

AN EXISTENTIAL APPROACH TO SACRED SCRIPTURE

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CONTEMPORARY BIBLICAL scholarship has repeatedly emphasized the need for a new orientation in the attempt to understand the different thought patterns involved in Hebrew mentality. Basically, it would seem to be a need of putting aside Western presuppositions in reading the Bible, in order to become more open to the message as expressed in Hebrew thought. The apparent affinity between biblical and existential thought warrants a closer study of the possibility of an existential approach to Scripture. Recent studies¹ seem to indicate that this could well be a partial answer to the challenge presented by Bultmann to theologians by and large to present the Christian message to modern man in terms intelligible to him. This study will consider the possible contribution of an existential approach toward an increased understanding and clearer expression of the biblical message.

CONTENT OF SCRIPTURE

In his Fifth Theological Oration on the Trinity, St. Gregory of Nazianzus presents a brief disquisition on the interpretation of Scripture, stressing "things and names . . . and their use in Holy Scripture." He writes: "Some things have no existence but are spoken of; others which do exist are not spoken of; some neither exist nor are spoken of; and some both exist and are spoken of" (*Oratio* 31, 22 [PG 36, 158]). Gregory elucidates his categories with appropriate examples. Anthropomorphisms belong to the category of things which have no existence but are spoken of in Scripture. For example, Scripture speaks of God walking in the cool of the Garden of Eden, God becoming angry, God sitting on the cherubim as His throne. Yet, God has no body, and thus we have here not a statement of fact but rather a figure of speech. One obvious reason for such figures is the inadequacy of language to describe God, the ineffable.

Again, there are things which do exist and yet are not mentioned

¹ Cf. C. Tresmontant, *A Study of Hebrew Thought* (New York, 1960), and "Biblical Metaphysics," *Cross Currents* 10 (1960) 229-50; T. Boman, *Hebrew Thought Compared with the Greek* (London, 1960).

in Scripture. In this instance Gregory criticizes heretics who deny the divinity of the Son as expressed in the terms "Unbegotten" and "Unoriginate" simply because they are not explicitly mentioned in the Bible. He claims there is more than ample evidence that these ideas are implied in the Scriptures.

Examples of things which neither exist in fact nor are mentioned include the following: "That God is evil, that a sphere is a square, that the past is present, that man is a compound being."

In the last category, things that exist in fact and are spoken of, Gregory places God, man, angels, judgment, etc.

This content matter, however, is given varied expression in the Bible, and in this regard Malevez's presentation of Bultmann's thought proves enlightening.² According to Bultmann, an author can express his ideas in a written passage either directly or indirectly. In a direct statement, the author makes an explicit affirmation of a fact, e.g., "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Gn 1:1). Indirect statements, however, can be of two kinds. First, the author relates something consciously and deliberately, but not as the main idea of his narrative. Thus, Ps 127:5 states: "He [the defendant] shall not be put to shame when he speaks with his enemies in the gate." This final phrase, "in the gate," reveals something of the nature of early Hebrew judicial procedure, which took place at the city gates, though the context clearly indicates that this is not the main intention of the inspired writer. Second, an author can make an indirect statement about some fact which is the main idea of his composition, but under the guise of other realities. A good case in point is the book of Jonah, which modern scholars consider as a parable, a story, underlining the universal character of Yahwism.

From the foregoing it is evident that the message of the Bible has a depth of meaning not always easy to grasp at first reading in its particular literary form.

PHILOSOPHY AND SCRIPTURE

That a philosophy in the wide sense of the term is found in the Scriptures should be quite readily admitted. Clearly, each inspired

² Cf. L. Malevez, S.J., *The Christian Message and Myth* (Westminster, Md., 1958) pp. 169-70.

writer possessed some kind of philosophical outlook on God, the world, man, and other basic problems, though he probably never systematized these insights. Hence, the Bible does not present any philosophical system as such, for this was never the intention of the writers. At most, their philosophy amounted to an existential knowledge of God through His acts, self, others, and the world. Thus, most of the philosophy found in the Bible will probably be found in indirect statements, though there may also be some pertinent direct statements as well.

The main interest of the inspired writer in general is to tell about the "being and action of Him who is *not* man, who, on the contrary, is the Lord of man and of the universe, and who controls both by His sovereign command."³ The Bible, then, leads to a knowledge of God; it points toward a theology. This is the reason for the abundance of texts in the Old Testament about the intimate life of God, about His thoughts and His designs.

