THE SPRINGFIELDER

June 1971
Volume 35, Number 1

Allegory

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OUR TEXT THIS MORNING is taken from the 20th Book of the Iliad of the poet Homer, where we read as follows:

> "So by the beaked ships around you, O son of Peleus, insatiate of fight, the Achaeans arrayed themselves for battle; and likewise the Trojans over against them on the rising ground of the plain. But Zeus bade Themis summon the gods to the place of gathering from the brow of many-ridged Olympus; . . . Then Zeus the cloud-gatherer spoke, "You know the purpose in my breast for which I gathered you hither; I attend to them, even though they die. Yet for myself I will stay here sitting in a fold of Olympus, from where I will look on and amuse myself; but do you others all go forth till you come among the Trojans and Achaeans, and bear aid to this side or that, even as the mind of each may wish . . . Thus did the blessed gods urge on the two hosts to clash in battle, and amid them made grievous strife to burst forth . . . Great was the din that arose when the gods clashed in strife. For against king Poseidon stood Phoebus Appollo with his winged arrows, and against Envalius the goddess, flashing-eyed Athene; against Hera stood forth the huntress of the golden arrows, and the echoing chase, even the archer Artemis, sister of the god that smites afar; against Leto stood forth the strong helper, Hermes, and against Hephaestus the great, deep-eddying river, that gods call Xanthus, and men Scamander. Thus gods went forth to fight with gods." (Iliad xx)

Such divine behavior came to be thought perplexing. Xenophanes, c. 530, observed:

> "Both Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods all things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind: theft, adultery, and mutual deception." (Fr. 11)[1]

Theagenes of Rhegium is the first that we know of who brought allegory to the aid of the Homeric gods. He was a contemporary of Cambyses, son of Cyrus, and king of Persia 529-522. Theagenes had learnt the Ionian theory of opposites and so was able to give a respectable account of the warring gods. It is fire that is symbolized by Apollo, Helios and Hephaestus, while its opposite, water, by Poseidon and Scamander. Wisdom, represented by Athene, is opposed by folly, represented by Ares, and so Aphrodite, desire, and Hermes, reason.[2]

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Late in the fifth century Metrodorus of Lampsacus uses the method to put theology into anthropology: heroes are elements of nature while the gods are parts of man. Agamemnon represents Aether, Achilles the Sun, Helen the Earth, Hector the Moon, and Paris the Air. And then, the gods Demeter, Dionysus and Apollo represent the liver, the spleen and the bile. It is indeed amusing but it goes on all the time. It is what Feuerbach was talking about when he said that theology is nothing more than anthropology. First we see here the attempt to fit the gods into the enlightened philosophy of that century and to use then also the categories of man as that within which all meaningful statements are to be made, and outside of which categories no meaningful statements can be made.

> Such curious identification evoked from Tatian the judgment: "Metrodorus of Lampsacus, in his treatise concerning Homer, has argued very foolishly turning everything into allegory. For he says that neither Hera, nor Athene, nor Zeus are what those people suppose who consecrate to them sacred enclosures and groves, but parts of nature and certain arrangements of the elements . . . not one of these personages having really existed. (*Oratio adversus Graecos*, xxi)

W. Nestle is more perceptive: "Though this be madness, yet there is method in't."[3] He points out that Metrodorus is using the physiological science of his day as he disposes the gods into human categories. The gall was regarded as the cause of acute and sudden seizures, and these were traditionally the work of Apollo, "the god that smiles afar." From Diogenes of Apollonia, the end of the line for Ionian philosophy, we learn that the two arteries which sustain life in the body are the hepatic and the splenetic. (*Ancilla*, p. 88f) Further, air is the elementary matter which affords possibility of change. A basic change is that of dry and wet[4] and these are traditionally the responsibility of Demeter and Dionysus respectively. Metrodorus is then as accurate as the science of his day,[5] and it is praise for Homer to find that he was really saying the same in an allegorical way. Zeus is air, the primary substance which is the life force, intelligence, the soul of the universe. With the help of allegory everything can be fitted into the current science and human categories, and piety shall lie down with reason.[6] It is the attempt to fit theological statements within philosophical and anthropological categories and so come to terms with them—this under the pressure of the enlightenment of that sixth century B.C.

Credit for the ethical allegorizing of Homer is given by Diogenes Laertius to Anaxagoras.

