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CHRISTIANITY AND CONFLICT IN THE MODERN AND CONTEMPORARY AGES CRISTIANESIMO E CONFLITTO IN ETÀ MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA

a cura di / edited by
Umberto Mazzone



EDIZIONI DEHONIANE BOLOGNA

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L'età moderna / The modern age

Roberto Osculati, *Francisco de Ribera (1537-1591)
e la profezia biblica*..... 25-45

The Spanish Jesuit, Francisco de Ribera (1537-1591), teacher of Holy Scripture at the University of Salamanca, published in autumn 1587 a vast commentary on the twelve minor prophets. In examining prophetic language, he sought to distinguish among the literal, allegorical, tropological and moral meanings. The events considered by Jewish prophecy always allude to a reality that would eventually come to pass in the history of Israel and humanity. Above all, however, the prophecies indicated the character of messianic times, fidelity to the gospel, the life of the Church and of the individual soul. Prophetic words have an immediate meaning, but also converge towards the central event of the gospel and its spiritual presence in any time. This type of interpretation was taught by Jesus himself, and by Paul and John. Most importantly, the Christian exegetes of Antiquity understood the dynamic, practical and universal character of Jewish prophecy. Among them excelled Jerome and, with regard to the moral meaning, Gregory the Great. Prophecy always reveals the passage from the past to present and future, from the external to interiority, from history to mysticism, from ritual to personal devotion, from worldliness to the body of Christ and the apocalyptic expectation. It is a continual and constant admonition to an often corrupt Christianity, which always needs to re-embark, internally, on the path towards individual and collective conversion proposed in the scriptures.

Vincenzo Lavenia, *Non arma tractare sed animas.
Cappellani cattolici, soldati e catechesi di guerra
in età moderna* 47-100

The author outlines the development of religious care for soldiers during the modern age, from Charles V up to Pius IX, tracing the rise of centrally-controlled military chaplainships. The investigation is underpinned by the analysis of the vast literature on wartime religious instruction, which has been studied only marginally up to now. In the foreground is the work of the Jesuits, from Antonio Possevino to Emond Auger. The Jesuitical method, applied in the context of major armed forces, turned out to be particularly efficient in the preaching to soldiers. The strengthening of fledgling modern European states led to the development of

stable chaplainships, which had nonetheless appeared in late sixteenth-century Flanders under Hapsburg rule. Progress in the military arts during the Enlightenment brought in its wake an improvement in spiritual assistance, the Christian soldier becoming the first to respect the rights of peoples. In conclusion, however, the work of Christian religious personnel did nothing to diminish the brutality of war.

Paola Vismara, *A proposito del prestito a interesse. Conflitti teologici e divergenze pastorali nel Settecento italiano*..... 101-113

Issues arising from the use of money and the legitimacy of interest-paying loans gained in urgency during the modern era. The development of economic-financial activities therefore exerted considerable influence. Moreover, the underlying themes were of a doctrinal character and regarded the very conception of man, perceived in highly divergent ways. Within the Counter Reformation Church, only apparently monolithic, the consequences of the resulting theological conflicts reverberated also at the pastoral level, albeit to a lesser degree, thus generating serious difficulties and conflicts of conscience. With the end of the rigorist phase, the problems abated, without, however, finding a univocal solution.

Jay Goodale, *Confessional Struggles in Electoral Saxony, 1574-92*..... 115-135

Although Calvinism was attractive to many German princes and high-ranking theologians in the second half of the sixteenth century, it was an abomination for other elites, as the visitor to Wildenhain put it, particularly in Electoral Saxony between 1574-86 and the years immediately following 1591. Both Calvinist and Lutheran elites felt compelled to impose their creed on their subjects for a variety of motives, and experienced various levels of success. But the laity, far from passive, was also an agent in this dynamic, endorsing or rejecting the efforts of the elites in numerous ways. Both parties sought to derive advantage from the process by which certain doctrines and liturgical practices were once again introduced. The conflicts of the Reformation were not confined to abstract theology, but permeated all of village life.

Alexander Schunka, *Interconfessional Conflicts and Religious Migration*..... 137-152

The article connects the attempts at confessional and political homogenization and centralization in early modern Europe with the phenomenon of religious migration from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Most of the large emigrations in the early modern era derived from Habsburg counter-reformation policies. After an overview of the local political strategies and the emigrations from Habsburg territories, the article addresses the shaping of an immigrant community comprising Habsburg exiles with different cultural and social backgrounds and religious beliefs. It argues that the idea of the Habsburg authorities was to create a largely homogeneous Catholic population. However the emigrations contributed to the failures of this policy as well as to the creation of exile communities under the shared experiences of emigration. Traditions of exile, constancy, and faith led to the shaping of integrative common identities abroad which the Habsburg authorities had failed to achieve at home.

