

Third, the creation-evolution debates seem to have been motivated by contrary views on the relations of science and theology. John Puddefoot opines that "in its premodern-childhood science presupposed divine authority; in its modern-adolescence science rebelled against arbitrary authority; and in its postmodern-adulthood science may again recognize the legitimacy of Divine authority and the value of the concept of creation ("Faith's Third Age, Theology and Science in the Third Millennium," *Colloquium* 27 [1995]: 109-128). This offers hope that creation-evolution debates may be replaced, in time, by a more genuine science-theology dialogue. This could lead to a more harmonious reevaluation of the data that is presently being interpreted in very different ways by evolutionists and creationists.

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O'Collins, Gerald. *Christology: A Biblical, Historical, and Systematic Study of Jesus*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995. 333 pp. Paper, \$18.95.

Gerald O'Collins, is professor of systematic and fundamental theology at the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. A prolific writer, he has written during the last 25 years or so in such works as *Foundations of Theology* (1971), *What Are They Saying About the Resurrection?* (1978), *The Easter Jesus* (1980), *Interpreting Jesus* (1983), *Fundamental Theology* (1981), *Interpreting the Resurrection* (1986), *Jesus Risen* (1987), *Jesus Today* (1986), *Newman After a Hundred Years* (1990), *Retrieving Fundamental Theology* (1993), *The Resurrection of Jesus Christ: Some Contemporary Issues* (1993), and numerous articles, in both encyclopedias and theological journals.

O'Collins's *Christology* finds its primary interpretative key in the resurrection of the crucified Jesus and in his presence (vii). The theme of Christ's "presence" permeates the whole book and is the subject of the last chapter, "The Possibilities of Presence." Rooted in the dogma of transubstantiation, O'Collins refers to his as a *Christology* of "presence."

O'Collins devotes nine chapters to exploring and reviewing the christological controversies and formulations that made necessary the early ecumenical Councils of Nicaea I (325), Constantinople I (381), Ephesus (431), and Chalcedon (451). But he refers to the decisions of those great, ecclesiastical councils only after exploring the biblical backgrounds of *Christology* in both the OT and the NT.

O'Collins begins his book by answering "Some Major Challenges" to the knowledge of Christ—serious "historical, philosophical and linguistic considerations" (1). Chapters 2 ("The Background") and 3 ("The Human History") offer a review of the historico-theological information about Christ provided in the Bible. Chapter 4, on the resurrection, completes the survey of biblical data about Jesus. Chapters 5 and 6 explore some of Christ's titles that point to the mysterious combination of his divinity and humanity, such as Son of God, Lord, Savior, God, and Spirit—titles and names through which the "NT Christians explicated their faith that 'the fullness of divinity' dwelt/dwells in Jesus (Col 2:9)" (135). The next three chapters (chap. 7, "To the First Council of Constantinople"; chap. 8, "Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Beyond"; and chap. 9,

"Medieval and Modern Christology") "prepare the way for the heart of the book: the systematic chapters on Christ's being and saving work" (153).

There is, however, another purpose behind chapters 2-9. "Unquestionably *the notion of presence* recalls and even summarizes many significant items which have surfaced in this book. Much of what was handled, for instance, in the first part [chaps. 2 through 9] involves this *notion*" (306, emphasis supplied). So in chapter 2, introducing Christ as the last Adam, "the head of a new humanity, Christ is *present* wherever there are men and women." As Logos and Wisdom, "his *all pervasive presence*" is acknowledged in the whole universe. "There *neither is nor* can be any situation *outside or without Christ*. By creating and sustaining the world, the Logos-Sophia *intimately accompanies everyone and everything*." Two of the OT themes, "God's fatherly/motherly love in repeatedly delivering a suffering people and the great public sign of the *divine nearness*, the Jerusalem Temple," provide "a deep sense of his *universal presence*" (306, emphasis supplied).

O'Collins argues that the same concept of *divine presence* is seen in Christ's incarnation and public ministry, through which "Jesus showed himself inseparably connected with the inbreaking of the divine kingdom. With his person, God's rule had come and was coming. His powerful presence brought the divine kingdom close to all." Even on the cross, nailed between two criminals, he manifested "his healing presence to sinners and the suffering" in "close solidarity" and "an anonymous identification with human pain" (307). The universal nature of the salvation which he made possible, his saving power over all, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the whole world, all point to his cosmic presence—present wherever his Spirit is present, which is everywhere. The Spirit mediates the presence of Christ in the community of the church by means of the sacraments, especially in the Eucharist through the *epiclesis*, "bringing about the intense and real presence of Christ for the church and the world" (307).

