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History, Salvation-History, and Typology (YDS 18-278)

Frei gave this talk at a symposium in April 1981, and later gave an account of it in a letter to Juliann Hartt (reproduced after the main text). As Frei says in the letter, the talk was 'about discerning patterns of providential government in the sequence of historical events', and Frei runs this ecclesiologically in a dialectical way: the people of God are a sign of the eschatological shape of all humanity, and human history in general foreshadows the travail and glory of God's people. As is his wont, Frei rejects any view that might 'reduce specific events to instances of either natural pattern or ideal generalization.' Such a view involves claims about agency and events; it also involves claims about typological reading and political theology.

Sacred and Profane History

For at least as long as the Augustinian tradition has been with us, and probably well before then in writings like those of Irenaeus and Eusebius of Caesarea, Christians have puzzled about the relation of their community to the world at large and to the passage of empire – under the eye of that providence which is also the consummation toward which all things temporal are hurrying.¹ One can pick out almost at random a number of topics under which theologians have translated that elemental human and religious concern into their own more technical themes. Perhaps most pervasive has been the constant, haunting background persuasion they have shared with all their fellow-creatures that the sense of time's passing is countered only in affirming its opposite, a permanence that transcends time completely. But as soon as we take refuge in some such realm, we ask immediately just what does it refer to, and even if it does refer to something other than the projected reversal of our experience of constant passage, is that realm the fulfillment or the denial of our ordinary temporal experience, or something wholly different from both?

If this is the common screen against which we all play our games, or the canvas on which the most serious among us, the speculative philosophers and literary artists paint their varied and often awe-inspiring pictures, Christian theologians refract some special images from it. Perhaps most persistent has been the question of the relation between sacred and profane history, or the special destiny of the Christian community, this peculiar people, the spiritual Israel, among all the others in the world. Christians who have reflected about human historical destiny are not exactly famous for their genteel treatment of the nations when they imagine the last day, and from Augustine's time to that of the Puritans, pagans and the worldly within the church have had good reason

to think that the rope of Christian mercy looked more like the hangman's noose than a strand to aid the drowning. But even the sternest Christians have hesitated to consign the whole political and cultural history of humankind to the ash heap. After all, it was in the wake of belief in the Incarnation that the vision of a single universal history first became strong, even if God would save only a remnant from all the nations of the world. But surely we would not want to spend too much time on a topic not only speculative but arid in the extreme, the ultimate obliteration of all save Christian history. But there is a related matter that invites attention: The Christian community is indeed distinct and at the same time spread in degrees of most uneven density throughout the world. But its presence among the peoples of the earth is hardly of the sort contemplated by our vigorous European and Anglo-American forebears when they sallied forth in that most missionary of centuries, the nineteenth, to Christianize the world in one generation. Indeed, since then, though the church of Christ surely remains 'catholic' – small 'c' – the course of secular history has provided it with a variety of surprises that make Christian modesty a virtue much to be appreciated. In the face of this development which often makes us look like sectarians by necessity because the *corpus christianum* with which we would naturally affiliate has vanished, all kinds of old questions are posed to Christians about their relation to their non-Christian neighbors in a way that calls for a candor, a sense of equality, a grace that we have not often mustered in the past. 'Openness' is the term one often hears about these relations from Christians and one tends to swallow for reasons that have as much to do with the nature of Christianity as with human pride. The openness all too often resembles that of the oyster shell under the knife.

The theologian undertaking to depict these matters under the topic of history and human destiny cannot help wondering, given a sense of increasing cultural isolation of the Christian community, and yet also of its increasing sense of solidarity with humankind, which figure is most appropriate: Ought we to see sacred history, the history of the Christian community, as ultimately identical with, subsumed under profane history, human history at large, so that Christianity stands as an eschatological synecdoche for humanity? Or is it, conversely, that the Christian theologian has to see profane political and cultural history incorporated into and thus as figure or foreshadowing reality of sacred history – after the fashion, very broadly speaking, of the New England Puritans before the Half-Way Covenant came to disturb their vision of a holy commonwealth?

