

in hand, the common person is thought to be equipped to challenge not only the most sophisticated theologian, but also the scientist or philosopher—even perhaps the social scientist!

While this Common Sense position may be philosophically and theologically weak, the problem to which such apparent anti-intellectualism is a response is a real one. The world, at least for the past hundred years, has fallen into the hands of experts. These professionals, by virtue of their very expertise, have an interest in keeping their disciplines or skills away from the access of common sense. The Christian community has shared in this willingness to fragment

reality and to leave it in control of the specialists and the technicians. Nineteenth-century Christian theologian-philosophers, by contrast, provided intellectual leadership by relating their expertise to all areas of reality in terms that common sense could apprehend.

Today the vestiges of such approaches may seem hopelessly simplistic. Yet the ideal is an important one. In the Christian community the special sciences should not be exalted over—or virtually divorced from—ordinary experience. It is in such ordinariness, after all, that Christ seems to have expressed the most interest.

Ancient heresies and a strange Greek verb

Catherine C. Kroeger

In Paul's first epistle to Timothy, bishop of Ephesus, there is a passage which has perplexed the church of Jesus Christ:

I will therefore that men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands without wrath and doubting. In like manner also, that women adorn themselves in modest apparel, with shamefacedness and sobriety; not with braided hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works. Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. *But I suffer not a woman to teach nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.* For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression. Notwithstanding she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety (2:8-15).

Yet the author of these words brought Priscilla as well as her husband Aquila to Ephesus to serve in a teaching capacity (Acts 18) and made significant use of women in his ministry. He hails several as fellow-laborers in the gospel (Rom. 16:1-15; Phil. 4:2f.) and asks the church to give submission to such as these (1 Cor. 16:16). He stated furthermore that in Christ there is neither male nor female and that before the Lord there is neither man without the woman nor woman

without the man (Gal. 3:28; 1 Cor. 11:11f.).

How can this attitude be reconciled with the text in 1 Timothy? And what of the doctrine that women must continue to bear responsibility for the sin of Eve? How does this accord with Christ's full and perfect atonement for sin and with the biblical precept that the child should not be held accountable for the parent's sin (Deut. 24:16; 2 Chron. 25:4; Jer. 31:29f.; Ezek. 18:20)? And then there is the matter of salvation through childbearing: how does this fit into the New Testament affirmation of salvation by faith?

The twelfth verse (italicized above) contains a rare Greek verb, found only here in the entire Bible. This word, *authentēin*, is ordinarily translated "to bear rule" or "to usurp authority"; yet a study of other Greek literary sources reveals that it did not ordinarily have this meaning until the third or fourth century, well after the time of the New Testament. Essentially the word means "to thrust oneself." Its earliest meanings are noteworthy, since they might provide a quite different understanding of a difficult text. We must also examine the closely related nouns *authentia* (later translated as "power"), *authentēs* (after the New Testament period, "master") and the adjective *authentikos*, which still survives in English as "authentic." Although the usages prior to and during the New Testament period are few and far between, they are significant.

The Attic orator Antiphon used the term *authentēs* to mean "murderer" in four different instances in legal

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briefs of murder cases and once to mean suicide, as did Dio Cassius. Thucydides, Herodotus, and Aeschylus also use the word to denote one who slays with his own hand, and so does Euripides. The Jewish Philo, whose writings are contemporary with the New Testament, meant "self-murderer" by his use of the term.

In Euripides the word begins to take on a sexual tinge. Menelaos is accounted a murderer because of his wife's malfeasance, and Andromache, the adored wife of the fallen Hector, is taken as a concubine by the *authentēs*, who can command her domestic and sexual services. In fury the legitimate wife castigates Andromache with sexually abusive terms as "having the effrontery to sleep with the son of the father who destroyed your husband, in order to bear the child of an *authentēs*." In the extended passage she mingles the concepts of incest and domestic murder, so that love and death color the meaning. The word also occurs in a homosexual sense in a speech by Theseus, king of Athens, where love of young boys was considered a virtue rather than a vice.

Although one finds hints in certain modern lexicons, the erotic sense of *authentēs* is often ignored. The grammarian Phrynichus, writing approximately A.D. 180, explained that the word is composed of two parts—*autos*, "self," and *hentos* from *hiēmi*: to "thrust out from oneself" or to "desire." The word should never, he announced, be used to denote tyranny, but rather murder by one's own hand, as with a sword. (The sword was considered a phallic symbol in ancient Greece.) Moeris, also in the second century, advised his students to use another word, *autodikein*, as it was less coarse than *authentēin*. The Byzantine Thomas Magister reiterates the warning against using this objectionable term. The charred fragments of a scroll excavated from the ruins of Herculaneum demonstrate the use of *authentēin* in a parallel position to "those wounded by the terrible shafts of Eros." The lines were penned by the rhetorician and obscene epigrammatist, Philodemus, who was nicknamed "Lascivus."

In the Wisdom of Solomon 12:6, part of the Septuagint Apocrypha, one finds *authentās goneis*, "parents engendering helpless souls," in the midst of a discussion of the abominable fertility and mystery rites of the Canaanites. Although God gave the Canaanites ample opportunity to repent, yet

Thou wert not ignorant that theirs was a wicked conception, their evil inseminated, and that their attitude could never be changed. For it was a cursed seed from the beginning.