Franco Motta, *Il breve meriggio degli sconfitti. Programmi di superamento del conflitto confessionale nello scacchiere della politica europea, 1606-1617*..... 153-177

For some fifteen years, during the early seventeenth century, in the period that opened with the «war of the Interdiction» between Venice and Rome, and closed with the Hapsburg re-conquest of Bohemia, the possibility of reconciliation between confessional forces appeared a feasible project,

at least in the eyes of a minority of European intellectuals. Theologians, philosophers, jurists, and scholars, including Grotius, Bacon, Sarpi, Kepler, Casaubon, De Dominis and Lukaris, all in close correspondence, shared a common ideal of religious reconciliation, founded on a denial of the primacy of dogma over civil cohabitation (which was instead being bolstered, not only by the catholic Church, but also by the more rigid factions of Protestantism) and on the adoption of the basic doctrinal traits of Christianity. Faith, science and politics were interwoven within a genuinely Irenist ideology, which envisaged as the cohesive element an integration of political sovereignty, the rejection of Aristotelian philosophical paradigm and, at the same time, of the supremacy of scholastic theology: the years coinciding with the early reign of James I of England seemed to herald a golden age of peace, all too soon belied by the outbreak of the Thirty Year War.

Jane E. Calvert, *Quaker Constitutionalism. An Overview of the Origins of American Civil Disobedience*..... 179-193

The Quakers are more generally seen as “withdrawers” from American politics, and thus unworthy of attention. Because of perceptions such as these, although their actions in the public sphere have been well documented, the Quaker contribution to the ideas, institutions, and processes of the American polity has remained unarticulated. This essay gives a brief overview of the seventeenth-century origins of the Quaker theologico-political thought and civic engagement and touches briefly on their considerable significance for American socio-political reform movements since then. The most tangible political legacy of Quakerism is the theory and practice of civil disobedience. With their understanding of a constitution that was both sacred and amendable through peaceful means, Quakers originated a process of dissent that limited government while at the same time demonstrating a strong sense of political obligation to the structures and principles that bound the polity together.

L'età contemporanea / The contemporary age

Maria Lupi, *Chiesa e dissenso religioso: i vecchi cattolici a Roma*..... 195-220

The work investigates an important episode of Italian catholic dissidence relating to the declaration of papal infallibility, eventually converging on the Old catholic Church. It focuses on the Rome-based groups linked to Enrico di Campello, who left the catholic Church in 1881. With the aid of new documents discovered in the Archive of the Sant'Uffizio, the study sets out to throw light on the interest that the old catholic movements aroused in Italy, on their diffusion, links, influences and mutual exchanges among various groups, and among them and different Christian confessions, also examining the sympathies raised in public opinion and among Italian political leaders, who favoured the creation of catholic religious movements removed from Roman intransigence. Above all, however, the experiences of this group can help to understand more generally the reasons of dissent in a clergy dissatisfied with the situation of State and Church, who yearned for some vague form of religious reform, and the reactions of the ecclesiastical authorities, in particular the Sant'Uffizio, to manifestations of dissent. The study therefore provides elucidation on relations between religion and politics, and among different religious experiences, in a complex socio-political climate of deep conflict: between the intransigent clericalism which then dominated the clergy and lay members of catholic associations, on the one hand, and the sometimes heated anticlericalism, on the other, which emphasized, even in the press, religious issues in contrast with the Roman line.

Alberto Siclari, *Cristianesimo e cristianità in Kierkegaard. Il conflitto fra spiritualità pietista e ordine stabilito*..... 221-249

In a section of the *Exercise of Christianity*, Kierkegaard delineates the recurring conflict between the spiritual man, who holds himself responsible before God for every moment of his

own life, and the religious establishment, which attempts to prevail as the term of reference for each believer. This conflict results in a paradigmatic contraposition of Christ, considered to be the teacher of spirituality, to the Scribes and Pharisees, and is characterized as the contrast between pietist spirituality and the established order. Within this perspective, Kierkegaard also interprets his own attachment to the Danish Church, accused of preventing, through its own sacralization, an effective development of Christian religiosity.