Which, if either, is logically subordinate to, or a sub-species of the other? General history or salvation history? It's hardly fair to raise a question and then refuse to answer it, but unless I am very much mistaken there is no compelling Christian theological reason to solve this matter, not even perhaps to think of it in terms of either/or. There are some comforts to be drawn from

the dialectical method, the reconciliation of opposites, even if one refuses to heed its most rigid and dogmatic embodiment in the Hegelian vision of the procedure. The theologian would be wise, I think, to state the issue and its penultimate seriousness, and lay out the positions – on the one hand a God who endows *all* his human creatures with freedom and preserves his *full* creation from ultimate loss or absurdity; who, on the other, in the fulfillment of that creation as well as its radical redress in the face of evil has focused his providence in the person of Jesus Christ in whom the reign of God has come near, a reign foreshadowed, not embodied, in the precarious existence of Christian community. Beyond that the theologian would do well to commend the dialectic of the two sides to the encompassing mercy of God. A commitment to universalism concerning human destiny and a commitment to the specificity of sacred or salvation history within it are not in ultimate conflict, even if the manner of their cohesion is hidden.

The relation of sacred to profane or Christian to universal history has been enabled as a topic for inquiry in Christian reflection about history in the first place because by and large Christians have avoided two contrary extremes. On the one hand, they have refused the complete consignment of the sense of time's passage and therefore the image of the person, time's creature, to the explanatory mechanism of the development of physical nature. In this they have found the most surprising allies, from anthropologists who have refused to bend to social biology, insisting instead that the turn from natural to cultural evolution is a distinctive one, to scientists in the role of moralists, as when T.H. Huxley in his remarkable Romanes lecture, with the full amoral force of natural selection as an explanatory device in his mind, begged his audience not to allow humanity to imitate nature – one of the most passionate pleas against social Darwinism on record.²

On the other hand Christians have by and large refused to appropriate the passage of time simply to the transcendental structure or to the consciousness of the human being. When people die and empires collapse something more changes than a perspective that finds itself constitutive of what it observes on the historical scene and vice versa. This sophisticated yet simplistic tool for historicizing human being completely, for example in Existentialism, has been a siren song in modern theology. But its self-imposed isolation from the *natural* structures of existence hobbles that sense of the coherence of human being with the larger universe on which our sense of time as the connected passage of events depends. The Existentialist and the historicist allow us none of that, only the present as our project and all else as derivative or a mirror of it.

The extent to which Christian theologians can affirm the coexistence of sacred and profane, Christian and universal history as a single, powerful vision is probably proportional to the degree that they avoid both of those extremes.

In addition, it is probably dependent on their ability to avoid the lure of reductionist compromising middle ways, for instance the covertly or even quite overtly anthropocentric teleologies and quasi-teleologies that appropriate humanity fully to nature or vice versa – the natural and idealistic panentheisms of our day. Against such compromises too, the Christian theologian has to assert the Christian belief in providence. Though not directly manifest in extrinsic or immanent teleology of the natural process or consciousness process, God sustains his creatures, non-human as well as human, whom he has called into being, one creation in two realms, cosmos and history, the revealed unity of their administration being not the collapse of either into the other but Jesus Christ as the all-governing providence of God.

Julian Hartt on History

No theologian in our day has asserted the complex and fit unity of the divine providential government against all reductionist tendencies in theology more powerfully than Julian Hartt. I refer you here, simply as an example, to section VI and VII of Ch. XI, ‘Man’s Being as History’ in *A Christian Critique of American Culture*.³ In fact, my last few sentences have been no more than a slightly extended exposition of some of the things he has said in this connection.⁴ And he has said them with very few allies. Only Austin Farrer comes to mind, except that he does not share Hartt’s elemental concern with history as a theological topic, and with the human being as political agent. It may well be that the one theologian whose both sympathetic and antipathetic presence haunts the thinking of Julian Hartt most of all, the one who has shown many of the same interests and the same tough-minded independence, is Karl Barth.