Pregnancy as a result of pagan orgies was an ancient commonplace, but to the Jewish mind illegitimacy

was repugnant in any form. The same book states elsewhere:

The wives [of the godless] are frivolous, their children criminal, their parenthood is under a curse. . . . The children of adultery are like fruit that never ripens; they have sprung from a lawless union, and will come to nothing. Even if they attain length of life, they will be of no account and at the end their old age will be without honor. If they die young, they will have no hope, no consolation in the hour of judgment; the unjust generation has a hard fate in store for it. . . . The swarming progeny of the wicked will come to no good. . . . Children engendered in unlawful union are living evidence of the parents' sin when God brings them to account (3:10-4:6, NEB).

The crime of the *authentās* parents appears to be the procreation of souls doomed to everlasting damnation—although most English translations render the phrase "parents murdering innocent souls." The Latin Vulgate translates it *parentes auctores*, "parents procreating innocent souls"; for in the period before the birth of Christ *authentēs* came to mean the "author" or "originator" of an action. Such usage occurs in Josephus, Diodorus of Sicily, Eusebius, and Polybius. By the second century A.D., the word was used for "creator," for a self-thrusting one could both murder and create. Most modern scholars accept the rendition of "original status" for *authentia* in 3 Maccabees 2:29.

In Egyptian magic and Gnostic papyri, the terms *authentēs*, *authentikos*, and *authentia* designated the original, the primordial, the "authentic"; and by the third century, the concept of the primal source had merged with that of power and authority. In most ancient theologies, creative acts were also sexual ones; and the erotic connotation of *authentēin* lingered on.

In a lengthy description of various tribes' sexual habits, Michael Glycas, the Byzantine historian, uses this verb to describe women "who make sexual advances to men and fornicate as much as they please without arousing their husbands' jealousy." The eighth-century folk epic *Digenes Akrites* repeatedly employs *authentēs* as a term of endearment, usually in an amorous sense, and quite often its use ushers in an erotic scene such as this:

"That was why, my *authentēs* [lover], fear came over me." We kissed a thousand times and went into the tent.

In another scene introduced by the use of both *authentēs* and the feminine *authentēria*, there follows so amorous an episode that the mother-in-law is obliged to douse the couple with cold water lest they should be completely overcome by the heat of their passion.

But what can the term *authentēin* imply in 1 Timothy 2:12? In his Commentary on 1 Timothy 5:6, St. John

Chrysostom uses *authentia* to denote "sexual license." If the word in this context refers to sexual behavior, it puts a quite different interpretation on the entire passage. For instance, if we were to translate the passage, "I forbid a woman to teach or *discuss higher algebra* with a man," we would understand the prohibition to be directed against instruction in mathematics. Suppose it read, "I forbid a woman to teach or *talk Japanese* with a man." Then we infer that the injunction applies to the teaching of language. "I forbid a woman to teach or *dangle a man from a high wire*" would presuppose that the instructor was an aerialist. "I forbid a woman to teach or *engage in fertility practices* with a man" would imply that the woman should not involve a man in the heretical kind of Christianity which taught licentious behavior as one of its doctrines. Such a female heretic did indeed "teach to fornicate" in the Thyatiran church mentioned in Revelation 2:20 (cf. 2:14f.; Num. 25:3; 31:15f.).

Too often we underestimate the seriousness of this problem for the New Testament church. A passage in 2 Peter expresses concern not only for those drawn into this error but also for the illegitimate children which it produced:

But Israel had false prophets as well as true; and you likewise will have false teachers among you. . . . Having eyes full of adultery, that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls, an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; *cursed children*, which have forsaken the right way . . . following the way of Balaam. . . . They utter big empty words, and make of sensual lusts and debauchery a bait to catch those who have barely begun to escape from their heathen environment (2:1,14f.,18).

It is evident that a similar heresy is current at Ephesus, where these false teachers "led captive silly women laden with sins" (2 Tim. 3:6f.).

Licentious doctrines continued to vex the church for several centuries, to the dismay of the church fathers. Clement of Alexandria wrote a detailed refutation of the various groups who endorsed fornication as accepted Christian behavior. He complained of those who had turned love-feasts into sex orgies, of those who taught women to "give to every man that asketh of thee," and of those who found in physical intercourse a "mystical communion." He branded one such lewd group *authentai* (the plural of *authentēs*).

Others have kicked over the traces and waxed wanton, having become indeed "wild horses who whinny after their neighbors' wives." They have abandoned themselves to lust without restraint and persuade their neighbors to live licentiously.

Continuing, he describes them as

lecherous, incontinent men who fight with their tails, children of darkness and anger, thirsty for their

blood, *authentai*, and murderers of their neighbors (*Stromata*, III.xviii).

Such, then, are the deluded Christians who persuade their neighbors' wives to live voluptuously.

