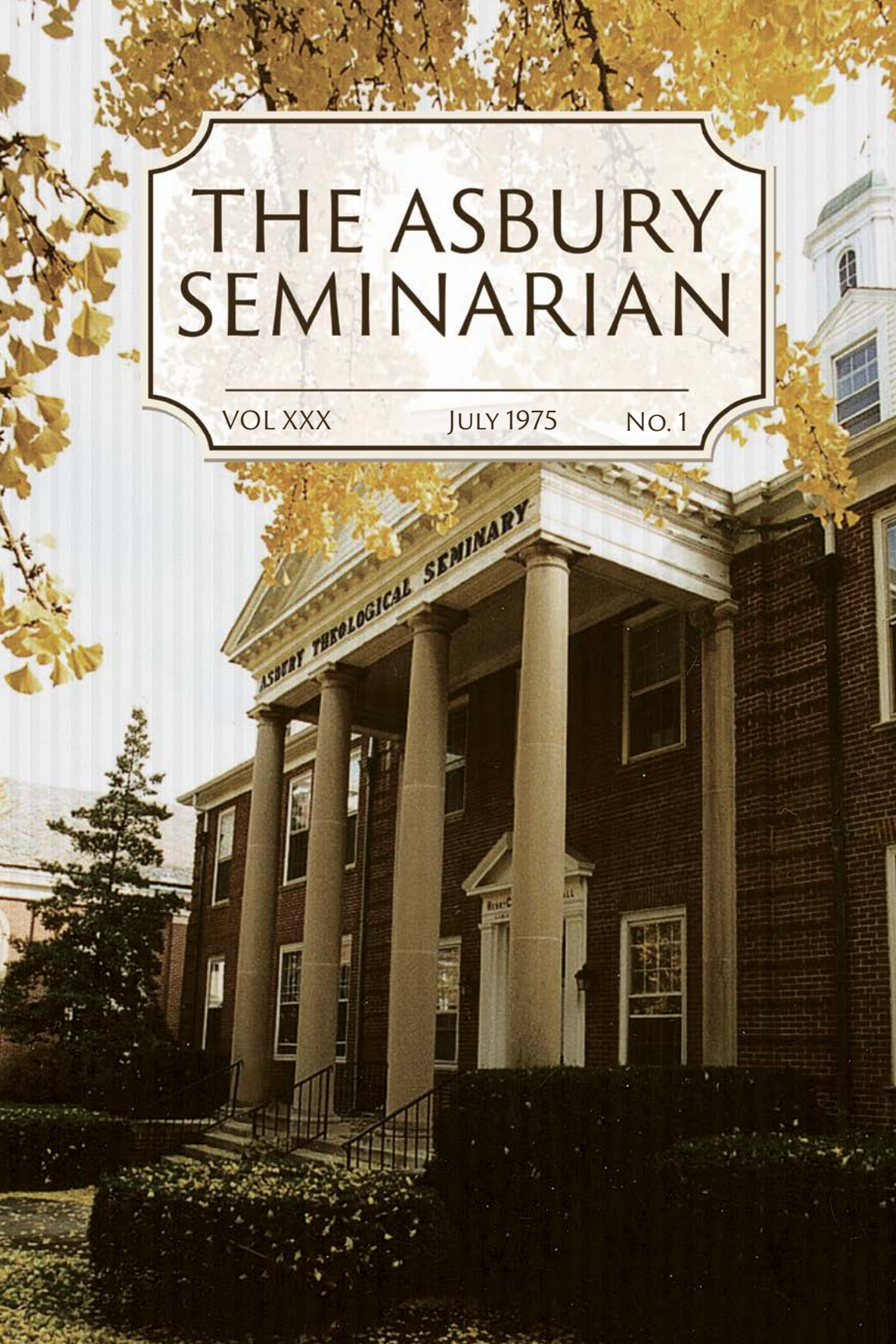


# THE ASBURY SEMINARIAN

VOL XXX

JULY 1975

NO. 1





NOT TO BE USED WITHOUT COPYRIGHT PERMISSION  
OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# *The Asbury Journal*

---

**July 1975**

**VOL. 30 • NO. 2**



NOT TO BE USED WITHOUT COPYRIGHT PERMISSION  
OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

# *The Asbury Seminarian*

## **EDITORIAL BOARD**

### **ACTING EDITOR**

David D. Bundy

### **EDITOR**

Harold B. Kuhn (Sabbatical leave)

### **ASSOCIATE EDITOR**

George A. Turner (Sabbatical leave)

### **BOOK EDITOR**

James D. Robertson

### **MANAGING EDITOR**

Ruth Garfoot

### **MEMBERS EX-OFFICIO**

President Frank Bateman Stanger

Dean Robert A. Traina

### **FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES**

David D. Bundy, Donald M. Joy, Kenneth C. Kinghorn,

Jerry L. Mercer, John N. Oswalt, Susan A. Schultz

### **CIRCULATION MANAGER**

Wayne R. Kenney

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE**

Robert L. Ransom, James R. Harriff

### **ALUMNI REPRESENTATIVE**

Glenn L. Courts '62

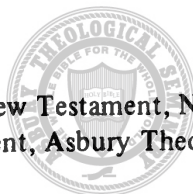
### **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

**Ralph Earle**, Professor of New Testament, Nazarene Theological Seminary

**Kenneth E. Gooden**, President, Asbury Theological Seminary Alumni Association

**Lloyd H. Knox**, Publisher, The Light and Life Press

**Kenneth P. Wesche**, Dean-Registrar Emeritus, Western Evangelical Seminary



# The ASBURY SEMINARIAN

---

Volume XXX

JULY 1975

Number 1

---

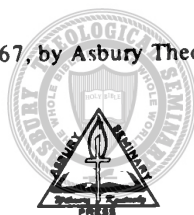
Subscription Price \$3.00 per annum  
Single Copies \$1.00

## The Wesleyan Message In The Life And Thought Of Today

---

Published quarterly by *Asbury Theological Seminary*  
at Wilmore, Kentucky 40390. Postage paid at  
Wilmore, Kentucky.

Copyright 1967, by Asbury Theological Seminary



NOT TO BE USED WITHOUT COPYRIGHT PERMISSION  
OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### ARTICLES

On the Development of Doctrine: Reactions to Jaroslav Pelican <sup>1</sup> David D. Bundy . . . . .	3
The Pattern of the Church Howard F. Shipps. . . . .	7
Apologetics Harold B. Kuhn . . . . .	25
<b>BOOK REVIEWS . . . . .</b>	<b>43</b>



# ARTICLES

## On the Development of Doctrine: Reactions to Jaroslav Pelican<sup>1</sup>

David D. Bundy\*

Since the era of Eusebius, Christian theologians and historians have concerned themselves with the teachings of their predecessors. Eusebius argued that change and novelty involved heresy since doctrine was true eternally. Augustine, however, voided this definition. In his writings which generated the Pelagian controversy, Augustine argued against what had been the traditional recognition of the Fathers of the free will of man and his moral responsibility, much in the manner of the pagan philosophers and Manicheans. Because of the overreaction of Pelagius, Augustine carried the day and, to the amazement of St. Vincent of Lerins and the Oriental Divines, achieved a verdict which placed the onus of change on the Pelagian doctrines.

The issue of change in doctrine became an important issue in the reformation era as both reformers and churchmen sought to use history as a weapon for their alternative. This phenomenon is most vividly illustrated in the *Centuries of Magdeburg* (Protestant) and the *Annales* of Baronius (Catholic).