That is another story, but in the present context, the affirmation of history as one of the realms of providential rule, it is appropriate to mention one common interest between them. Both theologians refused to be scared away from the metaphysical freight traditionally so essential in the statement of Christian doctrine, yet so strictly proscribed by the regnant fashion in academic theology from the 1930s to the 1960s, indebted as it was to both a narrower and a broader Idealistic tradition. Various called dialectical theology, neo-orthodoxy, biblical theology, the salvation–historical school, this school placed a very heavy emphasis on what it was pleased to call existence, decision, in history. It turned out the historical existence so affirmed was no more than a circle, sometimes called a hermeneutical circle, in which the self functioned to reduce the events of the past to its own engagement with a select sketch of them, namely those depicted in the Old and New Testaments, and the change in perspective or consciousness – for that is what ‘existence as historicness’ really amounted to – that one underwent in connection with that engagement.

Furthermore, the designations of meaning interwoven in that stretch of the past – creation, sin, Christ, the Kingdom of God, the end of things – were heavily dependent on, perhaps even reducible to, the mode of one's engagement with or perspective on them. As for the status of these privileged events in relation to universal history, two options were open. Either the privileged events had a double status, one existential and *heilsgeschichtlich*, the other purely factual, part of a trivial, objective sequential chain with which positivist historians could deal most adequately. The other option was that one simply left the status of the relation hanging as an unknown quantity. This alternative is quite different from the view we mentioned earlier which finally commends universal and sacred history to the mercy of God in their mysterious unity, their tensed belonging-together in pre-eschatological distinction.

Both Julian Hartt and Karl Barth rejected this abbreviated salvation-historical reduction of a powerful or once powerful vision of history.⁵ Hartt proposes some elements of a general theory of history consonant with the stronger, more than historicist claims he wanted to make.⁶ I want to reflect on them though perhaps more for my own than his purposes. In contrast to the all-encompassing view of the person as perspective, the human being has to be seen at least in some situations as *agent*. There is no drastic but a graded distinction between historical subjecthood and historical agency. One can say that being a historical subject is to identify consciously with an antecedent community, including vicarious participation in its storied past. 'Historical agent' builds on that context; subjecthood seems to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for it. Yet it is inadequate to say that I am part subject, part agent. I am the same person and not merely a set of relations, there is no single description of my life, scanning a variety of contexts.⁷

But 'historical agent' has to do in addition with the sort of genius whom Hegel called the world-historical individual. But I take it that Hartt immediately wants to lift his hat to Hegel and say farewell as soon as Hegel makes the passions of this agent the plaything of impersonal reason or of Marxist social forces. I am not sure whether Hartt wants or even needs to plead as alternative a plasticity in the field on which actions are played out, so that one can speak of 'individuality, of self-causality and intentionality'⁸ *instead* of opting for one of the several available 'larger force' explanations, Hegel's, Marx's or Freud's – in short instead of opting for the report that the various masters of suspicion render in lieu of the agent's own description.⁹ Or whether, instead of pleading for an alternative in such a strong sense, one simply says that agent description, or agent-like description is of a different order of description, for which reasons, institutions and enactments count in establishing connections and sequences. It just simply isn't the same as describing the event in terms of general patterns that generate enough pressure

on human beings to become historical causes, and there is no super-description encompassing these two descriptions.

Whichever option we choose, there is thus far no reason to give up on agent or agent-like historical description, nor do we - in case we leave moot the metaphysical appeal of the first option - need to appeal to something like phenomenological theory to back up the possibility of agent description. At a certain level it simply works and nothing is a substitute for it there. Further, even though it does not easily mix with general force description, it is not at all condemned to pure conjunction of individual acts. Hartt says 'X's intention is thrown around by forces he cannot identify in advance, and he will not be able to control them perfectly once they take shape. Nevertheless X intends that these forces shall coalesce in the form of e. This is a project, not just a hope or a wish ... X's intention is realized when the difficulties, the counterthrusts of circumstance, are themselves countered'.¹⁰

In other words, agent-description of history is the interplay of character and circumstance, the thing we call plot in fiction. We can go on from there to add other elements, such as *pattern*, i.e., the unfinished or cumulative, confused interface of human designs. On such a reading, agent-accounts can only be highly particular accounts since they cover only a limited number of contingent events or happening meaning patterns: '... event [is] a fabric of meaning overarching a quotidian world; an intentionality unifying multitudinous intendings.' Historical agent accounts are not accounts of nature, but of an extension of what Hartt, using a favorite world of his, calls the quotidian world.¹¹ It is as hard to get purposive agency *out* of historical description, at least of one kind, as it is to get it *into* descriptions of natural and cosmic patterns.