> "Favorinus in his Miscellaneous History says Anaxagoras was the first to maintain that Homer in his poems treats virtue and justice, and that this thesis was defended at greater length by his friend Metrodorus of Lampsacus, who was the first to busy himself with Homer's physical doctrine." (*Lives*. ii,11. Loeb I, 141)

Xenophanes goes further than the question of the doubtful morality of the gods and their equivalents in natural philosophy and repudiates all anthropomorphism. He remarks:

> "The Aethiopians have gods with snub noses and black hair, the Thracians have gods with grey eyes and red hair." (Frag. 16)

Another fragment:

> "If oxen (and horses) and lions had hands or could draw with hands and create works of art like those made by men, horses would draw pictures of gods like horses, and oxen of gods like oxen, and they would make bodies (of their gods) in accordance with the form that each species itself possesses." (Fr. 15)[7]

So much for the projected gods. "There is one god," says Xenophanes, "one god among gods and men the greatest, not at all like mortals in body or in mind." (Fr. 23) Here the utter repudiation of anthropomorphism. Yet Xenophanes' one god does not transcend natural philosophy but seems coterminous with living matter. Man is not given revelation but the way of empirical enquiry. Even if man should say what is completely true, he would be unaware of it. It would be impossible, Xenophanes seems to suggest, to prove it by something other than itself, a profound observation to be kept in mind in any discussion of the argument of analogy. He says, "Opinion is fixed by fate upon all things."[8] We know no more than opinion. *Dokos depi pasi, tetyktai.* We meet the cognate of *dokos* a little later in *doxa*, one of the later divisions of allegorizing.

Enlightment in morals and in science adjusted the Homeric gods to itself with the aid of allegory ethical and physical. Diogenes declared that Homer was not the author of myths and fairy tales, he merely used them as a vehicle for telling the truth. His Zeus was air and nothing but air.[9] Historical enlightenment in Hecataeus and Herodotus cut away the supernatural.

The range of allegory was full-stretched when the materialism of natural philosophy gave way before the immaterialism of mental and moral science. We come to the conception of a transcendent, a truly transcendent. In Plato's world where all visible things exist insofar as they imitate the forms, the ultimate ideas, we have the material immaterial, finite/infinite, visible/invisible, temporal/eternal, that furnish allegory with its largest scope, and also the impulse to move from the material, temporal and historical to the spiritual and eternal. For Plato to move to the higher is to leave the lower behind. And in that duality also we should mention letter and spirit, which has its meaning in St. Paul, and then the meaning that it was given from this Platonic background of the duality of temporal and eternal. You know the great writing of St. Augustine that Luther found so enormously helpful and that is characteristic of the theology of young Luther, and it is still this Platonically shaped conception of letter and spirit which informs the article in the Lutheran Encyclopedia about allegory. Gloege's article operates with

these two categories of letter and spirit Platonically understood rather than Paulinely.

Allegory has to have two factors to operate with, and Plato is the one who gives the great potent categories for the subsequent operation of allegory. He himself speaks scornfully of the patent allegorizers that went before him. He mocked those who allegorized Homer.

> "That the strife and contention of the gods was instigated by Themis and Zeus *Rep.* 379E) . . . all the battles of the gods in Homer—these tales must not be admitted into our State, whether they are supposed to have an allegory meaning or not." (*Rep.* 379D)

Plato will not allow Homer in his *Republic* because of the danger to morals and because of the false view that they present of the gods, and he will not allow the gods to be rescued from such objection by the use of allegory. The word which is used for allegory is *hyponoia* which J. Tate gives the literal translation 'undermeaning,' the meaning that lies under the surface meaning.[10] The word allegory only comes into usage in the first century B.C. but the decisive usage which gives it currency is that of Cicero in his writing on oratory (94). The word allegory also appears in Philo, but before that time the word for the subject of our discussion is not allegory but *hyponoia*. Tate in discussing this section of the *Republic* finds a threefold distinction in Plato's treatment. He talks about the *logos* which is the narrative, the surface meaning, and then the *typos*, *nomos*, or *doxa*, which we would call the moral of the story, the way the Duchess in Alice in Wonderland says what the moral of everything is. *Typos* is the word then, of course, that gives the other hermeneutical technique of typology. The usual distinction between typology and allegory is that typology deals with events and allegory with words. Tate finds in Plato, in this second category of *typos*, *nomos* or *doxa*, the principle implied or illustrated by the narrative, and then in the third category, *hyponoia*, the allegorical meaning of the narrative. If the narrative represents a false moral or principle, it is no valid defense of it in Plato's view to assert that it has an 'undermeaning.' He is scornful of 'undermeanings' which he says are supplied by the "country bumpkin's wisdom" or "yokel's wisdom." (*Agroikos tis sophia Phaedrus* 229 E cf. also 229C&E) It may be that Tate is drawing too much from the passage, but a threefold division is indeed a most useful one for getting at the assessment of the value of allegory, particularly if subsequently we can use the third category as that in which the lower meanings are left behind, sloughed off.