Yet, we cannot deny that the main statements of the Christian message all concern human existence in some way or another. They make the Christian knowledge of man possible and constitute the basis of the Christian doctrine of man. Eichrodt aptly comments: "The Old Testament view of man is supremely important since it offers an interpretation of life which is almost unique in that it proceeds from a constant relation with the Will of God as revealed in the Word, and answers the question of man in the light of the redemption it perceives there."⁴

Nevertheless, it must be noted—as Barth⁵ points out—that the anthropological is secondary to the theocentric viewpoint in Scripture, though the two are intimately linked.

NATURE OF THIS PHILOSOPHY

To assert apodictically that the philosophy inherent in the Bible is predominantly or exclusively a theodicy or a psychology would be an oversimplification. Though he admits that the "theological teaching

³ *Ibid.*, p. 157.

⁴ W. Eichrodt, *Man in the Old Testament* (London, 1959) p. 3.

⁵ Cf. K. Barth, *Die kirchliche Dogmatik* 3/2 (Zurich, 1945) 534; cf. also B. Cooke, S.J., "The Theology of Person," *Spiritual Life* 8 (1961) 11.

of the Bible is metaphysically structured," Tresmontant⁶ hastens to add that the metaphysical structure is communicated together with the theological teaching—in fact, within this very teaching. Hence, philosophy would seem to be only implicit in the Bible.

Note also the mode in which this philosophy is given. It is found in the indirect statements; it is not generally the main interest of the writer, but lies hidden in his actual message. It is communicated through the perceptible aspects of concrete teaching—be it historical, prophetic, or sapiential—to unlettered men. Thus, it is very concrete, but at the same time rather "universal," having value and meaning for every culture.⁷

A closer study also reveals that the philosophy in the Bible differs radically from the Western philosophy which is our common heritage. This difference stems basically from the difference between the Semitic and the cultured Western mind. A few examples will illustrate this point rather well. For one, the various anthropomorphisms applied to God in the Bible point out the peculiar vitality of the Hebrew view of God. The inspired writer's allusions to Yahweh's anger are in marked contrast to the Greek emphasis upon the imperturbable, the apathetic character of God, as Aristotle testifies: "But it has also been shown that it [the prime mover] is impassible and unalterable . . ." (*Meta.* 1073a). In the nature of the Hebrew-Jewish God, however, there is something unresting, dynamic, irrational, passionate—all of which is best summarized in the category of the holy, *qōdēš*.⁸

Again, God is also known as the great peacemaker, the one who helps make things right. Peace in the Old Testament means above all the situation where everything can follow its own proper undisturbed course to success. Köhler aptly remarks:

Šālôm is the Greek *harmonia tōn pantōn*, but the difference is significant: the dynamic element in the Hebrew phrase—the Hebrew mind sees everything prospering and growing; the static element in the Greek phrase—the Greek mind sees things in a carefully arranged and harmoniously integrated *kosmos*. To translate *šālôm* "peace" is a makeshift; prosperity would be better.⁹

⁶ Tresmontant, *art. cit.*, p. 229. ⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, p. 230.

⁸ Cf. O. Procksch, *Theologie des Alten Testaments* (Gütersloh, 1950) pp. 642 ff.

⁹ L. Köhler, *Old Testament Theology*, tr. A. S. Todd, (3rd rev. ed.; Philadelphia, 1957) p. 240, n. 21.

The difference should be apparent. The Semitic mind as reflected in the Bible is existential, dynamic, concrete in orientation. The cultured Greek mind, on the other hand, is essentialistic, static, abstract. An abstract consideration of God makes Him the supreme objective existent, the principle and foundation of objects, and personal indeed, but not in an existentialistic sense.

This is not to disparage the essentialistic viewpoint. Essentialism and existentialism should complement each other for a fair understanding of the world and reality as it exists. Yet, as Tresmontant¹⁰ points out, every metaphysics is organically united to a certain concept of the Absolute and depends on this Absolute, and vice versa. Thus, an existential notion of God can hardly be adequately expressed in essentialist terms. Consequently, not every philosophy will be able to express the content of the Bible, nor for that matter will it contribute to a better understanding of the Bible. Some will be better adapted than others for this task, and this seems to be the case for existentialism.