Discerning Providence

It seems to me that when the Christian theologian speaks about sacred history and its relation to secular, universal history, his first duty is to avoid the historicist or perspectivist reduction. Whatever his way of going about it, he is discerning a *public* pattern in which humankind is seen as united in destiny, albeit in a dialectic of sacred and profane history. I said earlier that one ought to leave the working of the dialectic to the mercy of God; I did not mean to say, however, that we ought to exempt that relation from the patterning that one regards as the equivalent of Law in the agent or agent-like description of history. On the contrary, this precisely is the heart of the difference between a perspectivist and a more nearly full-orbed view of salvation history. Here we will have to tread cautiously.

In the first place we now have to regard the whole of human history as the enactment of a complex design. Even if that design is enacted *ab extra*, it is

shaped in the form of a cumulative pattern, the fullness of which is not known at any single stage. The connective web of this narrative is neither purely random nor necessary but characterized by that fitness of sequence which is the combination of teleology and contingency.

Second, the Christian, will claim that the *character* of the pattern is not clear in history at large but rather in salvation history. To sense fragments of design and to sense a design fragmentarily are two different things. This in turn leads to two consequences: firstly, one will have to show elements of design in the description of the temporal sequence of salvation history; secondly, one will have to make room for such elements in relating secular to sacred history.

Figuration or typology is in doubly bad odor today. For one thing it is 'pre-critical', and thus superannuated as the result of a later outlook. Second, it enjoyed a brief and disastrous vogue in connection with 'biblical theology' at the end of World War II. Yet it seems to me that something like it is indispensable if we are going to give descriptive substance to the claim that history is the story of the providential governance of God the Father of Jesus Christ among humankind. Let us remind ourselves: Figures are events or patterns of meaning that are real or have an integrity in their own right and in addition foreshadow that which is to fulfill them. The line between allegory and figure or type is a wobbly one, but Erich Auerbach's suggestion still seems as good as any: In allegory, unlike figuration, the concrete sense structure gives way and becomes dissipated under the web of meanings. Figuration is also to be distinguished from prophecy, although both have a common core in connecting past and future as promise and fulfillment: Prophecy is referring a state of affairs to the future or one event to another one that fulfils it. Thus the statement in Jeremiah 31:31ff: 'Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah' – is obviously prophecy. Karl Barth uses the two rituals from Leviticus, one involving two birds, another two goats, and suggests that the actions in each instance and together – one a sin offering, the other a cleansing from leprosy – are a figure of a complex and in their interaction unfinished reference to the person of Jesus in the New Testament.¹² But Barth expresses a reservation unthinkable in earlier figural exegesis: In such cases as these, where figural exegesis is not an instance of the notorious *vaticinia ex eventu* on the part of the writers for which the Gospel writers get their wrists slapped by modern critics, one has to keep open the option that the actual referent, even if one can show exegetically that it points beyond the images and actions themselves, is 'a magnitude as yet unknown to us', or that there is no referent at all, 'that the Old Testament has no object, that its witness points into empty space, that there where its narratives and its sacrificial images and the blessings and woes of its

prophets point, there is nothing and thus nothing to be seen now or at any time.’¹³ Or the referent is Jesus Christ.

Barth wants to build plasticity, openness or ambiguity into the future temporal thrust given with his exegesis and at the same time claim a teleological pattern between signifier and signified, or rather between story or image and referent. It is an oddly ironic and yet depth-dimensional performance. The framework is at once semiotic and epistemological or perhaps literary and historical: the story lives in its own medium or its own world so that its referent also has a purely storied status, but at the same time the story is a rendering of a real world and therefore tensed between past and future.