But if 1 Timothy 2:12 is understood as a prohibition against promulgating licentious doctrines and practices, how does this tie in with the entire passage? Women are bidden to dress modestly and with propriety (vv. 9-10)—surely a necessity in a city which boasted thousands of prostitutes. Sumptuary laws forbade any but harlots the adornment Paul here proscribes. "Imitate not the courtesans," thundered John Chrysostom in his commentary on this passage—and widens his censure to include seductive voice as well as dress. But "silence" has here to do with receptivity to learning Christian doctrine in "subjection to the gospel."

In Ephesus, where a great multitude of sacred courtesans were attached to the shrine of Diana, women had much to unlearn. Previously they had been taught that fornication brought the worshiper into direct communion with the deity. It is worth noting that certain Gnostics and Nestorians employed *authentia* to indicate a force binding together the fleshly and the divine. But converts must learn that the one Mediator between God and man was Christ Jesus, and that they must practice their newfound faith in quiet decorum rather than in the wild and clamorous orgies demanded by Ephesian religion.

The devil had once seduced Eve (the verb in vv. 13 and 14 is also a sexual one); and Jewish tradition held that Satan chose the woman because she was newer and therefore more gullible. She was quite genuinely deceived, supposing that she would gain the knowledge of good and evil; and she involved Adam, who was not deceived, in the transgression. To women who had been trained in childhood in the gross immorality of the Phrygian cult, the admonition was certainly appropriate. But prostitutes were active in many areas of ancient life, and some of these found Christ as well.

Virtually without exception, female teachers among the Greeks were courtesans, such as Aspasia, who numbered Socrates and Pericles among her students. Active in every major school of philosophy, these *hetairai* made it evident in the course of their lectures that they were available afterwards for a second occupation. But the Bible teaches that to seduce men in such a manner was indeed to lead them to slaughter and the halls of death (cf. Prov. 2:18; 5:5; 7:27; 9:18). The verb *authentēin* is thus peculiarly apt to describe both the erotic and the murderous.

Verse 15, with its reference to salvation through

childbearing, might refer either to the woman's social and economic salvation in marriage and family or to a concern for children brought into the world as a result of immoral practice. We have referred above to the "tainted children" of 2 Peter and those described in Wisdom of Solomon as headed for a dreadful fate, rising up against their parents at the Day of Judgment.

Paul was familiar with the Wisdom of Solomon, and he quoted from it in Romans and 1 Corinthians. As

the word was so rare, the use of *authentain* here must have triggered a recollection of the "parents engendering helpless souls" in Wisdom. But the gospel of Jesus Christ offered redemption to mother and child alike when they have been born anew in the family of God. The stigma of illegitimacy could be removed and the personality healed; and the redemptive maternal attitudes are faith and love and holiness with self-control.

Imagination, rites, and mystery:

why did Christ institute sacraments?

Thomas T. Howard

Editor's note: Sacrament has not been a lively notion among evangelical Protestants, Thomas Howard noted in these pages last month. The idea that, *in a mystery*, physical components (bread, wine, water) can not only remind us of something we are trying to recall and witness to, but can in fact make that something *real* to us—this idea has been crowded into a corner by the typically Protestant penchant for articulating Christian vision in satisfactory propositions.

The starting point for sacramentalist vision is the principle that the visible and proximate may be "full of the majesty of Thy glory." Material things incarnate their own excellence and beauty, and at the same time bespeak significances beyond themselves.

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Besides the idea that the world is both real and metaphorical, there is another principle at work for the sacramentalist. *Enactment*, or ceremony, is very much of the essence. A sacramentalist would urge that he is not fetching some occult or arcane notion from afar and imposing it on things, but is merely proceeding on plain principles that are there for anyone to see.

The principle of enactment is certainly at work in Baptism and Eucharist, when we "act out" what we believe to be true. Not only are we not doing something peculiar here, we are in fact carrying to its ulti-

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mate point of significance a phenomenon that is absolutely central to universal human practice in every tribe, culture, and civilization from the beginning of myth and history to the present. It is this: that we mortal men are ritual creatures. We are forever "acting out" things.

Take greetings, for example: there is hardly a culture anywhere that does not have some ritual convention for greeting people. It may be a handshake, a bow, a nod, or whatever, but the principle is always there. We act out with physical gestures (grasping hands, bending the waist, nodding) something that is invisibly at work in the situation. We wish to signal the ideas of welcome and peace and friendship, so, rather than going through a long discourse on the idea, we do something physical. We are ritual creatures. We take the significance, and let a conventional, physical ritual carry it.

Similarly with eating. The business of eating is nothing more, at least from the pragmatic view, than the transfer of energy from point A (the peapod, or the rasher of bacon) to point B (my bloodstream) so that I can keep going. The progress of technology has devised enormously efficient means for streamlining this transfer (bottles of glucose, tubes, and needles); but no tribe or society has adopted these streamlined methods for lunch or dinner. Why not? Why do we all follow the laborious and circuitous route of fixing and cooking and garnishing . . . to say nothing of setting tables with folded napkins and cutlery, china, and crystal?

It is because we are ritual creatures. These routine functions somehow seem to us to imply more than mere utility. To try to bespeak our sense of this further significance in things, we deck them. We festoon them. We set them about with ritual, even if the ritual



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