Existentialism, however, can take either an ontological or a psychological orientation. In this latter role, it would seem most effective in uncovering the biblical basis of religious anthropology. In contradistinction to secular anthropology, which centers on the study of primitive man, religious anthropology presents the "Christian doctrine, based upon Biblical views of man's origin, sin, freedom and destiny, which must be understood in the light of its integral relationship with other doctrines concerning God, Christ, the Church, and the Kingdom of God."¹¹ B. Childs seems to bear this out:

We must turn from abstraction [philosophical and historical] to the concrete expressions of Israel's life. By rejecting modern categories to find reality we are made receptive to Israel's own categories by which she expressed her existence. In saga, legend, the broken myth, through these unhistorical vehicles as well as through the historical, Israel articulated her understanding of her existence. . . . Thus the error of modern Biblical theology stems from this attempt to relate reality to something other than the concrete experiences of Israel.¹²

¹⁰ Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 231.

¹¹ D. E. Roberts, *Psychotherapy and a Christian View of Man* (New York, 1950) p. xii.

¹² B. S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (Naperville, Ill., 1960) p. 102.

This would seem to justify an existential approach to the study of the Bible. In some instances existential categories may prove to be identical with authentic biblical categories. In other cases the existential category may only help to discover the true biblical category. But in any event, existentialism seems most suited at the moment to interpret the concrete experiences of the simple Hebrews.

Nor is this concrete aspect of the Hebrew expression to be rejected: it has not altered the biblical message in any way at all. In fact, the message seems to bear the characteristics of insight as given by Lonergan. Pivoting between the concrete and the abstract, insight is also universal in nature. "For if insights arise from concrete problems, if they reveal their value in concrete applications, nonetheless they possess a significance greater than their origins and a relevance wider than their original applications."¹³

Can this apply to the insights found in the Bible? Are these insights into human nature something much wider than their origin, something that can be developed or corroborated in the light of new discoveries and researches, something with a relevance wider than the original application? Perhaps the existential approach can answer these questions. This study is just a small attempt in that direction.

GENERAL AND BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS

Bultmann suggests that biblical hermeneutics is nothing more than a specific instance of general hermeneutics,¹⁴ and therefore both follow a similar pattern. There is a basic rule in general hermeneutics that seems to be an ideal point of departure. In approaching any ordinary piece of literature or work of art, a person can derive as much benefit from that particular work as he is prepared to take from it. Thus, an accomplished virtuoso and an ordinary teen-ager can both listen to the same Beethoven symphony, but each will obviously appreciate it in a different degree.

Again, in the field of literature, one text can have a political, historical, philosophical, and perhaps even theological significance. The specific reader generally "chooses" the significance he will grasp. This is not to say that he "puts" meaning into a text; rather, his present

¹³ B. Lonergan, S.J., *Insight* (New York, 1958) p. 5.

¹⁴ Cf. Malevez, *op. cit.*, p. 169.

knowledge or frame of reference determines his understanding of any text to a greater or lesser degree. Personal experience is of great import, but it does not "prejudice" the result of one's reading. The message of the text remains basically objective, and is in fact rather "rich" in that objectivity.

The reader approaches the text with a particular *Vorverständnis*, a preintelligence of human existence in general and of its possibilities. The text in question helps raise this subcritical understanding of human existence to the level of conscious reflection. Hence, the grasping and understanding of a text means the rendering explicit, via the action of the text, of tendencies which already form, at least dimly, a part of the individual's life. One must bring to bear on the interpretation of a document one's experiential preintelligence of its content, and the vital relation or *Lebensverhältnis* with that text which already in some way binds one to the text.¹⁵

Now the transfer can be made to biblical hermeneutics. The existential approach depends basically upon two concepts: *Fragestellung* and *Begrifflichkeit*.¹⁶ *Fragestellung* is simply the manner in which one questions the text. It is almost impossible to read the Scriptures without having some implicit philosophy of life, man, God, creation, etc. If a person does not question the text, it will tell him nothing, it will be meaningless. Unless the reader already possesses some idea of the being of the Creator and the being of creatures, the inspired text will reveal nothing of meaning to him.