I suppose he would claim that the reason figurative reading in the classical and pre-critical period did no such double duty was that it didn’t have to, or rather that it did the double duty without intruding the differences – for there was no such sharp distinction between the literary *sensus literalis* and a putatively factual or incorrect depiction that could be independently confirmed or disconfirmed. But, he would also claim, the procedure is really the same under the earlier condition and under the somewhat different and perhaps temporary conditions of a world picture gradually introduced since the Seventeenth Century, which may in turn give way to a new, post-modern world picture. In a later volume he pleads for a kind of biblical reading remarkably similar to a better known suggestion Paul Ricoeur made in a different context. Barth says that we had to move from a pre-critical naïveté to a critical reading of the Bible, but that if one knew how to read it at all, if one had any literary sense in effect, one had then to go on from there to a post-critical naïveté, quite the same as Ricoeur’s second naïveté.

The upshot of this reflection on Barth’s procedure shows the contrast to the salvation-historical school’s perspectivism, with its reference to the ‘mighty acts of God’ which actually had no referent outside one’s own interpretation of the history of Israel. Here, instead, the sacred history is a story in time, and in fact profane history would have to fit itself into it as an act of interpretation rather than the reverse – much after the fashion that Sacvan Bercovitch suggests the rhetorical formula of the jeremiad, quintessential typology, was the rhetorical device that set the terms in which Americans of an earlier day saw their secular history incorporated into sacred history.¹⁴

It is a procedure obviously not without risks, but there is in it a built-in resistance against the hubris of every kind of community. The content of the story provides it. The contrast to the perspectivism or biblical theology or the salvation historical school is most strikingly expressed in a definition which Auerbach sets forth:

Figural interpretation establishes a connection between two events or persons, the first of which signifies not only itself but also the second, while the second encompasses or fulfils the first. The two poles of the figure are separate in time, but both, being real events or figures, are within time, within the stream of historical life. *Only the understanding of the two persons or events is a spiritual act ...*¹⁵

It is a striking reversal of the usual point of view we have come to accept uncritically in theology ever since we felt we had to march in step to the vaunted ‘turn to the subject’ in philosophy.

Precisely because understanding the teleological connection between the events is a judgment that is at once historical, moral and, yes, esthetic, one cannot escape elements that are odd. The teleology is expressed by the temporal lapse or transition, perhaps even by the risk of being wrong in the juxtaposition. It is, in any event, highly reminiscent of some of the procedures of the old-fashioned newer criticism: the relation of images in a self-contained world, but one which, on its own terms, nevertheless subscribes to the diachronicity characteristic of narrative. On the other hand, because the pattern is a direct juxtaposition overleaping time, it has an uncanny resemblance to the structuralists’ synchronic, binary juxtaposition of patterning. I cannot see any further than that: the design is cumulative yet, at least proleptically, the unity of its pattern is also manifest. That, I believe, is what the Christian theologian has to affirm about the divine providential governance of history and from there he will have to make his metaphysical connections with the divine governance of nature, including man.

Concluding Remarks

I am done, but please allow me a personal reminiscence. We had three great teachers in the theology program at Yale in the 1940s, Julian Hartt, H. Richard Niebuhr, and Robert Calhoun. I remember my second year in graduate school, 1948, when I had a tutorial with Niebuhr, who exercised a great deal of influence on many of us. We read Spinoza’s *Ethics* that day, with whom Niebuhr had a natural affinity. ‘Consent to being’ was a phrase he liked to use. He shared with Spinoza more of a metaphysical than a moral vision. But though there was a metaphysical vision of great austerity – faith was attachment to the slayer and life-giver for his own sake, with no return favors asked – Niebuhr shied away from metaphysical speculation. And as I left that afternoon, I began to realize that this austere affirmation of existence under a God who relativized all finite gods and values and mysteriously caused us to cling to him, which was Niebuhr’s Christianity, was my natural religion. It was the transforming enablement to call ‘God’ what had appeared to be fate. It

was a cleansing vision. For Calvinism was in my theological bloodstream, and about a third of Calvinism is determinism. After all, the natural heresy of Calvinism is Deism, a far better one than the natural heresy of Lutheranism, which is Idealism, with its identification of God and man by way of consciousness while the heavens remain empty and bereft of Deity. But I had always been persuaded that whether my natural religion was theistic or atheistic – and the two were not far apart – my Christianity, insofar as it spoke the language of the church, had to find a way of using the language of *grace*, and that Niebuhr could not help me with, for ultimately the two languages – fate and grace – were identical for him, as, I believe, they were for Spinoza.