Plato does not use Homer for proof but as illustration or point of departure, rather in the way in which Milton uses the gods of mythology and his invocation of the muses and so on. This is poetically viable for him and his use is possible in the way that he does it just because he doesn't believe in them.[11] Parallel to that is

the way in which some theologians use Scripture to illustrate their point of view. It is merely used to illustrate a position which is taken on other grounds. Allegory is an enormously useful technique if you want to show that Jesus was really a political revolutionary or that basically he was a clinical or psychological social worker; you will be able to demonstrate that from the text with the use of allegory. It goes on around us all the time, although the contemporary theological journalists who do that sort of thing do not always even trouble their little minds with the exegetical task. The production of *Jesus Christ Superstar* is possible because he is not believed in. Lucretius is more instructive than Feuerbach.

When god is equated by Plato with the good, he is then supplied with a divine attribute according to which it is then possible to specify those things which are unworthy of god. God is then disallowed many things, and since Homer is very permissive Plato reacts censoriously toward Homer. Such things couldn't possibly be so. Since god is "the good" he couldn't do anything filthy or strifeful as Homer tells us that he they did. Plato's purified transcendent god did not, however, succeed in displacing the Homeric gods. They were sustained by allegory nevertheless. Allegory could dispose of what was embarrassing about them, or more importantly it could bring them into the service of one's own philosophy.

Antisthenes, the companion of Socrates, whom Plato scornfully called a "belated learner," "Johnny-come-lately," allegorized the Homeric gods in the service of his own radical anti-establishment philosophy. For your young people's groups you should introduce them to Antisthenes. He sounds very contemporary. He and his disciple Diogenes, who accepted the nickname "dog" which gave the Cynics their name, violently attacked the popular gods and for this purpose allegorized them and turned them to Cynical purpose. Antisthenes uses the distinction between the *doxa* and the *Alētheia*, the opinion, the view, and the truth, the real matter, and, of course, the *alētheia* which he then finds disclosed, comes out quite Cynical.

Zeno learned much from Antisthenes and his use of allegory preserved the moral value of the gods, apart from which there was little else to them. Follow through the 19th Century and you find Jesus ending up with little more than a moral value. It is the ethical importance of Jesus that is the last thing to go under, as it were, and here we have in Zeno the last stand for the Homeric gods in their ethical value, and with that their social value recognized also by Plato and Socrates. You may not believe in them but you should observe the religious usages and customs because if all that falls to pieces, society is likely to fall to pieces, and that would be a pity, so let's have religion and observe the customs, and have prayers in school. Similarly Zeno held that Homer wrote some things according to opinion and some according to truth. This was also useful in rescuing Homer from contradicting himself. The meaning that was the wrong one or you thought to be the wrong one, that was the *doxa* meaning, and then the one that fitted in with your

philosophy that was the *aleētheia* meaning. Not what he says, but what he means!

Cleanthes, Zeno's successor, "accommodated the sayings of the poets to their system."[12] His successor Chrysippus further suppresses the particularities of the gods, who are seen as functions of one god, the cosmic rational principle which orders all things. The gods are desexed. This removes not only much embarrassment but also much of their dialectical potency. The vivid particularity of the Homeric gods is lost in a pallid, ultimate rational principle, and what value remains is ethical.

Although the Homeric gods may have been rendered impotent, the method by which this was achieved goes marching on. By the time a certain Heraclitus and Crates of Mallas are done there is little Homer left unallegorized.[13]

The Epicureans were great mockers of allegorization, and their arguments may later be heard from Christian opponents of what had become a method for disposing of embarrassments scientific, historical, philosophical and moral, or, positively, for disclosing what was the real meaning of an ancient text, which, however, fairly consistently turned out to be the corroberation or the illustration of the school of the man who was operating the method.