Despite the frequent use of doctrinal history in apologetic and polemic, the history of Christian doctrine is a discipline with a short history dominated by the work of Adolf von Harnack's *History of Dogma*. Harnack, as Pelican observes, used the term dogma in a very restrictive sense. There were two dogmas, the dogma of the Trinity and the dogma of the Person (two natures doctrine) of Christ as these were defined by the first four (or seven) ecumenical councils. This dogma was the result of Hellenization; that is, the giving of metaphysical significance to the life of a person who appeared in time and space, and of ecclesiasticalization; that is, the interposition of the church's tradition between the individual and personal experience of salvation.

\*Instructor of Greek, Asbury Theological Seminary

Pelican perceives his work as a corrective critique of Harnack. *Historical Theology* is a work “in conversation with Harnack” (p. ciii). He also formulated the description of his task as a historian of the development of doctrine in contradistinction to that of Harnack:<sup>2</sup>

To find a substitute for Harnack’s definition of the history of doctrine as history of dogma, it is necessary to define doctrine in a manner that is simultaneously more comprehensive and more restrictive: more comprehensive in that the polemical and juridical expressions of doctrine in the form of dogmatic decrees and promulgations are not isolated from other expressions of doctrine, such as preaching, instruction, exegesis, liturgy, and spirituality; more restrictive in that the range and content of the doctrines considered are not determined in the first place by the quarrels among theologians but by the development of those doctrines themselves. Christian doctrine, then, may be defined as what the Church believes, teaches, and confesses on the basis of the word of God.

This is the method for his expositions of Christian doctrine, “What the church of Jesus Christ believes, teaches and confesses on the basis of the word of God.”<sup>3</sup> He seeks to clarify this definition:<sup>4</sup>

Without setting rigid boundaries, we shall identify what is “believed” as the form of Christian doctrine present in the modalities of devotion, spirituality, and worship; what is “taught” as the content of the word of God extracted by exegesis from the witness of the Bible and communicated to the people of the church through proclamation, instruction, and churchly theology; and what is “confessed” as the testimony of the church, both against false teaching from within and against attacks from without, articulated in polemics and in apologetics, in creed and in dogma. Creeds and decrees against heresy will bulk large in our documentation, as they do in that of the histories of dogma; for what the church confesses is what the church has believed and taught—or at least part of what the church has believed and taught. In the history of dogma, what the church believes and teaches apart from its normative statements of faith is important as a commentary on creed and dogma. In the present history of the development of doctrine, the creed and dogma are important as an index to what the church believes, teaches, and confesses.



In the outworking of this programmatic in the first two volumes of *The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine*, the most important words of the formulary become the recurring terms, "what" and "church". The emphasis is upon the **what** the **church** (broadly defined, emphasizing its unity in language and conceptual structures) believes, teaches and confesses. There is little attempt to go beyond a description to an analysis of **why** a doctrine developed as he has ably narrated that development toward becoming, "part of the authorized deposit of the faith."<sup>5</sup>

My reaction to Jaroslav Pelican's historiography can be formulated in a series of questions. First, how can one write a history of the development of doctrine without a careful investigation of Hellenistic and apocalyptic thought forms, the pagan and Judaic formulations of faith and philosophical investigations and without a consideration of the cultural, social and political contexts out of which individuals have sought to express the faith of the Church catholic? Expressions of hope and belief are never formulated in a vacuum. There are the static records of much debate, of intense feeling, of personalities in conflict and of words in cultural structures. Pelican oversimplifies the process of historical investigation; for, if an understanding of the past is to be achieved, we must ask the functional and contextual meaning of specific historical datum, which by analogy interacts with our own present. Thus, historical confrontation is more than description.

Second, can it be assumed that a word or construct represents the same symbolized structure for succeeding generations? Words are ambiguous in any context and usually draw upon several heritages.<sup>6</sup> They conceal aspects of any action as well as record and reveal. Only on the basis of extensive contextualization can sweeping generalizations of genetic continuity be promulgated.

Third, is sufficient attention given in Pelican's historiography to the problem of cultural mutation? Man has remained basically the same physiologically throughout his history. However the ordeal of change heightens or lowers technical proficiency, historical, social and cultural awareness and consciousness. Each is the product of a matrix of experiences quite unlike that of any other age. By analogy, we interact with the past from which we "inherited" our existential structures. This makes all the more imperative our investigation of the "why" along with the "what."

These questions which have been directed to Pelican are perhaps indicative of wherein may lie his greatest contribution; that is, not in his description, but rather in forcing historians and theologians to care-

fully and critically investigate their historiography. In this quest for an adequate hermeneutic for historical data, his *Historical Theology* will be a necessary starting point, along with the work of Harnack, J.H. Newman and Collingwood, beyond whom he has insisted we must go in our programmatic of historical analysis.

---

## FOOTNOTES

1. Jaroslav Pelican is the Titus Street Professor of Ecclesiastical History at Yale University. This editorial essay is concerned primarily with his *The Christian Tradition, A History of the Development of Doctrine*, the first two volumes of which, *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (100-600), (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1971) and *The Spirit of Eastern Christendom* (600-1700) (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1974) have attracted much attention. These are to be understood as outworkings of his historiography expressed in *Historical Theology, Continuity and Change in Christian Doctrine* (New York: Corpus, 1971) and *Development of Christian Doctrine, Some Historical Prolegomena* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969).

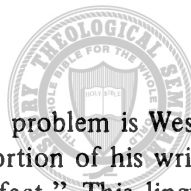
2. *Historical Theology, op. cit.*, p. 95.

3. *The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition* (100-600), *op. cit.*, p. 1.

4. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

6. Exemplary of this problem is Wesley's adaptation of the term "perfect." A significant portion of his writing is an attempt to clarify what was meant by "perfect." This linguistic dilemma continues to haunt the Holiness Movement.



## THE PATTERN OF THE CHURCH

Howard F. Shipp\*

In the United Methodist form of worship the suggested introduction to the corporate affirmation of faith contains the following declaration,<sup>1</sup> “Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is the one true church, apostolic and universal . . . .”

The implications of this affirmation are numerous. For instance, it may be assumed from Scripture that the Spirit of the Lord is everywhere.<sup>2</sup> Logically therefore it may be concluded that the Church is everywhere. But immediately one realizes that such a general conclusion is quite contrary to the thought and intention of those who have formulated this introductory statement. Clearly they must have had in mind a far more limited concept of the church. It would appear that they held that the “one true church” is to be found only among believers whose lives are fully committed to the will of God and controlled by the direction of the Holy Spirit.

This concept of the church is helpfully illustrated by the figure which is used by Paul in his writing to the Colossians,<sup>3</sup> “and he is the head of the body, the church.” Undoubtedly the clearest and most important aspect of this figure is that Christ as the head of the body which is the church, is directing and controlling all the desires and activities of that body which is united to him. This union and resultant activity are dependent upon the life and ministry of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer. Indeed, it is this relationship which makes him a part of the “one true church.”

Whenever the church is effective it is because the Holy Spirit has been allowed to remain in control. Substitutes for Him, no matter how splendid, important, and humanly perfect they may have been, have always initiated the decline of the church as a redemptive force in the purpose of God. The tendency to offer such substitutes has marked the history of the Christian community across the centuries. Repeatedly the growth and enrichment of the church in human skills and material possessions have persuaded her to believe that such things could assure

\*Visiting Lecturer in Church History, Asbury Theological Seminary

her success quite independently from the presence and power and leadership of the great divine administrator.