Begrifflichkeit, on the other hand, is a term used for a group of categories or basic formal concepts by which we understand experience. These concepts are derived from a philosophy of existence which has analyzed the understanding of existence which is given with existence. In this application, *Begrifflichkeit* must represent the understanding of existence given with existence and expressed in the Bible.

This is the necessary preface to understanding the message of the

¹⁵ Cf. H. Bouillard, "Théologie et philosophie d'après Karl Barth et Rudolf Bultmann," *Archives de philosophie* 20 (1957) 176.

¹⁶ Though these terms are well defined in Malevez, *op. cit.*, pp. 46, 49, 100, 170, 176, 194, 203, these same terms and others used in this article can be found in J. Macquarrie, *An Existentialist Theology: A Comparison of Heidegger and Bultmann* (London, 1955). The use of Heideggerian terms in this article is by no means a wholesale approval of that type of existentialism.

Bible. In brief, the message is simply a relation of the action and intervention of God in history bringing judgment, grace, and mercy to concrete man. Hence, in order to understand the message of the Bible, the reader must bring as his *Vorverständnis* a preintelligence of what the action of God may signify in general and how it differs from the action of men and events of nature.

Such knowledge need not be the complete and adequate notion given by revelation. The life of every man is plagued with the question of God (*Frage nach Gott*), or as Augustine phrased it: "inquietum est cor nostrum, donec requiescat in te" (*Conf.* 1, 1).¹⁷ If this were not so, man could never know God, and even revelation would be of no use. Deep within the individual man there lies an existential knowledge of God (*ein existentielles Wissen um Gott*) which takes on a variety of forms: goodness, salvation, sense of history, authenticity. Still, this knowledge remains hazy and must be perfected by the truths of revelation.

Whoever reads God's Word must be ready to correct this first representation of God which he acquired vaguely in formulating his disquiet. The reader should endeavor thus with unceasing vigilance to keep his mind in a state of the greatest docility towards biblical teaching. The God of revelation will never be the God of our own thoughts!

This, then, is the first rule for an existential interpretation of Scripture: to grasp and understand biblical anthropology, preserve the frame of mind which can be termed awareness of human disquiet.

Further, the *Fragestellung* that accompanies the *Vorverständnis* should not prejudice the reader's interpretation of Scripture, nor should it anticipate the conclusions of exegesis. It should rather open his eyes to the meaning of the text, whatever that meaning may be. This preliminary philosophy, i.e., existential knowledge of God, self, etc., used in the form of a question and raising the whole problem of

¹⁷ Cf. Bouillard, *art. cit.*, p. 177; Malevez, *op. cit.*, p. 152. The religious question pervades the life of man. Cf. the illuminating observation of J. E. Smith, "The Permanent Truth in the Idea of Natural Religion," *Harvard Theological Review* 54 (1961) 9: "There are many aspects or dimensions to life in the world: man alone raises the religious question and reveals that concern for the ground and goal of his being which shows that life has a religious meaning. . . . We cannot be religious animals by parts and we cannot seal off the knowledge we gain from our participation in general experience from religious truths which we receive through an historical tradition. The two must interpret each other."

the meaning of existence, is of great import for the reader and the exegete, for it enables the latter in particular to translate the philosophy from the implicit into the explicit state, even before interpreting the text. It is this simple existential analysis which releases the existential categories (*Begrifflichkeit*) that already inspire the reader unwittingly.

In fine, such biblical hermeneutics require the reader to meet the text halfway with a certain natural understanding of the condition of man before God, and this helps put into relief those elements of the scriptural message which deepen and amplify that primary understanding. It stands to reason that the clearer the understanding of human nature, the clearer will be the understanding of the given texts.

KARL BARTH'S CRITIQUE

Barth admits that it is hardly possible to approach the Scriptures without "assuming them subjectively,"¹⁸ without bringing to bear a certain philosophy, a certain way of understanding divine and human realities, in however commonplace, eclectic, and superficial a way. Every reader has his own personal intellectual schema which serves as his key to the material he reads.

Yet, Barth would have the application of this key, this *Vorverständnis*, subjected to strict rules. First, it must always be noted that the reader's intellectual schema differs from that of the Bible. Second, this use of philosophy should never have more than a tentative character; no *Vorverständnis* can set itself up as absolute, as *the* philosophical approach. Third, it must be kept in mind that no particular intellectual schema possesses in itself qualities which accord it a preference over any other for understanding the Bible¹⁹ (unless, of course, one's chosen intention would demand a specific approach, as in the case of this present study).

