

NOTES

CULLMANN'S NEW TESTAMENT CHRISTOLOGY: AN APPRAISAL

Once in a great while, it is a reviewer's good fortune to be assigned a book which he might wish to have written himself. Oscar Cullmann's study of *NT* Christology has provided the present reviewer with just such a happy experience.¹ The systematic theologian will, I believe, find that this balanced synthesis of the *NT* data regarding the person and work of Jesus Christ provides him with the scriptural background for the treatise on the Incarnate Word and the redemption, and—what is of paramount importance—with a competent introduction to the characteristically Semitic approach of the *NT* authors to the doctrine of the hypostatic union. One can only hope that an English translation of the book will soon make its appearance.

Dr. Cullmann is resolved to remain as faithful as he can to the *NT* picture of Jesus. Such fidelity is evident in his painstaking exegesis of key texts (frequently graced with new but sound insights), in his conscientious striving to eschew the almost unconscious *parti pris* produced in the minds of most modern critics by the classic works of Wrede, Bousset, Reitzenstein, Bultmann, etc., and in his determination to be guided by the four great moments of the Christian *Heilsgeschichte* in his division of the subject matter.

Briefly, the methodology consists in an investigation of the most important titles given by *NT* writers to Christ, relative to (1) His earthly life, (2) His parousiac function, (3) His glorified existence, contemporaneous with the Church, and (4) His pre-existent state *ab aeterno*. The *OT*, late Jewish, and Hellenistic semantic background of each of these designations is reviewed. The question, whether the title had been applied to Himself by Jesus, is raised and answered. Finally, the use of the title in the various *NT* writers is discussed.

One is grateful to Cullmann for his repeated insistence that the *NT* Christological question concerns itself with Jesus' person and work inasmuch as it is related to the divine *Heilsgeschichte*. The *problématique* invented by later conceptualist philosophies is quite as un-Hebraic and un-

¹ Oscar Cullmann, *Die Christologie des Neuen Testaments* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1957, pp. viii + 352). Since completing this study of the German edition, I have received the French version, *Christologie du Nouveau Testament* (Neuchâtel-Paris: Delachaux & Niestlé, 1958, pp. 300), which, as far as I can see, is identical in every respect with the German text.

biblical as it is undeniably Greek. Without some sort of induction into what he may consider the Bible's "unmetaphysical" viewpoint, the Scholastic theologian can easily be betrayed into thinking that the Christological problem was never really solved (perhaps never clearly posed) until the Council of Chalcedon.

Cullmann's book is remarkable by reason of the fact that, despite (or perhaps because of) its carefully analytical procedure, by which one Christological title after another is systematically treated, the result is not a *Reihe* of dissociated articles, in the manner of a lexicon. What emerges is a coherent picture of Jesus Christ. The secret, of course, is the author's fine feeling for the values inherent in the historical process which constitutes *NT* salvation-history. This enables him to unfold for the reader the significant moments in the genetic process by which the Christians of the Apostolic Age arrived at the complex and mysterious answer to the one question which had concerned them from the first days of their discipleship: who is Jesus?

JESUS' EARTHLY LIFE

The Christological titles relative to Jesus' earthly career are found by Cullmann to be those of the Prophet, the Suffering Servant of God, and the High Priest. The idea expressed in the phrase, the Prophet, is that of an eschatological prophet, bearer of God's definitive revelation given through the Mosaic Law. It appears in the literature of late Judaism and derives ultimately from Dt 18:15. Originally thought of as a forerunner rather of Yahweh Himself than of the Messiah, he is later envisaged as a precursor of the Christ. While, in the *NT*, the earlier sections of Acts (3:22; 7:37) apply the Deuteronomy text to Jesus, elsewhere it is the Baptist, not Jesus (an exception will be made for the Fourth Gospel), who is considered as the Prophet. The Synoptics make it clear that Jesus Himself bestowed the title on John. The fourth Evangelist, who applies every honorific title to Christ, thinks rather of Jesus as the Prophet (cf. John's refusal of the title, Jn 1:21, and the sharp contrast of Jesus with Moses, Jn 1:17; 6:32).