The heyday—if one may use a word so inappropriately gay—the heyday of Stoicism was during the first century before and after Christ. Its influence in Jewry can be seen in the Wisdom of Solomon and the allegorization of the Law in the letter of Aristeas, which purports to be an eyewitness account of the production of the Septuagint. The Septuagint puts the Old Testament into the language of the Greeks. A welcome could scarcely be expected among the Greeks,[14] but there were those who loved the Old Testament and who therefore tried to arrange such a welcome for it.

Such a man was Philo (c. 20 B.C.—c. 50 A.D.). This Alexandrian Jew grew up in that city, wealthy, cultured, sophisticated, the intellectual eye of the world, and that city gave him acquaintance with the language and thought of Greece. He knew his Homer and Plato and the Stoics very well. And with that Greek tradition he was also supplied with a method for removing difficulties and for disclosing the true meaning of the Old Testament, which he would commend to the Greek intellectuals who had it now available to them in translation. There was much for a Greek to scoff at in the Old Testament, and Philo writes with great brilliance and at great length in showing that what one runs into in the Old Testament which is unworthy of God or which is historically, philosophically or morally impossible is just what the surface meaning appears to be, but the real meaning, the 'undermeaning,' the *hyponoia*, he calls it also allegory, is what is really to be understood. And so Philo seeks to make the Old Testament palatable to the intellectuals of Alexandria. Again, we find allegory fitting things into anthropological categories. For Philo the allegorical meaning is the soul of the text, while the literal meaning is only its body, and soul and body are used dis-

junctively in a Platonic sort of way, and we must remember that for Plato to rise to the higher is to leave the lower behind. When you read much of Philo you feel that you have indeed lost contact with the lower, the logos, the narrative, the surface meaning of the text. However, some people took Philo very seriously and said, "Well, if what really matters is the 'undermeaning' of the text, the allegorical meaning of the text, then let's leave the surface meaning, the literal meaning, behind, and so there is really no need for us to keep the Sabbath or the whole business of the sacrifices and the dietary laws." Philo was alarmed by this result and said, "Oh, no, no, you mustn't do that, we must all go on doing what the literal sense says." But while saying this he speaks very scornfully about the simple, ordinary, vulgar, you know, the *hoi polloi;* for their sake we must stick with the primary, with the surface, the literal meaning, but those far advanced in knowledge and understanding, the philosophers, they live not at that lowest lowly level of the text, but at the higher level where you find the real soul of the text.

> "We should look on all these outward observances as resembling the body; and their inner meanings as resembling the soul. It follows that, exactly as we have to take thought for the body, because it is the abode of the soul, so we must pay heed to the letter of the laws. If we keep and observe these, we shall gain a clearer conception of those things of which these are the symbols; and besides that we shall not incur the censure of the many and the charges they are sure to bring against us." (*De Migratione Abrahami*, 93. Loeb iv, 185)

In Philo we have the attempt to bring philosophy and theology into harmony. They are really about the same thing, and Philo is at pains to show that what was best and truest in the philosophy of the Greeks was something that they probably got from Moses, and if they didn't get it from Moses then they got it from God who brought them to know these things by way of their philosophy which God, by the way of his dealing with Israel, had shown also to the Jews.[15] Things inimical and mutually exclusive need not trouble too much a man skilled in allegory, and Philo was skilled.

In Genesis the characters are allegories of states of the soul. Adam and Eve are reason and sensuality, which suggests why the Fall, and what is meant by sin in a Greek and quite unbiblical way. Abel is pure piety without intellectual culture, Cain is the egoist, Seth virtue imbued with wisdom and truth. The four rivers of Paradise are the four cardinal virtues. Joseph is the type of the statesman, his coat of many colors indicates that his political policy is intricate and difficult to unravel.

For all his exaltation of the allegorical method in contrast with the literal Philo does not yet deny the history of the literal meaning. The literal meaning is important for the simpleminded. That is all they are capable of getting. If a man cannot bear the full truth of the allegorical meaning, let him stick to the literal sense. (*De*

Somniis, 234-237. Loeb v. 421-423) Whoever cannot love God as pure being, let him fear him as the one who threatens and punishes. (*Quod Deus immutabilis sit,* 69. Loeb iii. 45)

When the text is not absurd it may be taken literally as when we read, "God is not a man." (*Num.* 23:19. *De Somniis* 237). "Keeping in view the ways of thinking of the duller folk" we have statements of punishment, and "for the instruction of the many," "God is like a man." (Deut. 1:31. *Quod Deus immutabilis sit,* 53f. Loeb iii, 37)