"The notion of presence" is woven through these and other topics handled in chapters 2-9. The same notion also enters explicitly or implicitly, into the systematic treatment of Christology (chaps. 10-13). In upholding and reflecting on the divinity of Christ, chapter 10 argues that "faced with him, people found and find themselves in the presence of the Holy One" (308). "Then the interpretation of evil and sin as alienation from oneself, from others, and from God obviously implies a loss of presence in each case" (308). "Christ's reconciling work as Savior entails bringing about an end to this loss and a new presence to oneself, to the world and God" (309).

At this point O'Collins surprises the reader, introducing an unexpected element in the "presence" of Christ. "Finally, reflection suggests a feminine dimension to presence" (313), a "feminine quality" in Jesus, anticipated already in the OT's "personification of divine activity, Lady Wisdom, who is present and active in all creation," and by Jesus presenting himself in the NT as "a mother hen" (319). Continuing his veiled tribute to the feminist movement of our times, O'Collins defines this "feminine quality of Jesus" as "being receptive, nurturing, interior, self-assured, self-possessed, and not needing constant contest to earn and to maintain one's identity. Being present belongs unmistakably to the list" (*ibid.*). It would be appropriate to ask if these are really exclusive "feminine" qualities,

because at first sight they appear as much masculine as feminine!

O'Collins has still another surprise reserved for the reader, the "Jewishness" of Jesus' presence. We are almost tempted to exclaim with the Roman writer, "*O tempora! O mores!*" in seeing this tribute now paid to the new climate in the Vatican-Israel relationship. But there is still more, a bridge stretched by O'Collins's Christology of "presence" to the non-Christian religions. O'Collins finds "three particular advantages for the perspective of presence: its Jewishness, its feminine face, and its spiritual, pastoral, and even mystical possibilities" (318). What "mystical possibilities"? "Respect for the multiform variety of his presence allows us to acknowledge Christ as everywhere present but in an infinite variety of ways" (322). This view looks more like pantheism or panentheism than the Christology of Scripture, about a Redeemer who offers the merits of his sacrifice in the heavenly sanctuary, as is so clearly depicted in the Epistle to the Hebrews.

O'Collins's book can be divided into two parts. The first nine chapters, historical and objective, trace the development of Christology through the Council of Chalcedon and beyond. The last five chapters offer O'Collins's main contribution: a utopian Christology of "presence," a reflection of contemporary trends such as ecumenism, the feminist struggle, and the now-cordial relations between Roman Catholics and Jews. Is it not strange that in a Christology no mention is made of God's law and human sinfulness—the human predicament that Christ came to solve? How is one to understand O'Collins's total silence about Jesus' high-priestly intercession for man in the heavenly sanctuary? Can we really trust in a Christ whose statements are not necessarily his, but put on his lips by others (146)? Can one be satisfied with a Christology deprived of the "blessed hope" of Christ's return, reducing it to a more or less meaningless "eschaton"?

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Perkins, PHEME. *First and Second Peter, James, and Jude*. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching. Ed. James Luther Mays. Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995. 204 pp. Hardcover, \$22.00.

Professor Perkins has added another volume to an excellent commentary series of which I find the New Testament volumes (Part I is edited by Achtemeier) particularly helpful in my exegetical classes for prospective pastors.

Despite the title of this volume, Perkins does not follow the canonical order but bases the commentary's structure on her dating of each epistle, earliest to latest: 1 Peter, James, Jude, 2 Peter. The order of the last two is based on the position held by many recent commentators that the author of 2 Peter used Jude extensively in the composition of his document.

Perkins does not accept the tradition that these epistles were written by apostles. She suggests that an apostle may have dictated 1 Peter, but points out that evidence for apostolic authorship for James, Jude, and 2 Peter "remains thin" (2). It is a pity that, due to space limitations, she never fully develops her position, instead of ignoring or just touching on contrary positions. For example, Ralph P. Martin suggests an early date for James with a reworking of the text by a later