This portrayal of Jesus as the eschatological prophet, Cullmann feels, popular in primitive Jewish Christian tradition but later abandoned as unsuitable, survived only in heretical Jewish Christianity (*Gospel to the Hebrews*, the Pseudo-Clementine *Kerygmata Petrou*) and was later to be exploited in Islam. Its undoubted advantages (freedom from the political overtones present in the concept of Messiah; inclusion of the idea of the Parousia, which makes it unique among primitive Christological titles) are outweighed by its inability to convey the notion of Jesus' redemptive

death and its radically eschatological orientation (the Prophet is prodromic of the end of history), irreconcilable with the predominant *NT* conception of Christ as center of the *Heilsgeschichte*.

Here one might well ask whether Cullmann has not compounded two themes which, already in the *OT*, appear as distinct: the notion of a mysterious precursor, ultimately identified as *Elias redivivus* (Mal 3:1 ff.; 3:22-23; Sir 48:1-11) and fulfilled in John; and that of the Prophet typified by Moses, combined with that of the *Ebed Yahweh* (Is 42:3-4, 6), and realized in Christ. It would appear that this latter conception is not far from the mind of the first Evangelist (cf. Mt 2:20, and the central section of the Sermon on the Mount). It is perhaps even more basic to the concept of salvation presented by the fourth Gospel, where the New Covenant is a dominant theme. Moreover, if, as it appears to be, Acts 3:26 is a Christological development based on Dt 18:15, we are dealing here with a primitive and exceedingly important depiction, not of the earthly but the glorified contemporary Christ (as I pointed out some years ago²); and we are forced to conclude that this conception of the exalted Christ as the Prophet finds a permanent place in *NT* Christology (cf. 2 Cor 3:17; Rom 8:9-11; the Emmanuel conception of Mt 1:23; 28:20; the office of the "other Paraclete" in John, etc.).

The discussion of Jesus as the Suffering Servant is a most valuable one, and the author's suggestion that this aspect of Christology might be utilized to better advantage in modern treatises on the redemption should be fully endorsed. The identity of the Deutero-Isaian Servant remains a *quaestio disputata* among scholars, as does the association of this figure in late Judaism with the notion of the Messiah. Two characteristics of the *Ebed Yahweh* theme made it a popular vehicle in apostolic Christianity for demonstrating the *OT* prediction of Jesus' redemptive work: the Servant's vicarious death and his mediatorial role in the Covenant. While Jesus did not perhaps assume explicitly the title of *Ebed Yahweh*, all four Evangelists testify that He did think of His own death as a redemptive act benefiting all humanity, and He connected His mission upon earth with the renewal of the Covenant, as is shown in the theophany at His baptism. It is gratifying to see that Cullmann considers authentic those logia of Jesus where these ideas are expressed (Mk 2:18 ff.; Lk 13:31 ff.; Mt 12:39 f.; Mk 8:31; 9:31; 10:33; Mk 12:1 ff.; Mk 10:45).

The conception of Jesus as the Suffering Servant is traced back to the earliest period of the primitive preaching. Cullmann considers that the

² "The Conception of Salvation in Primitive Christian Preaching," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 18 (1956) 244-45.

references to it in Acts 3-4 originated with St. Peter. The Johannine concept of Jesus as "Lamb of God" (Jn 1:29) is likewise an ancient variation on this theme. Here might be added Père Mollat's suggestion³ that Jn 19:36 is a compound citation of Ex 12:46 and Ps 34:21, the latter being an allusion to the Servant. Other interesting *NT* developments of the Servant Christology are to be found in Lk 24:26, 46, where the theme is integrated into the Paschal Mystery, Jn 12:37 ff., which connects it with Isaiah's inaugural vision, and Heb 9:27 f., which relates it to the Parousia.⁴