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, 1/2, 816: "Wie könnten wir den Text objektiv verstehen, ohne subjektiv, d. h. aber mit unserem Denken, dabei zu sein?"

¹⁹ In maintaining that Hebrew has been "preadapted" to the expression of the Word of God, Tresmontant, *art. cit.*, p. 248, almost seems to transgress Barth's third rule. Closer study, however, shows his true concern to be the proper understanding of the biblical message in its particular literary expression. For this reason he cannot understand Fr. Daniélou's contention (*God and the Ways of Knowing* [New York, 1957] pp. 196 ff.) that there are such things as "biblical categories" (in the philosophical sense of the term) and that these can be "translated," as it were, into "categories" proper to other philosophical systems.

Although this observation is well intended and indeed has valid objective application, it nevertheless seems to stem from a misinterpretation of Bultmann's position. By philosophy Barth understands *a* philosophy, a system. He therefore rightly condemns the canonization of *a* philosophy as a norm for interpreting Scripture. Bultmann, however, understands philosophy in a wider sense, as *Begrifflichkeit*, i.e., an ensemble of concepts used by each individual to understand things. This, then, is supposed to help one discover true philosophy, formal philosophy, which has universal validity.²⁰

NATURE OF THE VORVERSTÄNDNIS

The *Vorverständnis*, or preknowledge of human existence, needed for an existential approach to the Bible can be either popular or scientific. Popular preknowledge of human existence is that given with existence. It is not reflective or analytic, but experiential, and it is sufficient for an everyday, ordinary reading of the Bible. Concretely, a simple recognition of the *cor inquietum* illustrates this type of knowledge.

Scientific reading or exegesis of the Bible demands the same type of prerequisite understanding, but with the added element that it be analytic and reflective. A scholar, consequently, must read texts in the light of concepts and categories (*Begrifflichkeit*) furnished by existential analytics.

Evidently, exegesis is dependent upon a philosophy, but the philosophy in question is not a system. It is rather an attitude, an outlook, an approach. The relationship between philosophy as such and the Christian message of the Bible, or theology, is portrayed in the distinction between the *existential* and *existentiel*.²¹ The theme of philosophy is *existential*, i.e., personal reflections help a person to gather the entire horizon of possibilities which can occur in human existence. Theology, on the other hand, is *existentiel*, for it deals with concrete practical possibilities met with by individual human beings. Thus, the existential analytic (a pure application of phenomenological method to the interpretation of existence) points up the *existential* element in human existence, the whole field of possibilities. The reader

²⁰ Cf. Bouillard, *art. cit.*, pp. 178 ff. This calls to mind the ideas of M. Novak, "The Philosophy Implicit in Biblical Studies," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 22 (1960) 306-16.

²¹ Cf. Malevez, *op. cit.*, p. 100.

who approaches Scripture with this frame of reference thus learns how individual human existents respond to the summons of the Word in concrete circumstances, in other words, the *existential* element.

ROLE OF THE EXISTENTIAL ANALYTIC

The existential analytic reveals the fundamental structures of human existence. Two basic structures can be cited here as appropriate elements of an existential approach to Scripture. In existential analysis man is revealed as ipseity and as essentially historical (*geschichtlich*).

As ipseity,²² man is not one object among others in the universe, he is not a thing. Rather, he is a person with a free will, he can realize his responsibilities and raise himself (as he is *de facto*) above the level of all other existents.

Furthermore, man's being is essentially historical. Here two ideas of historical must be distinguished: *historisch* and *geschichtlich*. *Historisch* is an adjective used to describe *Historie*, the narration of facts which took place on a certain date and can be verified with the aid of the historical method. These are events which are treated as objects causally linked and observable according to standard laws of historical interpretation. *Geschichtlich* also describes an event that took place in history (*Geschichte*) and although it is not a nontemporal event, it is not necessarily connected with a date, nor can it be proven by the historical method. It describes human existence lived in free decisions reached in intersubjective relationships (*Miteinandersein*). The second person in these relationships approaches this person in what are termed existential encounters, which in turn lead to existential decisions.²³

The role, then, of the existential analytic is to bring to light or render explicit the natural knowledge and understanding of the human condition, so that it might help in understanding biblical anthropology. Yet, this knowledge also can be *existential*, i.e., pertain to existents in general, or *existential*, i.e., can be gained only in the sphere

²² Cf. R. Johann, S.J., *The Meaning of Love* (Westminster, Md., 1954) pp. 21 ff., on the distinction between ipseity and taleity.