> "Among men some are soul lovers, some body lovers. The comrades of the soul, who can hold converse with intelligible incorporeal natures, do not compare the Existent to any form of created things. They have dissociated Him from every category or quality, for it is one of the facts which go to make His blessedness and supreme felicity that His being is apprehended as simple being, without other definite characteristic; and thus they do not picture it with form, but admit to their minds the conception of existence only. (55)

Abram is first at the level of Hagar, "who is the education of the schools . . . being an Egyptian by descent she was qualified to see the supreme Cause." (*De Somniis* 240. Loeb V 423) Abraham leaves the lower education, the secular learning of the schools, for Sarah who is generic and imperishable virtue. Hagar is cast out with her "son, the sophist named Ishmael, and virtue gives birth to happiness, that is Isaac." (*De Cherubim* 3-8; Loeb II, 9-13. *Legum Allegoriae* ii, 82. Loeb I, 277). Sarah is also philosophy whose fruits are finest when "practiced for the honor and service of God." (*De Congressu quaerendae Eruditionis gratia,* 78-80. Loeb IV, 497 f.)

In the matter of the ox that may not be muzzled Philo does not suffer by comparison with St. Paul who says it was not written for the oxen. (*I Cor.* 9:9)

> This law forbids muzzling the ox when it treads out the corn. It is the ox who before the deep soil of the lowlands receives the seed, cleaves the furrows and sets the fields ready for heaven and the husbandman. For the husbandman that he may sow the seed in due season, for heaven that its kindly gifts of rain may be received in the deep hollows which store them up and deal them out part by part as rich nourishment to the crop until it brings forth first the ear and then the consummation of the yearly fruit, and after that consummation the ox is again necessary for another service to purge the sheaves and sift the refuse from the genuine and useful material.

It it a "kindly and benevolent injunction on behalf of the oxen when treading the corn" (*De Virtutibus,* 145f. Loeb viii, 253).

When we come to St. Paul we hear him saying:

"It is written in the law of Moses, you shall not muzzle the ox

> when it is treading out the grain. Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits. If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more?"

Philo understood Deuteronomy as talking about oxen. St. Paul seems to suggest that in Deuteronomy we have the instruction that pastors should be paid. While we may doubt his exegetical methodology, we, I suppose, are unlikely to argue with his conclusion. There it is, St. Paul does it. Is it necessary to bail St. Paul out, and give such a definition of allegory so that he isn't guilty of it, or do we condemn him for it, or do we say he can't allegorize and therefore he doesn't, and somehow explain it away by another form of allegorization. I suppose, or, the apostle does what he does. I may not feel that his exegetical method is worth an "A," but I am in no position to call a foul on an apostle. It's what he says, and that we all agree with. When he seems to suggest that that is what Deuteronomy is about we may have our reservation. It is not enough to say with Deismann that he speaks "as a man from the city."[16] I should like to think that if we get to heaven and say to St. Paul, "Now how could you have done such dreadful exegetical methodology there in I Corinthians? You really know that in Deuteronomy it was about oxen and not about pastors getting paid," and he would say, "Yes, of course, you fool, but I was just operating with this methodology to say something that needed to be said to the church at that time, and what basically it is is an argument from the lesser and the greater an *a fortiori* as our Lord himself uses when he says, 'If God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?' The same point as the sparrows!"

Usually a distinction is made between the allegory that the Jews got into the habit of doing—or perhaps Jews is saying too much—there was Philo and before him there was Aristobulus, but Philo's methodology had no sweeping success or popularity among the Jews in general. It had its greatest success and fruit and use among the Christians. The distinction made is between the philonic, the Alexandrian use of allegory, and that of Palestine. St. Paul's use of allegory is usually put under the Palestinian rabbinical tradition of allegorical usage. Some of it doesn't all quite fit into that category either, but you do have in the Palestinian use of the allegory a powerful insistence that one may not leave the literal meaning behind for another one. You may recognize a figure or a metaphor in the Old Testament but you may not on that account come unstuck from the literal meaning of it. There is the great image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream; they don't deny that he had a dream, and that's what it was, but they then were impelled to try and make head or tail of it. It is in that tradition that the allegorizing of St. Paul mostly fits. How