Cullmann rightly observes that the Servant theme does not figure directly in Paul's most characteristic Christology: 1 Cor 15:3 and Phil 2:6 ff. derive from earlier Palestinian traditions. At the same time, he perhaps over-emphasizes the allusions to the *Ebed Yahweh* in Rom 5:12 ff. Is not this rather the *locus classicus* for the fully enucleated Pauline New-Adam Christology, in the creation of which Paul has borrowed but the single note of obedience from the Palestinian Servant motif? I venture to suggest that Paul deliberately abandoned the Servant Christology because in it the Servant's exaltation is regarded as a kind of personal reward, rather than (as in Paul's view of Christ's resurrection) as an integral, indeed essential, moment in the divine plan of redemption. Indeed, Cullmann does not appear to have considered the values which the apostolic writers undoubtedly found in the Deutero-Isaian picture of the *glorified* Servant. He does note, however, that it is chiefly in liturgical texts that the portrayal of Christ as the Servant tended to survive (*Didache*, 1 *Clement*, Phil 2:6 ff.), and he asserts that this is due to a recollection that the Last Supper constituted the decisive moment when Jesus revealed Himself to His own as the *Ebed Yahweh*. This excellent observation might be further established by a study of the very primitive community prayer preserved in Acts 4:24 ff., as also of the Apocalypse's theme of the "Lamb that has been slain," in connection with which its author has recorded several liturgical hymns.

The title of High Priest, so closely related to that of the Servant of God, is applied to Jesus' earthly career principally in Hebrews (cf. chap. 7; 6:21; 7:25; 9:24, 28). In late Judaism, speculation on texts like Gn 14:18 ff. and Ps 110:4 began to invest the Messianic King with the high-priestly dignity (cf. Qumrân's "teacher of justice" and the two Messiahs mentioned in the *Testimony of the Twelve Patriarchs*). Cullmann attributes this hope in an eschatological high priest who would reform Israel's religious life to an awareness of the degradation of the high-priestly office in the Judaism of the Greco-Roman period.

³ D. Mollat, *L'Évangile . . . de saint Jean* (Paris, 1953) p. 190, note a.

⁴ "The Theme of the Servant of Yahweh in Primitive Christian Soteriology, and Its Transposition by St. Paul," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 16 (1954) 402, 404, 409.

If Jesus did not personally assume the title, it is implicit in His opposition to the official cult and priesthood of His day (Mt 12:6; Mk 14:58 par.; Jn 2:19), and He does cite Ps 110 in connection with the concept of the Messiah (Mk 12:35 par.), thus indirectly applying it to Himself. His final testimony before the High Priest (Mk 14:62) would indicate, from the context, that He considered it His mission to bring the priesthood to perfection. The Johannine literature displays some interest in Jesus' high-priestly office (cf. Jn 17; insistence on Jesus' sinlessness: Jn 8:46; 1 Jn 3:5, 7; Jn 19:23; Ap 1:13).

JESUS' PAROUSIAC FUNCTION

The *NT* describes Jesus' future, eschatological function chiefly by means of two titles: Messiah and Son of Man.

In Judaism, according to Cullmann, the concept of the Messiah stemmed from the divine promise to the Davidic dynasty (2 S 7:12 ff.): a descendant of David as "God's Anointed" (= Messiah, or Christ) would inherit the throne and bring salvation at some future date. The extinction of the Davidic line during the Babylonian captivity heightened this hope. The Messiah came, in late Judaism, to be envisaged as a political and martial figure (Ps Sol 17:21 contains for Cullmann the classic expression of the Jewish Messianic ideal). While Cullmann does advert to the Qumrân notion of two Messiahs of Aaron (priestly) and of Israel (political), he has sharpened the Jewish Messianic notion in which the political and warlike note predominates. Accordingly, he insists that Jesus habitually displayed the greatest reserve towards any attempt to confer the title Messiah upon Himself. At best, His answer to those who seek to call Him by it is neither yes nor no: the High Priest (Mk 14:61 f. par.), Pilate (Mk 15:2 par.), Peter at Caesarea Philippi (Mk 8:27 ff.), who is immediately rebuked for his "You are the Messiah" with Jesus' "Get out of my sight, you Satan." At His temptations in the desert, Jesus unconditionally rejected the prestidigitator-politico Messianic ideal proposed by the devil.