Jesus in his final message to the church, recorded in the *Gospel According to John* chapters, 13-17, forewarned his followers of this danger. Throughout these five chapters Jesus outlines and describes the place and ministry of the Holy Spirit as the all-important element in the life of the individual Christian and in the corporate life of the Christian community. He speaks concerning five ministries which the Holy Spirit will accomplish in their behalf: (1) The abiding comforter and helper: "and I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you forever."<sup>4</sup> This perpetual Divine Power at the center of their inmost being would guarantee their success in effective witness and fruitful ministry. (2) The never-failing teacher: "But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."<sup>5</sup> The lessons which they have learned and the truths which have been imparted to them during their years of association with Jesus, will be kept alive and reinforced throughout every day of their continuing ministries. (3) The supreme witness concerning Christ: "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, he shall testify of me."<sup>6</sup> And, later, "And when he is come, he will convict the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment."<sup>7</sup> The emphasis here is that whenever and wherever the Holy Spirit is revealed to the world through the life of the believer He will become the most effective Evangelist. That revelation is raised to its highest point of effectiveness when the Spirit is in complete control of the individual and giving undisputed leadership to the church. (4) The preserver of orthodoxy: "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he will guide you into all the truth."<sup>8</sup> He will continue to teach the church as Christ had begun to do. Thus the individual and the church will be safeguarded in all the elements which are essential for salvation and a fruitful Christian ministry. (5) The revealer of the beauty of Christ: "He shall glorify me."<sup>9</sup> The fullness of the presence of the Holy Spirit in the life of the believer is the only assurance that through that person the beauty of Christ shall be revealed and that He shall be glorified. This is the only sure and adequate dealing with the constant problem of self. The self becomes the instrument through which the beauty and glory of Christ may be revealed to an unbelieving but hungry world.

Likewise the Holy Spirit is to be the revealer of Christ's beauty and glory through the collective life of the Christian community.

Throughout the book of Acts Luke speaks of persons and groups of persons as being "filled with the Holy Ghost,"<sup>10</sup> and as a result of this relationship the church is making new conquests.

When the need arose for the organization of the first administrative board as a body of laymen within the church, one of the major requirements was that they be men full of the Holy Ghost. The seven laymen who were chosen for this ministry performed their work so effectively in the power of the Holy Spirit that Luke reports, "the word of God increased; and the number of disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith."<sup>11</sup>

The general purpose of this treatise will be to describe the nature or pattern of the church as seen in the Acts of the Apostles. This portion of divine revelation is, to be sure, the first chapter of the history of the Christian church. But it is much more than that. It is an ideal which God has set before the eyes of His people for all time. It is not an unattainable ideal. Rather it is a norm or standard established. It is a practical realizable goal. Whenever the association of believers fails to realize such a norm it is failing to fulfill the desire and expectation which God has for it. More specifically, the story of the life and mission of the church as recorded in the Acts is the divinely-appointed pattern by which the Christian community of any generation or geographic locality may determine the measure of its success.

Any consideration of the nature and life of the church should also be concerned with the nature of the kingdom of God as described by Jesus in his sermon on the mount as found in Matthew 5, 6, 7. In these three chapters the Messiah is proclaiming the basic principles of his kingdom. The laws of this kingdom are to be written upon the tables of persons' hearts. This is to be in fulfillment of the word of the prophet Ezekiel<sup>12</sup> when he foretold that the time would come when the law of God would be inscribed upon the heart of each person who had become a citizen of God's kingdom. Ezekiel foretold a new day for God's people:<sup>13</sup>

Moreover I will make a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them: and I will place them, and will set my sanctuary in the midst of them forevermore. My tabernacle also shall be with them; yea, I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And the heathen shall know that I the Lord do sanctify Israel, when my sanctuary shall be in the midst of them for evermore.

The author of Hebrews renews and confirms this prophetic word concerning the kingdom of the church:<sup>14</sup>

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people.

Let us see then from these prophecies, and their fulfillment, that there is a very clear relationship, or perhaps even a complete identity, between this description of God's kingdom in Matthew and the account of the first chapter of the history of the Christian church as recorded by Luke in the book of Acts. The individual whose life is described in the gospel become the divinely-chosen person by whom the work of God is to be implemented in the church. He becomes the means in God's hands by which the ministry of the church is accomplished. So the redeemed person of Matthew becomes the divine material out of which the church is made and by which it is enabled to perform its mission.

Matthew informs us that Jesus after his grueling temptation in the wilderness, went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom. And he further states that there followed him (Jesus) great multitudes from Galilee, Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judaea, and beyond Jordan. Jesus takes this as an appropriate opportunity to announce certain aspects of his kingdom, which was soon to be known as the church.

In the three chapters which follow he describes the citizens of that kingdom, the persons who will constitute the church. These high standards of life and conduct are very demanding. It is immediately clear that such qualities of life will be possible only in those who have been supernaturally transformed into the likeness of God, and who gladly and enthusiastically yield themselves in obedience to the principles and spirit of the divine kingdom. The pattern of such a life is here set forth and described in considerable detail. The demonstration of such a life manifest in corporate expression is recorded by Luke in the story of the Acts of the Apostles.

Let us direct our attention to the description which Jesus gives of the nature of those who shall inherit this kingdom. First he speaks of them as the blessed ones. The term blessedness appears in both testaments, and in such classic passages which have to do with holy living, as Psalms 1 and this sermon on the mount. In this passage it is the Greek *makariōs*. Vincent observes:<sup>15</sup>

In the Old Testament the idea involves more of outward prosperity than in the New Testament, yet it almost universally occurs in connection which emphasize, as its principal element, a sense of God's approval founded in righteousness which rests ultimately on love to God . . . it becomes the express symbol of a happiness identified with pure character. Behind it lies the clear cognition of sin as the fountain-head of all misery, and of holiness as the final and effectual cure of every woe.

Alexander Maclaren, discusses in his commentary on *The Psalms* the meaning of blessedness. He says, "The secret of blessedness is self-renunciation," a love to lose my will in His and by that loss be free.<sup>16</sup> In an age when the pace of life was much more calm than it is today, nearly a century ago Maclaren was proclaiming, "Men live meanly because they live so fast. Religion lacks depth and volume because it is not fed by hidden springs."<sup>17</sup>

This blessedness is a state of being or condition of life which is the end hoped to be attained by all men everywhere. It is the state of life to be desired above all others. It is the goal of true human endeavor. Thus God has revealed some laws which are to be observed if man expects to arrive at this state of perfect contentment and satisfaction.

In summary the idea of blessedness seems to imply four major elements, namely: immortality, satisfaction, fruitfulness, and service. The foreverness of life assures its meaning. Being made in the likeness of God, man is called to live with Him now and in the ages to come. Again the life of blessedness is one of satisfaction. This is not an attitude of complacency, but rather a sense of having the approval of God in the daily activity of life. A further evidence of blessedness is that of fruitfulness. As Jesus had said in John, "He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit . . . and I have chosen you and ordained you, that he should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."<sup>18</sup> Service is an inherent part of Christlikeness. The disciple finds fulfillment only as he serves God and man in the name of and for the sake of Christ. Jesus at the very beginning of his message to the church<sup>19</sup> assumes the role of a servant. And thus by precept and example he stresses that the life of the disciple as well as his own must be that of a servant.