Umberto Mazzone, *A Religious War? Suggestions from the First World War* 251-277

This essay tries to go back over some of the issues that seem to be common to all of the European Christian churches during the First World War, and presents some examples of data extrapolated from the Austro-Hungarian situation. These are issues that would be destined to be rooted in the life of the churches for many years to come. Going beyond the war years an effort should be made to reconstruct how, during the First World War, a process was started which led to the construction of the theological-political-historical framework that allowed for the construction of a religion of the homeland as a path for that nationalisation of the masses that then took on a totalitarian face. It is undeniable that the First World War provided a fundamental contribution, through the projection of the theme of nation by way of religious values and the consolidation of a self-understanding of the war as a religious war, outlining in more robust terms the sacralisation of politics that would represent one of the dominant notes of the Right-wing regimes and movements in the 20th century, whose development cannot be separated from the War experience itself. In this sense, it seems as though the Great War has been endowed with a precise as well as decisive genetic function *vis-à-vis* the manifestation of the immediately ensuing totalitarianism regimes. Hence, if we assume a scenario of the sacralisation of politics and the Fatherland, we can conclude that even if the concept of war of religion can only be partially assumed and limited to just some areas, the concept of religious war instead appears to be fully applicable to what has hitherto been examined.

Bruna Bocchini Camaiani, *Obbedienza e conflitti nella esperienza religiosa ed ecclesiale e nella riflessione di Ernesto Balducci* 279-300

The experiences and ideas on the subject of obedience of father Ernesto Balducci, member of the Scolopi foundation (1912-1992), from the 1940s to the end of the 1970s, throw light upon a special period in the history of the Italian Church and religious life. They exemplify the frequent tensions arising among the various spiritual, ecclesial and political currents, which characterized the ecclesiastical community, the diverse interpretations of the Church-society relationship, and the repercussions generated by such situations within ecclesiastical institutions. Balducci's religious and cultural ideas expressed the quest for renewal that shared many common themes with the avant-garde intellectual groups present in theological circles, as well as among Italian and European intellectual circles in general, all of whom regularly clashed with the approach of the ecclesiastical establishment and with the directives of the hierarchy, in particular, the Italian one. His reflection and experience had much in common with major clerical and lay figures of Italian catholicism in the '40s and '50s, such as Mazzolari, Turoldo, La Pira and Arturo Paoli. Like them, he underwent frequent censure and disciplinary actions or "silencing orders". His acceptance of them fell within a logic of obedience, while he continued to defend his opinions with a high degree of autonomy. The reflection of the Vatican Council led him to reformulate new perspectives, also on the theme of obedience: it became a duty of «responsibility to God» not «endorse by silence» procedures that did not respect freedom of conscience and the «primacy of the common good». In the post-council period, Balducci was both witness to and lead player in the crises and complex dynamics that characterized the Italian Church and society.

Steve Bruce, *Religion in the Northern Ireland Conflict*..... 301-323

This essay gives a brief account of the Northern Ireland "Troubles" (1970-1994) and considers the part that religious ideas and organizations have played in that conflict. It argues that religion has been an important element in ethnic identity and, because Irish constitutional politics have been largely based on ethnic rivalry, religion has been important in maintaining political divisions. However, religious leaders have generally worked hard to maintain a distinction between legitimate and illegitimate expressions of political preference. This is true even for Ian Paisley, the clergyman with the greatest impact on Ulster politics. While religion is implicated in political goals, it has had a civilising effect on political means.

John D. Carlson, *Just War, Just Revolution: Self-evident Truths, Biblical Roots, and the Revolutionary Origins of American Exceptionalism* 325-341

The United States has relied heavily upon "just war" thought to justify morally and politically its wars of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. Today, however, competing understanding of the "presumption against violence" and the resort to force threaten the internal coherence of this tradition. Interestingly, these different contemporary approaches to just war have analogues in the moral deliberation about the US War of Independence. Justifications for the American Revolution drew, on the other hand, from republican political theories about self-governance, human equality, and inalienable rights and, on the other hand, from biblical roots emphasizing early Americans' religious sense of calling and their belief in God's providential working in history. The Revolution served as a defining moment in which these two strands converged to form what became known as American civil religion. Since that time, just war thought has been unable to bridge its own universal and particularist elements in ways it successfully was able to do through just a revolution. This essay argues that both strands must be re-appropriated and sustained if just war thinking is to overcome its current internal divisions and cohere as a moral-political theory to which the United States can lay exemplary claim.

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