The mediatorial function underlying the title of Messiah is one that can be applied to Jesus, e.g., its highlighting of the continuity between the *OT* vocation of the Chosen People and Jesus' mission in which it finds its fulfilment (a mission of which, as Cullmann admits, Jesus was clearly conscious). The designation "Son of David," which has some affinity with the title of Messiah, was not directly refused by Jesus, although He rejected the allied idea of political kingship.

Paradoxically enough, the primitive Church constantly gave Jesus this title which in His public life He had carefully avoided; and in the late-Apostolic Age, "Christ" is used as a sort of surname, its Jewish Messianic

content being forgotten. In Palestine itself, the Jewish Christians gave Jesus this title in their discussions with the Jews, in order to justify their faith in Jesus, to stress the continuity between *OT* and *NT*, and to explain His Davidic dominion as a reign, primarily, over the new *qahal* of Israel, which they were aware they constituted.

Cullmann devotes some sixty pages to the title, Son of Man, and this section contains the most original contribution in his entire book. He asserts (vs. Lietzmann) that the expression simply means "Man." In late Judaism, the Son of Man conception assumed two forms: (1) that of the heavenly Man, now concealed and scheduled to appear at the end of time (Daniel, Enoch, 4 Esdras); (2) the heavenly, "ideal" Man (Philo, *Kerygmata Petrou*). In Dn 7:13, the figure is simply a symbol of "the saints of the Most High"; in later Jewish apocalyptic (4 Esdr 13; Ethiopic Enoch), it is conceived as an individual. The pagan myth of an *Urmensch*, which parallels to some extent the Son of Man concept, proved difficult of assimilation by Jewish thought, since the biblical Adam is clearly source of sin for mankind. An attempt at a solution was made in Ethiopic Enoch by soft-pedaling Adam's fall, sin's origin being attributed to the angels (cf. Gn 6:1). The Gnostic Pseudo-Clementine writings categorically deny Adam's sin, Eve being the principle of evil. Philo Judaeus (*Leg. alleg.* 1, 31 f.; *De opif. mundi* 134 ff.) distinguished, in the two creation accounts of Genesis, between the formation of the "heavenly Man" to God's image and the creation of the "earthly Man," who was the primordial sinner. Paul would appear to refute this Philonian exegesis in 1 Cor 15:46.

Assumed by Jesus Himself in preference to all other honorific titles, "Son of Man" was used by Him to designate either His eschatological mission (Lk 17:22 ff.; Mt 24:27, 37 ff.; Mk 8:38; Mk 14:62 par.) or His earthly work, where it is combined with the *Ebed Yahweh* conception (Mk 10:45; the prophecies of the Passion). The novelty of the term "Son of Man" in the mouth of Jesus is seen in the combining of this *Hoheitsaussage* with the Servant humiliation motif.

On Cullmann's view, there is no "Son of Man" Christology in the Synoptics, who prefer the Messiah Christology. One wonders, however, whether there is not a hint of it operative in the Marcan portrayal of Jesus' temptations (Mk 1:13), as also in the Lucan genealogy, where the ascent is traced back to "Adam who was of God" (Lk 3:38). E. Lohmeyer considers Galilee to be the place of origin of the "Son of Man" Christology. Cullmann conjectures, with some plausibility, that it was a creation of "the Hellenists" who were members of the primitive Jerusalem community.