In an expanded description of blessedness Jesus says such a person is poor in spirit or humble, sorrowful because of his sin, meek, a seeker after righteousness, full of mercy, pure in heart, a maker of peace, persecuted for doing good, salt of the earth, and light of the world.

Following this introduction concerning the nature of those who will inhabit Jesus' kingdom, Matthew, lists in "The Sermon of the Mount," twelve qualities of life which these persons possess.

1. They are purged within—5:17-32.
2. They are willing second-milers—5:38-47.
3. They are perfect even as their heavenly father—5:48.
4. They are sincere, devoid of all sham—6:1-4.
5. They are always ready to forgive—6:14-15.
6. They are not fakers—6:16-18.
7. They do not covet—6:19-21.
8. They are single-minded, united in purpose—6:24.
9. They are confident in God's mercy—6:25-34.
10. They are not judgmental—7:1-5.
11. They are persistent in prayer—7:7-11.
12. They are doers of God's will—7:21-27.

This in brief is the description of the persons of whom the church is made. These are they whose lives and activity demonstrate the church in action. The story of Acts is a record of their service for God in the first generation of the Christian community. Among the characteristics of this community as portrayed in Acts may be found the following.

1. **A Divine Fellowship.** The second chapter<sup>20</sup> indicates that the first generation of believers established a joyful and lasting togetherness. It was a fellowship of teaching and study of the word; a fellowship of intercession; a fellowship of sociability; a fellowship of economic requirement; a fellowship of worship; a fellowship of effective witness.

It should be noted also that this "fellowship of the redeemed," by which name the early Christian community has long since been known, begets a unity which reaches beyond all chronological, geographical, national, cultural, or racial limitations. The saints of every age are united to God and to one another because they are committed to the accomplishment of the purpose of God, each in his own generation; and yet at the same time participating in that unity of faith which shares in God's work for all time.

Geographically this fellowship begins at a given point when two believers enter a compact of mutual trust and share with each other the joy of that redemption which they have found in Christ. But this fellowship which begins at home will ultimately reach to the ends of the earth. Whoever is united with Christ is united with every other believer in bonds of Christian love.



Thus all barriers of time, space, culture, tradition, or race are destroyed by the universal fellowship of faith. As John Mackay observes in his work *Ecumenics*:<sup>21</sup>

The Christian church, when true to its nature, is a **koinonia**, a fellowship. It was as a fellowship that it first came into being. Following the Ascension of Christ, a group of one hundred and twenty people who spoke of themselves as 'brethren', and who were made up of the apostles, the mother and brothers of our Lord, and others who had been His friends and disciples were accustomed to meet together daily for prayer and anticipation of the Spirit's coming. To this first nucleus of the primitive church three thousand more were soon added. The latter were converted after the Holy Spirit had descended at Pentecost time upon the original group of Christ's followers and inspired thereby Peter's famous sermon. The apostolic utterance led to the radical change in life and outlook that immediately became manifest among those who heard it.

Mackay further affirms that we must seek to validate the assumption that it is the church's glory, as the society of the redeemed, as Christ's friends, partners, and joyous servants, to fit into God's purpose for the world. He suggests then that there are two questions which should follow: (1) What is God's purpose for the world? The answer in brief is that Christ should be known, loved, and obeyed throughout the whole world. (2) How can the church accomplish this purpose? The answer to this question is twofold. (a) To make the gospel known to all nations. (b) To live the gospel in every sphere and phase of its earthly life.<sup>22</sup>

2. **A Spiritual Force.** The story of Acts is a continuing demonstration of the power of God effectively working through the instrumentality of the militant church. It is a magnificent fulfillment of God's promise through His servant Zechariah saying, "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts."<sup>23</sup>

The record in chapter four describes the imprisonment of Peter and John by mandate of the Jewish Council. Their offense was that they had witnessed to the resurrection of Jesus. This was surely a time of crisis for the church so newly begun. But notice that it neither panicked nor fled. Rather this new company of the way turned this threat to their lives into a greater triumph.

This crisis was met by the church moving into action and laying hold of divine resources.<sup>24</sup> The initial action was togetherness in prayer. They prayed until it was possible for God to do in them and with them all that He desired. The result of their intercession is stated as the place

being shaken where they were assembled. It also says that this company was fully in the will of God, being all filled with the Holy Spirit. It also speaks of their unattached relation to material things, neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own. Ownership for them had been transformed into stewardship. They also spoke the word with freedom of speech, and witnessed to the resurrection with great power. In the midst of this very great conflict with evil the church was demonstrating a loveliness, beauty, and charm of which the world was taking note. The author in describing what the world noticed about them, says, "And great grace was upon them all."<sup>25</sup> This divine radiance was much in evidence among those who esteemed it a high privilege to suffer for righteousness sake. It is seen likewise in the life of Stephen as he is brought before the council and charged with blasphemy.<sup>26</sup> Here we are told that all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, "saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." The church's witness is at its highest and best only when the radiance of its divine life shines through in sufficient measure to dispel the clouds of persecution.

**3. Persecuted, but Never Defeated.** The historian Luke in the eighth chapter of the Acts describes the church at Jerusalem as it confronts its initial general persecution. This is a typical illustration of the Christian community living and growing under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, and making its witness effective because it is channeling divine resources to meet the needs of the society in which its life is cast.

Let us now observe and evaluate the principal events and activities in the life of this church. (1) As a result of a great persecution many were scattered abroad. They were driven to the south, west, and north; and as they went they preached the Word. Thus they transformed persecution into a spiritual awakening and an interracial revival. (2) There was concern for adequate organization, choice of leadership, and assignment of responsibility. The apostles chose to remain at Jerusalem to maintain the necessary structure of the church in order that it might continue to function. (3) The church provided for a meaningful burial service for the first of its members who had died in the triumph of faith. Here is a mighty thrust of evangelism which the contemporary church needs to recover. Wesley said of the Methodists of his own generation, "Our people die well." (4) It found its leadership among its enemies. Saul, the key potential leader during this awakening, was making havoc of the church, but the persistent lingering influence of Stephen's testimony was destined to bring him to his Damascus road shock. Here the church had another servant, Ananias, whom God could use in the completion of Saul's conversion and his designation as "God's chosen ves-

sel” to bear His name before the Gentiles, and kings, and the children of Israel. (5) The church also initiates a lay witness campaign. It was Philip, a layman, to whom the word of the Lord came directing him to proceed toward the south where he was to find an unusual evangelistic opportunity. The conversion of this Ethiopian eunuch is not only lay evangelism at its best, it is also a significant step toward foreign missions. It is also to be observed that the preaching of Philip was given a responsive hearing. Luke records that the people (heathens) with one accord gave heed unto those things which Philip spake.<sup>27</sup> (6) There was administration of disciples in order to preserve the purity of the church. Simon as a pretended believer reveals selfish motivation and evil desire which may be among the “converts” to the faith. This evil is corrected by speaking the truth in love by messengers who are under the control of the Holy Spirit. There can be no expression of revenge or administration of carnal authority. Simon repented because he heard God speaking. (7) The church acted with supernatural (divine) authority. Neither the authority nor the power to be employed by the church is ever derived from human resource, manipulation, or organization. Either of these can only be effective when it is clearly a manifestation of the presence and work of God. Meyer<sup>28</sup> in speaking of the coming of Peter and John to Samaria lays stress upon the two conditions upon which the power of God was given. These were (1) intercessory prayer and (2) laying on of hands. Meyer insists that the former of these was the more important though both were necessary. The coming of the Holy Spirit to accomplish His mission in and through the church was primarily dependent upon the intercession of the church. It is this quality of intercession about which Luke is writing when he says, “And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together.”<sup>29</sup> (8) Complete healing brought great joy to the city. Luke affirms that evil spirits were driven out, many were healed of physical diseases, and there was great joy in that city.<sup>30</sup> The church in any community when it is fulfilling its mission will bring great joy. It should be in constant conflict with evil and in such conflict will frequently be persecuted, but gladness and well-being are the inevitable consequences of the presence of the people of God in any community.