strongly the Palestinian tradition felt about not coming unstuck from the literal meaning, not floating off on Platonic ideas, is shown by an injunction regarding somebody that takes for his text, Deuteronomy 22:6, "If you chance to come upon a bird's nest in any tree or on the ground, with young ones or eggs, and the mother sitting upon the young or upon the eggs, you shall not take the mother with the young; you shall let the mother go, but the young you may take to yourself." If anybody starts quoting that text in a synogogue sermon the rabbis become apprehensive. They suspect that an allegorizer is getting under way, and is likely to begin talking about the idea of the all-pervading, all-inclusive divine mercy, and making that the whole of what the law or God are about. Once you've got an attribute defined nicely for God, then you've somehow got him taped and he may not behave contrary to your definition of the attribute. We saw that operating among the Greeks, and in the Palestinian tradition of the rabbis they were going to have none of that at all, and if a man opened up his mouth and exclaimed, "Thy mercy extends even to the nest of a bird," they shouted, "Sit down and be quiet."[17] St. Paul was not reared in a context that greatly encouraged allegory; at best it was a *"harmlose homiletische Spielerei."*[18] Now I don't think we can get into St. Paul in any kind of particular detail this morning. We mentioned Hagar and Sarah and so on, and the ox treading out the corn. Let us hurriedly follow the allegory through in the Christian tradition a little.

Allegorizing saturated the syncretistic second century and even its opponents used the method as we have in Aristides, in Tatian and in Pseudo-Clement. Celsus the Gnostic describes Christian allegorizing as a retreat of shame at the immoral stories in the Bible[19]— the sort of passages that you tend to skip when you are reading the Bible at family devotions. At the same time, the Gnostics allegorized wholesale. By and large, however, the church said no to allegory. Principally the spokesmen were Iranaeus, and then most drastically Tertullian who saw philosophy as the mother of all heresy, and would have no truck with it.

The blossoming of Christian allegorizing was the achievement of Alexandria and the school there, the school then which has Philo behind it, Aristobulus and the Aristeas sort of things as well. The first man of the great school of Alexandria is Pantaenus whom his disciple Clement called " a veritable Sicilian bee." He buzzed about the fields gathering honey and then giving it to his students. Sicilian honey was the best there was in the ancient world, and this was Clement's encomium to Pantaenus about whom we know virtually nothing. As far as his life was concerned we do know he was born a pagan and had first of all a Stoic upbringing. And remember the Stoics are great on ethics and on providence, the ultimate purpose and harmony in God. Providence comes from the Stoics, not from the Bible. Pantaenus' great disciple was Clement of *Alexandria,* c. 200. He holds that philosophy is of divine origin and he seeks to do for Christians what Philo had sought to do for the Jews and their Old

Testament. Clement was a profoundly learned man but not a very original one. He is much indebted to Philo. You have again Plato and Stoicism coming through powerfully. However, it is with the greatest of the allegorists that we should perhaps spend a minute or two, and this was Origen, one of the greatest minds of all times. Born in Alexandria, c. 185, died a martyr in c. 254. He is the first one to make Christianity really academically respectable. For him all Christian doctrine ultimately rests on allegory. The Holy Spirit used the guise of historical writing only as a means for teaching philosophical theology. We have again the principal operative of the things that are unworthy of god, and he works with the anthropological categories of flesh, soul and spirit. And flesh, of course, is the literal meaning, soul is the physical allegory, and spirit is the ethical allegory, the highest category then being the ethical. You see how the ethicizing in the understanding of the Gospel is operative here also. The three levels of the text are matched by three classes of readers (*De Principiis* IV, 11). Now in summary, Origen:

> "Combined the unphilosophical tradition of the church with the Gnostic—New-Platonic tendencies of the century on a higher intellectual plane and thus created a theological structure of admirable grandeur and completeness. But he had no feeling for the deeper essential problems of a truly Christian theology. For that very reason his solutions met with an easy and apparently uncontroversial success. They were the solutions of a theorist of genius who constructed reality from the idea, (thoroughly Platonic thing to do) without being moved at a deeper level by doubt and suffering. Such people do not find it difficult to obtain pupils and successors. (They are accommodating the Zeitgeist of the day. These are the men that are unfailingly relevant!) It was only among the succeeding generations of his followers that the progress of historical development brought to light slowly but surely the spiritual inadequacies of the theology of Origen."[26]

This is from von Campenhausen. For such questions as the following Origen finds answers with the use of allegory. "What reasonable person will believe, for example, that the first, second and third day, evening and morning came into being without the sun, moon and stars, and the first day even without the sky?" Or, "who would not be led to regard unchastity as nothing when he reads how Judah lay down with a harlot or the patriarchs had several wives simultaneously." (*De Principiis*, IV, 16). Where the literal meaning is unworthy of the wisdom of revelation we must look for the *hyponoia*.