While Paul does not employ the expression "Son of Man," he employs a

phrase whose meaning coincides with it: "the second, or last, Adam" (1 Cor 15:45 ff.), or the "coming Adam" (Rom 5:14). By a competent discussion of 1 Cor 15:45 ff., Rom 5:12 ff., and Phil 2:5-11, Cullmann shows how Paul successfully solved the problem, unsatisfactorily discussed by Judaism, of the relation of "Son of Man" to Adam, by connecting it with an historical person, Jesus Christ. This Pauline insight, as Cullmann appositely observes, is a proof of Paul's fidelity to the thought of Jesus, who had already applied the title to Himself. Like Jesus also, Paul connects "Son of Man" with *Ebed Yahweh*. Moreover, Paul takes up the doctrine of the heavenly Man, but (vs. Philo) denies the role to Adam, applying it to Jesus who comes to expiate Adam's sin. Jesus succeeds, where Adam failed, in being the Image of God, since He is the propitiation for our sins. Thus Paul underscores what was only implicit in the Jewish "Son of Man" concept: the vicarious function. Paul also handles the subjective aspects of the redemption by means of this same theme: cf. his "old man," "new man" (Col 3:9 f.; Gal 3:27; Rom 13:14; Eph 4:24). Phil 2:5 ff. adds the idea that the pre-existent Christ is already the heavenly Man and Image of God. His *Gottesebnbildlichkeit* is revealed through the obedience of the Incarnation and of the cross.

Mention of this Philippians hymn (Cullmann accepts it as pre-Pauline) reminds us that the "Son of Man" Christology did not originate with Paul. Acts 7:56 connects the title with Stephen; and Cullmann thinks this Christology was first adumbrated by "the Hellenists," Jewish Christians of non-Palestinian origin. It was also developed by the author of the fourth Gospel, where the function of Judge (Jn 5:27) belongs to the "Son of Man," as does the feeding of His disciples upon His own glorified flesh (Jn 6:27, 53). Moreover, if one accepts the variant reading in Jn 9:35, this title was employed in early baptismal catecheses. Further traces of this Christology appear in Ap 1:13; 14:14; Heb 1:3; 2:5 ff.

JESUS' GLORIFIED EXISTENCE

The titles *Kyrios* (Lord) and Saviour express the contemporary relations to the Church of the exalted Christ. The new Christian signification of *Kyrios* as applied to Jesus derives from the belief in His *sessio ad dexteram Patris*. If, like the expression Saviour, *Kyrios* underwent considerable development in Greek-speaking churches, still, again like Saviour, *Kyrios* originated in Palestinian communities. Hence (vs. Bousset) *Kyrios* as a divine name for Christ was not an invention of Hellenizing Christianity. It is gratifying to see Cullmann refute the theory that only with Luke and

Paul did the word receive a meaning it had never had in Aramaic Christian circles.

While, in Oriental-Hellenistic religions, *Kyrios* was a divine name (as it later became also in the Roman emperor-cult), it is to Judaism we must look for the prehistory of the term as applied to Christ. The Hebrew equivalent is *Adōn* (the Aramaic *Mar*), words signifying possessor or master in ordinary usage. *Adōn*, however, acquired a sacral meaning, and it was read in the Bible for the ineffable tetragram, Yahweh. In Greek-speaking Jewish milieus, *Kyrios* (the LXX rendering of Yahweh) also acquired a sacral meaning. As regards *Mar*, however, there is no evidence of the same pre-Christian development in meaning from a term of respect to an absolute sense as a divine title (although it was used as an honorific designation for kings and the emperor). We do, however, possess proof of the development of *Mar* in Aramaic-speaking Christian circles. *Mari*, *Mari* as an honorific appellation was used towards Jesus in His earthly life (Mk 7:21), while in the Palestinian Christian liturgy the Eucharistic acclamation, *Maran atha* (1 Cor 16:22), was addressed to the glorified Christ as a fully divine title. This phrase, Cullmann insists, was a prayer, not a creed: it means "Lord, come," not "The Lord is coming" (cf. its translation as imperative in Ap 22:20; *Didache* 10, 6). The ancient Aramaic credal formulae were invariably translated into Greek (cf. Phil 2:11; 1 Cor 12:3; Rom 10:9); prayers, not always (cf. *Amen*, *Abba*).