4. **It Is Holy.** No doubt in our oft-repeated affirmation in the historic creed of the church we have failed to give sufficient attention to the phrase, “I believe in the holy catholic church.” As we do give more serious consideration to his statement we are confronted with difficulties in describing the church as holy as we see it in the world today. Webster in his definition of the word in English, says that in the

church to be holy is “to be dedicated to religious use; belonging to or coming from God; consecrated; sacred; to be spiritually perfect or pure; untainted by evil or sin; saintly.” This clearly indicates that for the individual or the church to be holy, perfection, in an absolute sense is not to be required. Yet nevertheless, it is appointed by God that those who walk in His ways shall be properly designated as holy persons; and that the assembly of all such persons shall constitute His church which shall be properly designated as holy.

This aspect of the nature of the church is described by Schaff<sup>31</sup> in his study of the Christian life of the apostolic church. He says:

Practical Christianity is the manifestation of a new life; a spiritual (as distinct from intellectual and moral) life; a supernatural (as distinct from natural) life; it is a life of holiness and peace; a life of union and communion with God the Father, the Son, and the Spirit; it is eternal life, beginning with regeneration and culminating in the resurrection. It lays hold of the inmost center of man’s personality, emancipates him from the dominion of sin, and brings him into vital union with God in Christ; from this center it acts as a purifying, ennobling, and regulating force upon all the faculties of man—the emotions, the will, and the intellect—and transforms even the body into a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Hans Kung, in his volume *The Church*, discusses this element of the nature of the church at some length. In the section entitled, the church is holy, he emphasizes two affirmations: (1) That the only holiness of the church must be found in the purity of the lives of its members; and (2) that this holiness is always the work of God wrought in the life of the believer:<sup>32</sup>

Believers are ‘saints’ in so far as they are ‘sanctified.’ The concept of sanctification is usually passive in Paul; he speaks of those who are ‘sanctified in Christ Jesus’ (I Cor. 1:2) and ‘sanctified by the Holy Spirit’ (Rom. 15:16). These are no self-made saints, only those who are ‘called to be saints’ (I Cor. 1:2; Rom. 1:7; cf. 1:6; I Cor. 1:24). ‘saints in Jesus Christ’ (Phil. 1:1), ‘God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved’ (Col. 3:12). Only through divine sanctification can men actively become holy—holy in the ethical sense, familiar from prophetic literature and the Psalms. ‘As he who has called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; since it is written, ‘You shall be holy, for I am holy’ (I Pet. 1:15f.; cf. Lev. 11:44). God’s will is the basis and goal of our continuing sanctification’ (I Thess. 4:3; cf. 4:1-8; Rom. 6:19, 22; I Tim. 2:15; Heb. 12:14; Rev. 22:11).

The New Testament knows nothing of institutional sanctity, of a sacred 'it'; it does not speak of a church which invests as many of its institutions, places, times and implements as possible with the attribute 'holy'. The only kind of holiness at issue here is a completely personal sanctity. It is the believers who have been set apart from the sinful world by God's saving act in Christ and have entered a new Christian existence who make up the original 'communio sanctorum'; they constitute the church of the saints and hence the holy church. The church is holy by being called by God in Christ to be the communion of the faithful, by accepting the call to his service, by being separated from the world and at the same time embraced and supported by his grace.

Wesley may be found to be in agreement with the position of Kung. In his sermon on the church we find the following definitive paragraph. Many reasons have been given for calling the church holy, such as Christ its head is holy, or because its ordinances are designed to promote holiness, or because our Lord intended that all its members should be holy. But Wesley concludes that:<sup>33</sup>

The shortest and plainest reason that can be given, and the only true one, is:—The church is called holy because it is holy; because every member thereof is holy: though in different degrees; as he that called them is holy. How clear is this! If the church, as to the very essence of it, is a body of believers, no man, that is not a Christian believer, can be a member of it. If this whole body be animated by one Spirit, and endued with one faith, and one hope of their calling; then he who has not that Spirit, and faith, and hope, is no member of this body. It follows, that not only no common swearer, no sabbath breaker, no drunkard, no whoremonger, no thief, no liar, none that lives in any outward sin; but none that is under the power of anger, or pride; no lover of the world; in a word, none that is dead to God, can be a member of his church.

**5. It Is United and Universal In Its Faith and Its World Quest.** In numerous passages from Acts<sup>34</sup> we are reminded that it was faith in the risen Christ which gave unity to the Christian community, and made the witness which they bore effective. Edwin Hatch affirms that "There is no proof that the words of Holy Scripture in which the unity of the church is expressed or implied refer exclusively, or at all, to the unity of organization."<sup>35</sup> As Paul admonishes in his instructions to the Ephesian elders, the basis of Christian fellowship is a changed life—

repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Or again to emphasize such faith as the basic element in Christian unity Clarence Tucker Craig observes:<sup>36</sup>

The historic life of Jesus ended with good Friday. The Christian church was born when his disciples were convinced that this was not the end, but God had raised him from the dead. Without that belief Jesus would have remained a forgotten Jewish teacher who has **supposed** that he would be the Messiah. Without that belief there never would have been a Christian church. Surely it is no exaggeration to say that belief in the resurrection of Jesus is the best-attested fact of ancient history.

The church is a meeting of God with people, united by Christ, and under the direction of the Holy Spirit. It must have a tie with the past, and also a meaningful understanding of its mission today, and of the nature of the present generation to whom it is called to minister. It is better understood as a spiritual force rather than as an institution. In this sense the church is invisible. Man has never seen the church any more than he has seen God. Its manifestation is often visible indeed, but its real essence has never been seen. Organizations may be formed to facilitate its outreach, but such organizations are quite distinct from its real being. Or, as Bishop J. Williams has so well said:<sup>37</sup>

The church is not an abstraction, but an institution embodying a living power and charged with a wonderful mission. It is to be God's appointed agent in carrying on to its final issues the work of man's redemption. It is to be God's family, into which men are to be adopted; His school, in which men are to be trained; His hospital, in which they are to be cured of their manifold diseases. It is to embrace in its beneficent work all human needs of body or soul.

If the church is to heal the world it must have a very direct and meaningful identification with the world's hurt. Hans Kung a decade ago has described the mission of the church concisely and yet comprehensively:<sup>38</sup>

The church is the royal, priestly and prophetic people of God, called by him out of the world and sent by him into the world. She is built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, and she is led by Christ, acting through all the multiplicity of spiritual gifts and ordered ministries and offices. She has her center in the liturgical assembly, with the proclamation of the word of God

and the Lord's Supper; we are incorporated into her by baptism. Thus she is the one, holy, catholic and apostolic community of those who believe in Christ; the Bride of Christ, awaiting him and yet already espoused to him, the Body of Christ and the Temple of the Holy Ghost, at once visible and invisible in this world. As the people of God, travelling on, believing, struggling, suffering, and also sinning, the church passes through time towards the judgment and the fulfillment of all things.