> "It is deeply moving to note with what energy and earnestness this great and devout scholar dedicates the work of a lifetime to fathoming the truth of this one ardently loved book, firmly convinced that he is on the way to penetrating ever more deeply into its content, while in fact he remains the prisoner of the

assumptions of his Platonizing and Gnosticizing outlook, incapable even of seeing what separates him from the Old and New Testaments."[21]

When you have been to Alexandria your next stop must always be Antioch. Their reaction to the hermeneutical task is somewhat parallel to that of Palestinian Jewry to the Alexandrian allegorizing: an ardent rejection of the method of allegory, a preference for the use of typology for coming to terms with the exposition of the Old Testament, and an insistence upon the historicity of it.

But so long as one is thinking in alternatives, this or that, one is still in danger of not having the organic wholeness of the text. The text does not come at us at two or three alternative levels. Whatever level it comes at us on we take it and do not go anywhere else behind, above or below it. Occasionally that level is the level of allegory.[22] Then the allegorical sense is the *sensus literalis,* the intended sense.[23]

It would be necessary to follow the method through its transmission into the Middle Ages. From Origen comes the fourfold sense of scripture. This was what Luther was reared in. Always remember that Luther entered an Augustinian monastery and as such he had the Platonic tradition as represented in Augustine, and in his early theology he operates with the categories of visible invisible, temporal eternal, earthly/heavenly, letter and spirit. And he only gets there, he is only a proper Lutheran, when he no longer is working with this duality, but when the Word of God is organically whole.

"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Incarnation overthrows the disjunction. Calvary does not illustrate an idea or evidence a principle. What happened there makes all the difference. The gift of this and the Giver are there for us, as he has appointed, in words, the water, the wine and the bread. Only in their puzzling contingent and offensive earthly lowliness is he surely there for us; elsewhere not.[24] It is necessary for us as servants of the Word to know and master the various hermeneutical and exegetical techniques so that we know how the text has and can be dealt with, and then be in a position to assess the validity and usefulness of any one of them. We have looked at only the allegorical one in rather cursory form this morning. Having done all our hard exegetical sweat, it comes down finally to being at the receiving end of the text. What it says goes. The how of the text may often perplex us, but what it says, that's it. This school has a noble tradition of training servants of the Word, men who are "under the Word," who take what it says, and don't hunt behind, over or under it, or in any way dodge it or rise above it, but take its own life-giving impact into their lives and carry it into the world. May God have good use of you.

FOOTNOTES

1. This and the following fragments are to be found in Kathleen Freeman's *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers* (Oxford, 1948), p. 22.
2. Tatian, *Oratio adversus Graecos*, xxxi. Ancilla, p. 15.
   Cf. Fritz Wehrli, *Zur Geschichte der allegorischen Deutung Homers im*

Altertum (Borna-Leipzig, 1928), p. 35 "Da zwei der kampfenden Paare nicht physikalisch gedeuted sind, . . . so war das Interesse des ersten Erklärers nicht naturwissenschoftlich, sondern apologetisch."