It was, moreover, as the glorified, contemporary Lord that Jesus was honored after His ascension in the primitive Palestinian churches, and not merely as the future, parousiac "One who is coming." Indeed, their intense expectation of His final return can only be explained as a result of His resurrection and of the conviction that "the last times" had already been inaugurated. *Maran atha* was then a Eucharistic prayer (Christ's contemporary Lordship was experienced at the Eucharist; cf. 1 Cor 11:23), not a mere expression of a purely eschatological hope. Hence this liturgical use of *Mar* was already equivalent of the Greek *Kyrios* as an expression of faith in Christ as God.

Paul gives the theological basis for this contemporary Lordship of Christ (cf. Rom 10:9; Phil 2:6 ff.; 1 Cor 12:3), coextensive in time with the era of the Church, although "spatially" it includes Christ's dominion over the whole universe and the powers behind the state. The Church is conscious of Christ's Lordship, while the rest of the universe does not recognize it.

Curiously enough, Cullmann refuses to identify the millennium of the Apocalypse with the period of the Church's history, because he believes that the thousand years' reign belongs "chronologically to the *Endakt* of this

Lordship of Christ, which begins with His return." I should like to suggest that this famous *crux interpretum* (Ap 20:4-6) is the result of the inability of the Semitic mind to conceive final salvation without a bodily resurrection (our Scholastic concept of *anima subsistens sine corpore* would be unintelligible to the Semite). Since the author of the Apocalypse is convinced that the martyrs already enjoy the reward, in heaven, of their heroic confession (Ap 7:9-17), he is forced to *postulate* a "first resurrection." We see Paul make a similar postulate in Eph 2:5-6 when he attempts to conceive salvation (which in his earlier letters is invariably eschatological) as a present possession of the Christian in this life: if "saved" now, the Christian must be raised and seated already at the Father's right hand with Christ.

Jesus is called Saviour, a term often applied to God in the *OT* and in those *NT* books which come from Hellenistic milieus (John, 1 John, Luke, the Pastorals). The Hellenistic usage of the word, however, is of no help in explaining this title of Jesus. *Sōtēr* was applied to Aesculapius, god of medicine; in the mystery cults, *sōtēria* meant rescue from death and from material existence. The fact that *Sōtēr* is given to Jesus by those authors who apply it to God the Father shows that we are dealing with an instance, frequent enough in the *NT*, where an *OT* title for God is given to Christ. While the name Saviour itself would scarcely have been used of Jesus in Aramaic Christian circles (it would be identical with the theophoric name, Jesus), still it is clear that these Palestinian Christians were quite conscious that the name of Jesus denotes one of His primary functions (cf. Mt 1:21; Lk 1:31 ff.).

JESUS' PRE-EXISTENT STATE

The *NT* titles for the pre-existent Christ, according to Cullmann, are the *Logos*, the Son of God, and even God. It is only in the Johannine literature that *Logos* is a designation for Christ (Prologue; 1 Jn 1:1; Ap 19:13). The conception of Jesus as divine Wisdom incarnate is, however, found in Paul and in the Synoptics.

Logos in Heraclitus, the Stoic philosophers, and Platonism is a designation for the world law. While this is an abstraction, not a hypostasis, still it was not without influence upon later Jewish personifications in which *logos* figures. Probably, too, there was some influence by the Gnostic mythological conceptions (which envisage the *logos* as mediator) upon this subsequent speculation.

However, the Johannine literature is, like that of Qumrân, related to a Palestinian syncretistic Judaism. Hence it is faulty scientific method to seek its inspiration merely in Oriental-Hellenistic *logos* doctrines, while

ignoring its debt to the *OT*. Cullmann's view of this semantic development is a balanced one: "John's Gospel did not derive the doctrine of a common, nonspecifically Christian revelation from the widespread *logos* concept: on the contrary, it has completely subordinated the extra- and pre-Christian *Logosbegriff* to the unique revelation of God in Jesus of Nazareth, and so has made it entirely new."