From there I went to Julian Hartt's seminars in Philosophical Theology where I learned that a metaphysical *vision* can be turned into theology, including a theology of grace, only by way of an explicit metaphysics, a metaphysics of providence, for Christianity has a strange theology: It is neither theism plus Christology, nor – as Barth sometimes thought and I believe unwittingly tempts us to think – a reduction to Christology pure and simple, but a complex interaction of the providential action of God in Christ, the governor of nature and history.¹⁶

It was a complex and powerful lesson, and it paid heed to the richness and full scope of the tradition, refusing all siren calls to reductionisms on every side. Sometimes I have wanted to forget at least part of that lesson, but I have never been able to do so. I know nobody in our day who has taught it the way Julian Hartt has.

Letter to Julian N. Hartt, August 19, 1981 (YDS 2-36)

Dear Julian,

...

Last fall, just after we got into the airport, I asked you what the theme of your [Taylor] lectures was going to be and you said you were thinking of 'The End of *Heilsgeschichte*'. To my question whether 'end' meant *finis* or *telos* in this case you responded that it was a bit of both, although I gathered that *finis* was more in your mind then because you mentioned Van Harvey's *The Historian and the Believer*,¹⁷ although you added that his criticism was a bit on the crude side. That bit of conversation stayed vividly in my mind, and when David Little called in early March about the symposium I had no difficulty in landing on a topic. I wanted to explore something of the other meaning of salvation history. Since your letter came I have looked at the manuscript and had to conclude regretfully that it can't even be put into typescript shape in the next few days, in time for your reply to YDS. But I'd like to reminisce a little about the talk. Running through my mind was a criticism of Reinhold

Niebuhr's *Faith and History* which William Dray had made at the very end of his little book, *Philosophy of History* (in the Prentice-Hall Foundations of Philosophy series).¹⁸ He proposed that Niebuhr's view could have been, and at times was, 'that history may be meaningful after all, although we (by contrast with God) lack the discernment to see what its meaning is.' But more frequently, he said, Niebuhr seems to be saying that 'the full meaning of history is "transhistorical", without being quite willing to say that it is "nonhistorical".' I had my quibbles with what Dray makes of 'nonhistorical', but on the whole I thought the criticism was fair. Furthermore, it seemed to be of a piece with the kind of criticism that Harvey and others level against *Heilsgeschichte* as a general theological view as well as against its particular application to the seemingly everlasting Jesus of history / Christ of faith juxtaposition. And I knew that you held similar views, both from *Christian Critique* and the last two chapters of *Theological Method and Imagination*. In addition, these two volumes also made some powerful proposals about discerning providential government in the sequence of historical events, even if only partially – in other words, proposals of the sort Dray wished Niebuhr had consistently made. I proposed in my lecture that such a view of history is indeed theologically appropriate and right, but that it is a matter of seeing the destiny of human events generally in constant interaction with the history of God's people. As for the matter of 'exclusivist' or 'absolutist' Christian claims in this connection, I could not get excited about them – though in others (e.g., conversations among the world's religions) I might. One can look at it either way: The people of God are a sign of the eschatological shape of all humanity, or human history in general foreshadows the travail and glory of God's people. I suggested that affirming a partially evident providential pattern in the events of history involves a denial not only of historicist, existentialist and other 'perspectivalisms', but also of those panentheisms which reduce specific events to instances of either natural pattern or ideal generalization.

Among the conditions requisite for the affirmation of strong Christian claims about history, it seemed to me that you had stated one of the most important: An understanding of persons as historical subjects and historical agents who cannot be sublated by any of the available 'larger force' explanations. I demurred only (and slightly) at the point typical of analytical philosophers: I thought that for intelligible talk about history, and pattern in history, description in terms of agents' reasons, intentions, and enactments might be sufficient for the immediate purpose, postponing until a better day 'causal explanation' talk of every sort, whether determinist or indeterminist.