And now as we conclude this general discussion of the church let us share in the thought of J.W.C. Wand when he affirms, "As the human body is the instrument of the personality, so is the church the instrument of the personality of Christ."<sup>39</sup> And later he continues:<sup>40</sup>

Here is the heart and core of the whole matter. The church is the church because in its believers are put into direct relationship with Christ and because its members are incorporated into him. Such a claim is not capable of proof but it is capable of experience. It has been the assertion of millions in every age since the time when Jesus lived on earth. They claim that this relation to Christ is precisely what they themselves have felt and known.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Armstrong, Anthony. *The Church of England, the Methodists and Society 1700-1850*. London: St. Paul's House, 1973.
- Ayer, Joseph Cullen, Jr. *A Source Book for Ancient Church History* (From the Apostolic Age to the close of the Conciliar Period). New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1949.
- Buttrick, George Arthur (Commentary Editor). *The Interpreter's Bible*. Volume VII, (General Articles on the New Testament – St. Matthew, St. Mark), New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press, 1951.
- Craig, Clarence Tucker. *The Beginning of Christianity*. New York: Abingdon-Cokesbury Press.
- Emory, John. *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Volume II, New York: Lane & Scott, 1850.

- Emory, John, *The Works of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M.* Volume II, *Sermons*. New York: Carlton & Porter, 1856.
- Erdman, Charles R. *The Acts*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1924.
- Hatch, Edwin. *The Organization of the Early Christian Churches*. New York: Longmans, Green, and Company, 1895.
- Homrighausen, Elmer G. *I Believe In The Church*. New York: Abingdon Press.
- Inge, William Ralph (collected essays by). *The Church In The World*. New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1927.
- Johnston, George and Wolfgang Roth (eds.) *The Church In The Modern World*. Toronto: Ryerson Press, 1967.
- Johnston, George. *The Secrets of the Kingdom*. Philadelphia: The Westminster Press.
- Kirkpatrick, Dow (ed.). *The Doctrine of the Church*. New York: Abingdon Press, 1964.
- Küng, Hans. *The Church*. New York: Sheed & Ward, 1967.
- Küng, Hans. *The Council in Action* (Theological Reflections on the Second Vatican Council). New York: Sheed & Ward, 1963.
- Küng, Hans. *Truthfulness: the Future of the Church*. New York: Sheed and Ward, 1968.
- Latourette, Kenneth Scott. *A History of The Expansion of Christianity. Volume I, The First Five Centuries*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1937.
- Mackay, John A. *Ecumenics: The Science of the Church Universal*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964.
- Meyer, Heinrich August Wilhelm. *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament. Volume I, Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles*. New York: Scribner, Welford and Strong, 1877.



Newbigin, Lesslie. *The Household of God*. New York, Friendship Press, 1953.

Nygren, Anders (ed.). *This Is the Church*. Philadelphia: Muhlenbert Press, 1952.

O'Grady, Colm. *The Church in Catholic Theology: Dialogue with Karl Barth*. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1970.

Richardson, Cyril Charles. *The Church Through The Centuries*. New York: Scribner Press, 1938.

Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church*. Volume III, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950.

Schaff, Philip. *History of the Christian Church*, Volume IV, *Medieval Christianity*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950.

Schaff, Philip. *History of The Christian Church*. Volume VII, *The History of the Reformation*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950.

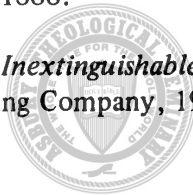
Schmidt, Karl Ludwig. *The Church*. London: A. and C. Black Limited, 1950 (translated from the first edition, 1938).

Streeter, Burnett Hillman. *The Primitive Church*. New York: The Mac-Millan Company, 1929.

Walker, Williston. *A History of the Christian Church*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1959.

Williams, J. *Studies in the Book of Acts*. New York: Thomas Whittaker 2 and 3 Bible House, 1888.

Wood, A Skevington. *The Inextinguishable Blaze*. Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1960.



**FOOTNOTES**

<sup>1</sup>*The Book of Worship*, The Methodist Church, p. 180, Nashville, 1964.

<sup>2</sup>Genesis 1, Psalm 139.

<sup>3</sup>Colossians 1:18.

<sup>4</sup>John 14:16.

<sup>5</sup>John 16:26.

<sup>6</sup>John 15:26.

<sup>7</sup>John 16:8.

<sup>8</sup>John 16:13.

<sup>9</sup>John 16:14.

<sup>10</sup>Acts 2:4; 6:5; 7:55; 11:24, etc.

<sup>11</sup>Acts 6:7, 8.

<sup>12</sup>Ezekiel 36:26, 27.

<sup>13</sup>Ezekiel 37:26-28.

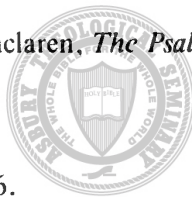
<sup>14</sup>Hebrews 8:10.

<sup>15</sup>Marvin R. Vincent, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, Vol. I, p. 35.

<sup>16</sup>Alexander Maclaren, *The Psalms*, Vol. I, p. 4.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>18</sup>John 15:5, 16.



<sup>19</sup>John 13.

<sup>20</sup>Acts 2:41-47.

<sup>21</sup>John A. Mackay, *Ecumenics: The Science of the Universal Church*, 1964, p. 47.

<sup>22</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>23</sup>Zechariah 4:6b.

<sup>24</sup>Acts 4:31-33.

<sup>25</sup>Acts 4:33b.

<sup>26</sup>Acts 6:15.

<sup>27</sup>Acts 8:6.

<sup>28</sup>Heinrich August Wilhelm Meyer. *Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament*. Vol. I, *Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Acts of the Apostles*. New York: Scribner, Welford and Strong, 1877. pp. 229, 230.

<sup>29</sup>Luke 4:31.

<sup>30</sup>Acts 8:7, 8.

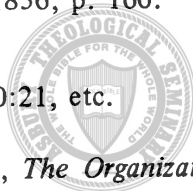
<sup>31</sup>Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, Vol. I, 1950, p. 432.

<sup>32</sup>Hans Kung, *The Church*, 1967, p. 319.

<sup>33</sup>John Emory, *The Works of the Reverend John Wesley*, A. M. Vol. II, Sermons, 1856, p. 160.

<sup>34</sup>Acts 4:32; 20:21, etc.

<sup>35</sup>Edwin Hatch, *The Organizations of the Early Christian Churches*, p. 186.



<sup>36</sup>Clarence Tucker Craig, *The Beginning of Christianity*, p. 133.

<sup>37</sup>J. Williams, *Studies in the Book of Acts*, New York, 1888, p. 52.

<sup>38</sup>Hans Kung, *The Council in Action*, 1963, p. 221.

<sup>39</sup>J. W. C. Wand, *The Church Today*. Baltimore, Maryland, Penguin Books, Inc., 1960, p. 112.

<sup>40</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 117.



## APOLOGETICS

Harold B. Kuhn\*

The term 'Apologetics' and the discipline which it indicates are rooted in the usage of antiquity. The **apology** finds its first formal origin in the legal procedures of the City State of Athens, in which the plaintiff (an individual or the **polis** itself) brought an accusation, and in turn the accused might make a reply, called an **apologia**—literally a "speaking off" of the charge. Thus the basic meaning of the term came to be **defense**; it was in this sense that Socrates spoke in his own behalf before his accusers.