While the *Sitz im Leben* for the *Kyrios* title applied to Christ in an absolute sense was the Christian liturgy, the *Sitz im Leben* for the *Logos* designation is Christian theological reflection (*Logos* was applied to Jesus only after His death). Doubtless John was helped by Jewish-Hellenistic speculations on *logos* in answering the question "Who is Jesus?", but what is new in his Gospel is the taking of Jesus' life as the *point d'appui* (to understand the Prologue, we must keep in mind John's assertion that "The *Logos* became man"; v. 14). Always in the forefront of John's mind is the truth that, while Jesus brings divine revelation by His preaching (*logos*), it is paramount to realize that Jesus *is* Himself the revelation (*Logos*). This, says Cullmann, is the *trait d'union* between the abstraction, *Logos*, and the incarnate Son. John's novel use of a Hellenistic expression does not imply that the Greeks, in speaking of *logos*, had any real knowledge of Christ. Rather, they spoke of *logos* without knowing the divine revelation of the incarnate *Logos*.

The title "Son of God" given to Jesus in the *NT* expresses the unique character of the relation between the Father and the Son. Still the biblical viewpoint is not that of later Greek theologies which discuss the "substantial equality of Jesus with the Father" or the union of two natures in one divine Person.

The Oriental and Hellenistic background of this term does not throw any light on *NT* usage, since it did not influence it. In the Near East, "Son of God" was a royal title (cf. the *divi filius* given later Roman emperors): Hellenism applied it to the *theoi andres* or thaumaturges (essentially a polytheistic conception). In the *OT* the expression designates the people of Israel (Ex 4:22 f.; Os 11:1; Is 1:2; 30:1; 63; Jer 3:22), chosen by God for a special mission and owing Him absolute obedience. It is employed of the king (2 S 7:14; Ps 2:7; 89:27) and of the angels (Gn 6:2; Jb 1:6; 2:1; 38:7) with much the same meaning. There is no *OT* text where the term is clearly applied to the Messiah. This is hard to explain, given the association of the Messianic idea with that of the Davidic king. However, "Son of God" in the *OT* does not signify special powers or anything like a substantial relation to God. Indeed, the title applied to Jesus in the Synoptic Gospels

appears not to be an inference from His Messianic dignity, but represents a different aspect of Christ from that indicated by Messiah. Moreover (vs. Bousset and Bultmann), the use of this *NT* title was not an invention of a Hellenized Christianity: the Synoptics do not employ "Son of God" to indicate Jesus' miraculous powers but His unique relation with the Father and His filial obedience.

Did Jesus apply the title to Himself, or are the logia in which He does so merely a creation of the community? Cullmann's view is that they are authentic sayings of Jesus. Where others apply the term to Christ in the Synoptics, some special supernatural knowledge is indicated or implied (Mt 16:16; Mt 4:3, 6; Mk 3:11). Cullmann's main argument for admitting that the *NT* use of the title originated with Jesus Himself is that neither the *OT* nor Jewish literature can provide a sufficient reason to explain why the community might later describe Jesus as "Son of God."

The sense of this title in Jesus' mouth indicates His awareness of an utterly unique relation with the Father. Two aspects of this consciousness appear in the Synoptic texts: Jesus' filial obedience in realizing the Father's plan of salvation, and His knowledge that His relation to the Father is very different from that of the prophets. Indeed, Mt 11:25 ff. indicates Jesus' awareness of His own pre-existence.

"Son of God" is applied to Christ in the most primitive Christian creeds and earliest baptismal liturgies (cf. Acts 8:36-38; 1 Jn 4:15; 5:5; Heb 4:14; Rom 1:3-4). Paul stresses the perfection of Jesus' obedience in carrying out God's *Heilsplan*. Paramount in his conception of grace as man's adoptive filiation, the divine Sonship of Christ is also prominent in Paul's *eikōn* theology. Mark, who respects Jesus' own discretion in the use of "Son of God" (Mk 1:1; 15:39), is profoundly aware that it expresses the ultimate secret of Jesus' Person and work. With Matthew and Luke (the infancy narratives), an attempt is made to explain the "how" of Jesus' Sonship. Cullmann denies that their doctrine of the virginal (conception and) birth of Jesus expresses this idea. As Père Benoit remarked in his recension of this book, "this is one of the rare instances where he [Cullmann] appears to reject, with perhaps some illogicality, a formal affirmation of Scripture."⁶ John, aware that he writes after the coming of the Holy Spirit, proclaims Jesus' divine Sonship and insists more than any other Evangelist upon His obedience and unity with the Father. Although Cullmann does not appear to make a point of it, "Son of God" in the fourth Gospel is used solely of Christ, never of men. This hard and fast rule explains, as I have noted else-