My one further plea was that in order to read off partially evident, cumulative design from historical events, the Christian cannot avoid typology; indeed, typology as a literary exercise in the interpretation of providential history is more important than the old-fashioned prophecy-fulfillment scheme

for the connection of earlier and later events. For ‘prophecy fulfilled’, in addition to looking troublingly like a magical view of miracle, never allowed the plea that history, while providentially governed, is nonetheless an open-ended course, whereas figural interpretation does allow precisely that conjunction. For a striking example of such an exegesis I cited Barth’s *Church Dogmatics* II/2, the exegetical section in §35.2 (‘The Elected and the Rejected’ – I can’t give you the pages, because I only have the German right here).

What one does not get in theologians like Barth is the further requisite for espying a providential pattern in history, viz. the adequation of something like the interpretative ventures of ‘civil religion’ to some form of biblical typology. Without that move there is no vision of the dialectic between salvation history and the history of political communities of the ordinary sort. I have always been wary of the notion of civil religion after the fashion of Bellah and Co.,¹⁹ and David Little put some very sharp questions to me on this score last April. However, I believe a kind of reverse movement to that of Bellah, from the biblical original as constant to the civil as variable antitype is necessary. I have found useful – although sharply critical of the practice – the description of *The American Jeremiad* in American social rhetoric, in the book of that title by Sacvan Berkovitch.²⁰

¹ [Frei added in the margin: 1) Sacred and Profane / Christian and Universal; 2) Apocalyptic and history; 4) Perspective vs agency/suffering character/circumstance; 3) Event vs pattern (plan, covering law, meaning, pattern).]

² T.H. Huxley, ‘Evolution and Ethics (1893)’ in *Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays*, Collected Essays 9 (New York: Greenwood, 1970), pp.46–116; reproduced at <http://aleph0.clarku.edu/huxley/CE9/E-E.html>.

³ New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

⁴ Ibid, p.263.

⁵ [Frei struck through the following paragraph: ‘What enables Hartt to do so and to assert a powerful understanding of history as part of a larger picture of providential governance of the world, is a series of interwoven persuasions which expresses in the form of four components a general theory of history – a theory which is itself dialectically though not univocally related to a metaphysics in the strong sense, i.e. in the sense of trying to coordinate the meaning of ‘God’ or ‘transcendence’ into a single set of affirmations about providence.’]

⁶ *Theological Method and Imagination* (New York: Seabury, 1977), pp.189ff.

⁷ [Frei also struck through the following: ‘If you don’t put too much stress on the technical term, you might say that one can render a variety of home-grown phenomenologies (I borrow the term from Stephen Crites) of the self in various relations to a variety of worlds or even to the same world. On the other hand, the closer one comes to thinking about historical agency, the more unsatisfactory the

very term 'phenomenology' becomes, for what one wants to describe is not a mode-of-being-in-the-world with its inescapable reference to conscious intentionality, but a transcendently present world.']

⁸ Ibid, p.196.

⁹ [Frei struck through: '... of how, say, the Civil War and its results not only came about but came to take the shape it did.']

¹⁰ Ibid, p.198.

¹¹ Ibid, p.190; cf. James Childress and David Harned (eds) *Secularization and the Protestant Prospect* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1969), pp.159ff.

¹² CD II/2, pp.340–409.

¹³ CD II/2, p.363.

¹⁴ Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1978).

¹⁵ Erich Auerbach, 'Figura' in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature* (New York: Meridian, 1959), p.43.

¹⁶ [Frei deleted: 'The logic of the faith is a doctrine of providence. It was a powerful and complex lesson, and it has never left me, for while providence without grace is empty, grace without providence is blind.']

¹⁷ Van A. Harvey, *The Historian and the Believer: The Morality of Historical Knowledge and Christian Belief* (New York: Macmillan, 1966).

¹⁸ Reinhold Niebuhr, *Faith and History: A Comparison of Christian and Modern Views of History*, London: Nisbet, 1949; William H. Dray, *Philosophy of History* (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1964).

¹⁹ Robert N. Bellah et al (eds), *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985).

²⁰ See n.14 above.