²³ This seems to be borne out by A. Gelin, "Comment le peuple d'Israël lisait l'Ancien Testament," in *L'Ancien Testament et les chrétiens* (Paris, 1951) pp. 117-31. On the question of subjectivity, cf. J. de Finance, S.J., "Being and Subjectivity," *Cross Currents* 6 (1956) 167-78, and A. Dondeyne, *Contemporary European Thought and Christian Faith* (Pittsburgh, 1958).

of existential operation, in concrete encounters in which man faces another who comes forth to meet him objectively. This latter knowledge need not be conscious of itself by reflection; often it is lived rather than known explicitly, but at least it is recognized and experienced.²⁴ Nevertheless, this knowledge in itself is incomplete and must be corrected and completed by biblical data in order to form an adequate religious anthropology.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The need for a certain precomprehension of man for a proper reading of the Bible cannot be denied. God's word in Scripture demands loyalty and obedience. But loyalty demands faith, an affirmation. Yet, how affirm something unless it can be recognized as conforming to some norm, at least to a norm existing in the reader's mind? Again, obedience demands a response of faith. But how recognize the obligatory character of a challenge without grasping in some way its conformity to a norm?

True, the Word ought not to be forced to conform to a demand placed upon it by the mind; this could not be. But in some way the Word must manifest its freedom from contradiction, its internal truth. So, if the Word does not consent to having the limits of human concepts imposed on it, it willingly submits to the form of the mind's first principles; and it must so conform under the penalty of no longer constituting a possible object of affirmation.²⁵

Thus, a certain natural light on man, a certain anthropology not given by the Word, to which it would be truer to say that the Word subordinates itself, is the forerunner and basis of the possibility of obediently hearing the Word.

In addition, although everyone possesses some knowledge, at least

²⁴ J. E. Royce, S.J., *Personality and Mental Health* (Milwaukee, 1955) p. 63, makes an appropriate remark that substantiates this: "Many definitions of emotion exist, all of them perhaps unsatisfactory because in the last analysis we have to experience an emotion to know what it is."

²⁵ Cf. St. Thomas, *Summa theologiae*, 1, q. 88, a. 3, ad 1m: "In luce primae veritatis omnia intelligimus et iudicamus, in quantum ipsum lumen intellectus nostri, sive naturale, sive gratuitum, nihil aliud est quam quaedam impressio veritatis primae." Thus, our natural intellect is a reflection of the divine intellect, or at least it has within it this reflection. When we refer Christian revelation back to the natural light of the mind we somewhat refer it back to God Himself.

nonreflective, of human existence, nevertheless the exegete must make an analysis of that precomprehension of man and transfer his knowledge from the level of direct apprehension to that of analysis and reflection. He should think philosophically.

If his philosophy is existential, it must contain some basic elements. The exegete's *Vorverständnis*, or preintelligence of human existence, must be translated into existential terms, if it is not already so formulated. This *Vorverständnis* guides his *Fragestellung* (manner of questioning a given text) and *Begrifflichkeit* (categories which express his understanding of reality), which must always be open to change insofar as new insights into reality contribute toward a clearer understanding of this same reality.

This philosophic approach is by no means intended to be normative: it must never exceed the role of guide. For the exegete, moreover, it must be reflective, a result of the existential analytic which reveals man as a person, an ipseity, and as historical (*geschichtlich*), i.e., one who makes free decisions in intersubjective relationships or encounters.

A general awareness of the present condition of man characterized by disquiet, the *cor inquietum*, is also basic to the existential approach. It is this above all which will help the exegete grasp the full meaning of salvation and redemption in the biblical message and present it in terms intelligible to modern man.²⁶

²⁶ For other evaluations of this approach, cf. J. C. Futrell, S.J., "Myth and Message: A Study of the Biblical Theology of Rudolf Bultmann," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 21 (1959) 283-315, and D. M. Stanley, S.J., "Rudolf Bultmann: A Contemporary Challenge to the Catholic Theologian," *ibid.* 19 (1957) 347-55.