

philippine studies

Ateneo de Manila University • Loyola Heights, Quezon City • 1108 Philippines

Revelation and Inspiration: Aspects of Biblical Inspiration

Review Author: A. Lambino, S.J.

Philippine Studies vol. 15, no. 4 (1967): 731–732

Copyright © Ateneo de Manila University

Philippine Studies is published by the Ateneo de Manila University. Contents may not be copied or sent via email or other means to multiple sites and posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's written permission. Users may download and print articles for individual, noncommercial use only. However, unless prior permission has been obtained, you may not download an entire issue of a journal, or download multiple copies of articles.

Please contact the publisher for any further use of this work at philstudies@admu.edu.ph.

<http://www.philippinestudies.net>
Fri June 30 13:30:20 2008

Book Reviews

REVELATION AND INSPIRATION

ASPECTS OF BIBLICAL INSPIRATION, by Pierre Benoit, O.P.
Chicago: The Priory Press, 1965. 127 pp.

That the Scriptures are inspired is defined Catholic doctrine. How they are inspired has been left for theologians to explain. The traditional explanation probes into the mind of the inspired writer to describe the working of the judgment as it is affected by divine influence. The traditional theory is therefore characterized by its emphasis on what may be called the psychological aspect of inspiration. On the other hand, Karl Rahner has proposed a different theory which views the Scriptures primarily as a normative constitution produced by the Apostolic Church; divine influence on the inspired writer is placed essentially in the fact of formal predefinition (whereby God infallibly accomplishes his preordained purpose). Rahner's theory may therefore be said to emphasize the sociological aspect of inspiration.

In the ranks of theologians who have written on the psychology of inspiration, there can be no doubt that Pierre Benoit occupies a most privileged position. It is Benoit who has pushed the theory to its farthest development. This he has done by resolving two dilemmas which have hounded expositors of the theory: the dilemma of the speculative judgment versus the practical judgment, and the dilemma of revelation versus inspiration. The second of two essays published in *Aspects of Biblical Inspiration* has perhaps no equal for the clarity and accuracy with which it treats the problematic.

By rejecting a simplistic opposition between the speculative and the practical judgments, Benoit has shown that both are involved in the charism of inspiration. One has only to distinguish between the "absolute speculative judgment" which has to do with truth considered in itself and without any relation to activity, and the "speculative judgment related to action" whose object is truth related to activity. The

latter interweaves, so to speak, with the practical judgment in the inspired writer's composition of Scripture.

In a similar manner, Benoit clarifies and broadens the concepts of revelation and inspiration. Revelation must not be restricted to the passive reception of infused ideas or species. Revelation may also bear on representations acquired naturally and on judgments already formed by the natural exercise of the intelligence. Thus, revelation and inspiration are seen to be "intimately bound up in the same concrete activity of the mind." They are two facets or two moments (if you will) of one and the same charism.

It would be hard to measure the value of Benoit's contribution to the advance of theological reflection on inspiration in the Bible.

There is, however, one glaring omission in Benoit's analysis. (Alonso-Schökel has suggested this in his book *The Inspired Word*.) The element of intuition, a most significant part of the literary process, is all but totally neglected by Benoit. If one can believe the testimony of writers concerning their own art, intuition is extremely pertinent to literary production. And if form criticism has taught us anything, it is to tell us that the Scriptures are fundamentally literary forms. Thus, a psychology of inspiration which puts exclusive emphasis on the judgment is bound to give rise to a less than balanced treatment of the charism in question.

But as far as the role of the judgment is concerned, Benoit's analysis is perhaps unsurpassed.

A. LAMBINO, S.J.

EPIC AND ROMANCE

THE EPIC QUEST: Studies in Four Old French Chansons de Geste, by William Calin. Baltimore, Md.: The Johns Hopkins Press, 1966. vii, 271 pp.

To the average student of literature, the term *chanson de geste* is very often associated only with the *Song of Roland*. And to most of the world, the two are synonymous. Thus, it is a pleasantly revealing experience to read William Calin's *The Epic Quest* and re-discover that there are *chansons* other than the *Roland*; to realize that these various "songs" together provide a fuller picture of that French literary age to which the *trouvres* and *troubadours* belong.

It is not Calin's idea to downgrade the *Roland*; neither is it his wish to play up the other "songs" at the expense of the first. Rather,