3. "Metrodors Mythendeutung," *Phliologus*, 66 (1907), pp. 503-510.
4. " 'Damp hinders thought' was one of his dicta, and is burlesqued in the *Clouds* (232) accordingly." J. Burnet, *Greek Philosophy* (London, 1962), p. 123. A truth incontrovertible for anyone who has lived in England and Valparaiso.
5. Compare the allegories of the sub-conscience. In another context C. S. Lewis remarks, "The obvious parallel is modern psycho-analysis and its shadowy personages such as the 'censor.' At a different level, it might be argued that the application of psychological terms at all to the unconscious is itself a species of allegory. As Passions become People for the allegorist, so x (in the unconscious) becomes Passions for the analyst; or at least he can talk of them only as if they were 'desires,' &c.—*la quale cosa secondo la veritade e falsa.* As the first century dived to the psychological by the aid of Personification the twentieth dives to the sub-soul by the aid of 'Passionification.' *The Allegory of Love* (Oxford, 1936), p. 61.
6. "Metrodorus' thoroughgoing naturalism really made Homer religiously irrelevant. Perhaps it could be called a premature synthesis of science and religion." R. M. Grant, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London, 1957), p. 4.
7. For fish see Rupert Brookes' *Heaven*.
8. Fragment 34. *Ancilla*, p. 24. Partly quoted in Plutarch's *Moralia*, "How to Study Poetry," 17, Loeb I, 91. Here Plutarch disposes of "Homer's accounts of the gods being cast forth by one another, their being wounded by men, their disagreements, and their displays of ill temper." (20E) "The poet does not imagine that it is the god who contrives evils for mankind, but by the name he rightly implies the compelling force of circumstances." (23DE). See 19E.
   Pseudo-Plutarch on the theomachy, *De Vita et Poesi Homeri*, 102.
9. Cf. T. Gompertz, *Greek Thinkers*, Trans. L. Magnus (London, 1949), I, 375. P. 355: "The transference of the conception of substance from the material world, its original home, had not yet taken place.
10. J. Tate, "Plato and Allegorical Interpretation," *Classical Quarterly*, 23 (1929), 142-154, p. 145.
11. Cf. C. S. Lewis, op. cit, p 83
12. H. von Arnim, *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta* (Leipzig), (1905), I. 539. Quoted by R. P. C. Hanson, *The Letter and the Spirit* (London, 1957) p. 7.
13. Irenaeus opens his mouth for the dumb and the blind in *Adversus Haereticos* i, 9, 4. Cf. R. M. Grant, *The Interpretation of the Bible* (London, 1963, p. 54). There is an out of the way essay on this Heraclitus in Sommerlath's *Festschrift, Bekenntnis zur Kirche* (Berlin, 1960), pp. 9-14: "Der Homerdeuter Herakleitos," by J. Leipoldt.
14. Grant, p. 52. "And among the Christian intelligentsia of the second century, revulsion from the Old Testament must have been widespread. It was, to an educated Greek, an unpleasant book. Its legislation seemed trivial, and some of its morality was clearly immoral. The God who spoke to Israel was unworthy of the respect of philosophers. Cf. Paul Heinisch, Der Einflusz Philos auf die älteste christliche Exegese (Münster, 1907), pp. 3 & 23.
15. Heinisch, p. 16. "Die Philosophie sollte ihnen ein Mittel zum besseren Verständnis ihrer Religion sein. Dasz sie vom Glauben der Väter abwichen, indem sie Lehrsätze der verschiedensten philosophischen Systeme, die oft genug mit dem Offenbarungsglauben unvereinbar waren, wie die Lehre von der Präexistenz der Seele, die Ideenlehre, die Lehre von der Boshit der Materie, als scheinbar schriftgemäsz annahmen, daran dachten sie nicht. Sie hielten sich vielmehr gerade für eifrige Juden, da sie an der Oberfläche der Schrift nicht verweilten, sondern

in ihre Tiefe eindrangen." *Legum Allegoriae* I, 108, Loeb, I, 219; *Quis Rerum* 214, Loeb IV, 389. Celsus, of course, said it was the other way round. *Contra Celsum,* I, 19-20; IV, 11, 42, 79.

16. A. Deismann, *Paulus,* 2nd ed. translated by W. E. Wilson (London, 1926), p. 103.
17. H. L. Strack and P. Billerbeck, *Kommentar zum Neuen Testament,* 4th ed. (Munich, 1965), III. 398f.
18. Strack-Billerbeck III, 393.
19. *Contra Celsum* IV, 38; I. 17; IV, 48-50, 89.
20. H. von Campenhausen, *The Fathers of the Greek Church* (London, 1957), p. 55f.
21. Campenhausen, p. 49.
22. V, Taylor, *The Gospel According to Mark* (London, 1953), p. 210. "The shade of Jülicher must not affright us from admitting allegory when we see it." Cf. J. D. Smart, *The Interpretation of Scripture* (Philadelphia, 1961), pp. 93-133.
23. Cf. *Divino afflante Spiritu;* Denzinger, 2293. W. A. IX, 456,7: germanum scripturae sensum. VII, 652, 24-27.
24. Cf. Luther's recoiling from a heavenly Christ at Marburg. Cf. A. Oepke, *Geschichtliche und übergeschichtliche Schriftauslegung* (Gütersloh, 1931) p. 8.