⁶ Pierre Benoit, in *Revue biblique* 65 (1958) 274.

where, the omission (Jn 10:35) of the second half of Ps 82:6, despite the fact that it is essential to Jesus' argument against the Jews.⁶ The other *NT* loci which employ "Son of God" are Ap 2:18, Acts 9:20 and 13:33, and Hebrews *passim*.

While Jesus did not call Himself God during His earthly life (hence the Synoptics do not mention this title), there are *NT* authors who do so (Jn 1:1; 20:28; 1:18, where Cullmann reads *monogenēs Theos*; 1 Jn 5:20; Heb 1:8-9). Some Pauline texts equivalently call Christ God (1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:6 ff.; Col 1:15; 2:9); and this is more probably the sense of Rom 9:5 and Col 2:2 (in which *τῆς Θεοῦ Χριστοῦ* is considered the original reading). This doctrine is also implied in the fact that Paul prays to Christ (2 Cor 12:8). Other *NT* instances of this usage are Acts 20:28, Tit 2:13, and 2 Pt 1:1. Generally speaking, where the term God is applied to Christ, it is either in connection with His elevation to *Kyrios* (Paul, 2 Peter), or in connection with the conception of Jesus as divine revelation incarnate (John, Hebrews).

As a conclusion to his study, Cullmann sketches the main stages in the evolution of *NT* Christology and discusses its principal qualities.

The essential elements in the *Entstehungsgeschichte* of *NT* Christology are: Jesus' own earthly life, which provides a point of departure both by reason of Jesus' own consciousness of the mystery of His Person and His mission (especially His awareness of His role as Suffering Servant and Son of Man) and by reason of those first gropings on the part of His disciples and the crowd to express their reaction to Jesus (their attempts to describe Him as the eschatological Prophet and the political, royal Messiah); Jesus' death, which corrected some false ideas about His Messianic function and led to belief in His Second Coming; the Easter experience of the disciples (this reviewer feels that Cullmann has not sufficiently stressed the impact of Christ's resurrection in his book); the disciples' liturgical experience of the presence of the exalted Lord, whom they identified with Jesus of Nazareth; the early Christian reflection, under the conscious guidance of the Holy Spirit, upon the coherent character of the salvation-history manifested through the chronologically successive functions of Christ, which were traced back to the creation (the pre-existent Christ as *Logos*, Son of God).

The basic quality of the *NT* Christology is its *heilsgeschichtliche* character, which differentiates it so radically from anything like myth. An indication of the supreme importance which the *NT* writers attach to the historical process by which salvation has been wrought and revealed to

⁶ "La confession de Pierre à Césarée," *Sciences ecclésiastiques* 6 (1954) 55, note 13.

men is seen in their recognition of Docetism as the most pernicious Christological error.

Cullmann finds that this *NT* Christology is specified by two further notions: the concept of "substitution" (*Stellvertretung*) and the concept of Christ as God's Self-Revelation (*Selbstmitteilung Gottes*). The principle of substitution governs the whole movement of the *Heilsgeschichte*, which thus proceeds from creation to mankind, to Israel, to the "Remnant," to the Incarnate Son, to the apostles, to the Church, to the world, to the New Creation. At the same time, Christ, who accordingly stands at the very center of this salvation-history, is the revelation of the Father, i.e., is God as He reveals Himself to men through His redemptive activity.

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