The word 'apologetics' sometimes carries a negative, even unpleasant connotation. This is due, in part, to the fact that it is customary to make an apology for some social miscue or some work spoken in haste. Not only so, but some tend to regard the **bona fide** apologist as an unduly aggressive and personally defensive individual, who seeks primarily to shout down his opponent. But making allowance for unfortunate usages, the term apologetics has a long and respectable history, and the practice which it suggests has been, as we hope to show, an intrinsic and beneficial part of the Christian proclamation.

As classical philosophy came increasingly to be religious in tone, the element of apology came to increasing prominence in antiquity. Many of Plato's religio-philosophical discourses are quite clearly designed to persuade. Insofar, especially, as these writings were concerned with the refutation of the current polytheism, they were clearly apologetic in tone. Thus the term **apologia**, as well as the procedures which it connotes, were in use in pre-Christian times. Near the beginning of the Christian era, Judaism made a determined effort to relate itself affirmatively to the systems of Hellenism. This was exemplified particularly in the Hebrew community in Alexandria, where Philo Judaeus (c. 20 B.C.-c. 42 A.D.) felt constrained to present an affirmative case for his historic Faith.

Philo, as is well known, saw the Old Testament as the greatest and wisest of books, and Moses as the prince of teachers. By means of allegorical methods of exegesis, he attempted to show that the Old Testament was not only harmonious with the best in Hellenistic thought, but also that it contained a wisdom more lofty and certain than the best in non-Christian systems. By means of the concept of the *Logos* he

sought to connect the major cosmological ideas of the Hebrew Scriptures with those extant in the Greco-Roman world.<sup>1</sup> The result was a powerful synthesis of Mosaic faith and Hellenism.

It is proposed to deal with the general subject of Apologetics under four rubrics: first, attention will be given to the apologetic element in the writings of the New Testament; second, brief consideration will be given to the development of apologetics during the early Christian centuries. The third division will examine the early forms of apologetic models and note something of the dynamics of model-making. The final section will attempt to deal briefly with several forms of structured or modelled apologetics, and if possible, to point the way to the type of apologetic thrust which the conditions of our own century might dictate.

## I

There is a surprisingly large degree of attention given to the element of apologetics in the New Testament. The term **apologia** and its verbal form **apologeomai**, appears four times in the New Testament (Acts 19:33, Acts 22:1, Phil. 1:7 and Phil. 1:17). The concepts which these terms bear appear far more widely than the terms themselves. This is true of the Gospels, as well as in the Pauline and Petrine writings. Our Lord himself is shown to have made a reply to representatives of three major Jewish elements of his time, Pharisees, Sadducees and 'Lawyers' (Matthew 22:15ff; 23ff; and 35ff). Paul's apologetic activity is described in the closing chapters of the Book of Acts, in which he undertook a defense before the mob in Jerusalem (Acts 22:1ff), before the council (Acts 23:1ff), before Felix (Acts 24:1ff) and during his hearing before Festus and Agrippa (Acts 26:1ff). Echoes of this same motif appear in his Epistle, notably in the Corinthian correspondence (I Cor. 9; II Cor. 13) and in the Epistle to the Galatians (Gal. 1 & 2). To this we would certainly add his masterly apologetic discourse at the Areopagus in Athens (Acts 17:22-31).

One of the discernible forms of apologetic activity in the New Testament is that which centers in the use of Old Testament materials by New Testament writers. It goes without saying that the Evangelist Matthew makes the most conspicuous use of materials from the Hebrew Scriptures in his Gospel. Some thirty times the formula, with slight variations, occurs there: ". . . that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by . . ." (Matt. 1:22; 2:15; 2:23; 13:14; etc.). The purpose of this and similar usages was, of course, to support the claim of Christianity against objectors, (in this case perhaps non-believing Jews). The

manner in which Scripture was employed to this purpose, and the shift of the mode of employment of it is discussed by Father Barnabas Lindars;<sup>2</sup> considerations of time forbid any detailed consideration of this more minute question.

While the use of the Old Testament for apologetic purposes by New Testament writers is most visible in St. Matthew's Gospel, the Epistle to the Hebrews is in some respects even more noteworthy for its reasoned employment of Old Testament motifs with a purpose to persuasion. A. B. Bruce has called this Epistle "the first apology for Christianity."<sup>3</sup> The writer seems to have been in correspondence with Christians of Jewish origin who stood in peril of slipping quietly away from their Christian faith and back into Judaism. Against the tempting possibilities that Old Testament faith was being abandoned, that suffering and death were unworthy of a divine Messiah, and that the lack of ritual in the Christian Church represented a loss of vital visibilities in Judaism, the author of *Hebrews* made a three-fold defense. First, far from losing the essential features of the divinely given Faith channelled to the Patriarchs and Fathers, Christianity was shown not only to fulfill the inner core of Judaic religion, but to surpass all of its usages. Likewise, the sufferings of Christ were, far from being an argument against the dignity of the Messiah, the normal expectation of the Hebrew prophetic message. Further, our author pointed out that while the ritual system of Tabernacle and Temple were no longer observed, they have found a far more satisfying fulfilment in the priestly work of our Lord.

Thus the apologetic thrust of the Epistle to the Hebrews continues that which is both implicit and explicit in the Gospels. It carries that thrust further by showing that Christianity is the perfect Faith, fulfilling and surpassing all that the "Law and Prophets" contained and prefigured. The use of the a *fortiori* form of argumentation was 'a natural' to this mode of apologetic.

Much more ought to be said at the point of the employment of the apologetic method by writers of the New Testament. For a careful survey of the methodology of the several New Testament writers, the reader is invited to note especially the section "Apologetics in the New Testament" in Fr. Avery Dulles' work, *Theological Resources: A History of Apologetics*.<sup>4</sup> The following is an excerpt from the conclusions which Father Dulles reaches:

While none of the NT writings is directly and professedly apologetical, nearly all of them contain reflections of the Church's efforts to exhibit the credibility of its message and to answer the obvious objections that would have risen in the minds of adversaries, prospective converts, and candid believers. Parts of the

NT—such as the major Pauline letters, Hebrews, the four Gospels, and Acts—reveal an apologetical preoccupation in the minds of the authors themselves.<sup>5</sup>

It seems clear, in the light of the foregoing, that the apologetic mood is pervasive of the writings of the New Testament. It should be added that the resurrection of our Lord occupied a place of unique importance in the overall New Testament apologetic thrust. This event seemed to the New Testament writers, especially Paul, as the crowning manifestation of God's mighty and supernatural activity within human history. As such, it formed a major point of reference and appeal as the Church stood at the cutting edge of history, tremulous but confident that it possessed a Faith worthy of universal acceptance.

## II

The first two centuries of Church history were marked by a continuation of the apologetic activity begun by our Lord and by the Apostles. Two sets of circumstances called this forth. First, the Church faced, upon repeated occasions, persecution at the hands of the Imperial power—persecutions of varied fierceness, which at times decimated the Church and at most times during the second and third centuries formed a living threat to all who professed to be part of The Way. The second set of circumstances came to the fore as forms of teaching incompatible with the Christian Evangel were advanced within the Christian body (e.g., heresies). Thus was shaped the twofold character of early Christian apologetics.

Chief among the Greek apologists of the ante-Nicene period were Justin, called The Martyr, (died 166) and Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons (140–202). While the causes of the Imperial persecutions were many, one causative factor was the slander directed against believers by both Jews and pagans. Another factor was, we feel certain, the general uneasiness which pervaded the Empire as a result of the constant incursions of the Germanic barbarians from the north and the east. This led to the psychological phenomenon of scapegoating. It was a concern of both Justin and Irenaeus, not only to refute such charges as those of cannibalism and of sexual license among Christians, but to convince the Imperial power of the reliability of Christian believers as citizens. High officials were assured that the presence of Christians within the prevailing society served only beneficial purposes. The objective was, of course, to secure civil toleration for the Christian body.

As the Christian Church came to include many persons who were educated in the science of the time, early Greek apologists sought to relate the Christian Evangel to the prevailing knowledge of the age. Justin sought to show that Christian truth, particularly as it centered about



the teaching of the *Logos*, carried forward to completion the major themes of Greek thought. In this, Justin laid the groundwork for much of later apologetics, in pointing out to objectors of all levels the essential affinities between Christianity and the best of prevailing thought.

Irenaeus developed an apologetic primarily designed to deal with the increasing currency of teachings which threatened the primary teachings of Christianity. His work *Against the Heresies* is not only a defense of Christianity; but it is as well a major source of information concerning heretical movements, notably Gnosticism. Tertullian (c. 160-245) likewise did an important work in his *Apologetic* and his two books *To the Nations*. The latter was a well-reasoned treatise in defense of the Christian message against the prevailing paganism. To the list we might add his work *On Idolatry*. His works suggest a dual form of opposition, namely the bitterness of the Jewish communities toward the Christians, and the mocking attitude of the pagan thinkers of the period. Tertullian is brilliant in his application of the principles of Roman law and Roman justice to the defense of Christianity.<sup>6</sup> Incidentally, the Jews were not ignored in this period; Justin addressed an apologetic to them under the title of *Dialogue with Trypho the Jew*, in which, in the spirit of the Epistle to the Hebrews, he points out that the New Covenant has abrogated the Old, and urges Jews to turn to Christ as the source of the completion of their ancient faith.

Origen (185-254), usually regarded to be the greatest of the Alexandrian apologetics, undertook a defense of the Christian faith in terms of a head-on refutation of the prevailing currents of pagan thought. Drawing upon the insights of his great teacher Clement of Alexandria (c. 150-214), Origen sought to elaborate a philosophical base for the several doctrines of Christianity. Unfortunately many of his writings have not survived. We do possess his major work, *On Principles* (in a Latin translation and of course his *Contra Celsum*).

It is significant that Origen's greatest apologetic work was elicited by the ablest criticism of Christianity which paganism could mount, that by the Platonist Celsus. If one were to paraphrase a homely phrase, it might read: "It takes a Platonist to catch a Platonist." In any case, it was in his engagement with Celsus that Origen produced "the keenest and most convincing defense of the Christian faith that the ancient world brought forth, and one fully worthy of the greatness of the controversy."<sup>7</sup>

It must be said that with Origen, Christian apologetics reached a new level of clarity and a new stage of approach to the subject. He no longer plead with authorities for mere toleration, but took the counteroffensive against the prevailing currents of thought. He, above all his col-

leagues, knew well the range of pagan thought and could speak as an authority in his own right, and not merely as a defensive thinker. He was a maker of synthesis by which he demonstrated to the mind of his day that the Christian message not only included all that is valid in pagan systems, but also embodies and engenders a wisdom more comprehensive and profound than any rival religion or any philosophy not resting on revelation.<sup>8</sup> In this sense, Origen was a creator of an apologetic model; as such he summed up in himself the best of ante-Nicene apologetics.

### III

With Aurelius Augustine (354-430) there began a new era, not only in biblical interpretation, but as well, in theological discourse and in Christian apologetics. If it be said that Origen moved far in the direction of an apologetic model, only reaching it at the end of his work, it may be said that with equal plausibility that Augustine made from the beginning a systematic use of such a model.

It should be noted at the outset that Augustine imposed no logical order upon his writings. Many of them overlap, and later ones frequently develop or make explicit ideas only implicit in earlier ones. The major writings which concern apologetics are four: *The City of God*, *The Confessions*, *On the Trinity*, and *The True Religion*.

As a germinal thinker, Augustine's writings not only introduce new answers to old questions, but also project new forms of both methodology and content. The range of his researches encouraged this. He not only knew Plato and the Neo-Platonists as did Origen, but he also knew Aristotle, as well as both the original and the later Hellenistic forms of Stoicism and Epicureanism. He appears in the role of one who will meet all comers—not in an attitude of braggadocio, but from a posture of deep conviction of the validity and finality of the Christian faith.

His apologetic model concerned itself with three major and interlocking problems: 1. the nature of knowledge; 2. the relation of knowing to theology; and 3. the relation of God to the cosmos. These he treats in their interrelationships. Basic to his epistemology is his belief that all mental activity is from God. As he says in *The True Religion*, God is "the unchangeable substance which is above the rational mind."<sup>9</sup> In other words, knowledge of God is integral to any human knowledge. By cultivating, therefore, a knowledge of God, one will find illumination of the mind which will affect affirmatively all knowing.<sup>10</sup> Thus faith and reason are held to be reciprocal in activity. For this reason, Augustine would contend, the existence of eternal ideas in the mind leads logically to the affirmation that God exists.



NOT TO BE USED WITHOUT COPYRIGHT PERMISSION  
OF ASBURY THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



# First Fruits

THE ACADEMIC OPEN PRESS OF ASBURY SEMINARY

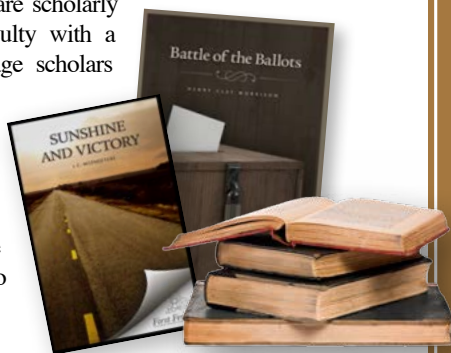
## About First Fruits Press

Under the auspices of B. L. Fisher Library, First Fruits Press is an online publishing arm of Asbury Theological Seminary. The goal is to make academic material freely available to scholars worldwide, and to share rare and valuable resources that would not otherwise be available for research. First Fruits publishes in five distinct areas: heritage materials, academic books, papers, books, and journals.

In the Journals section, back issues of The Asbury Journal will be digitized and so made available to a global audience. At the same time, we are excited to be working with several faculty members on developing professional, peer-reviewed, online journals that would be made freely available.

Much of this endeavor is made possible by the recent gift of the Kabis III scanner, one of the best available. The scanner can produce more than 2,900 pages an hour and features a special book cradle that is specifically designed to protect rare and fragile materials. The materials it produces will be available in ebook format, easy to download and search.

First Fruits Press will enable the library to share scholarly resources throughout the world, provide faculty with a platform to share their own work and engage scholars without the difficulties often encountered by print publishing. All the material will be freely available for online users, while those who wish to purchase a print copy for their libraries will be able to do so. First Fruits Press is just one way the B. L. Fisher Library is fulfilling the global vision of Asbury Theological Seminary to spread scriptural holiness throughout the world.



[asbury.to/firstfruits](http://asbury.to/firstfruits)



**ASBURY**  
theological  
SEMINARY

asburyseminary.edu  
800.2ASBURY