

Critique by Michael E. Stone

Alexander Toepel: Adam Traditions in Early Christian and Rabbinic Literature.

Dr. Toepel's survey of Adam traditions commences with some remarks on the Primary Adam Books, with the ultimate purpose of discussing the angels' worship of Adam. I shall refrain from entering into a discussion with him on his text-critical views (following J. Tromp), on which matter I disagree with him, since that argument would be technical and irrelevant to the present forum. Suffice it to say that the position forwarded by Gary Anderson, J.-P. Pettorelli and myself, which does not support Tromp's position, might have been mentioned. Furthermore, while claiming to remain uncommitted on the questions of original language and context of origin, he supposes that the Greek *Life of Adam and Eve* was written in Palestine in the first or second century CE, which begs the question. Again, work of the present speaker and Gideon Bohak on the original language has been ignored, as has, by the way, the Synoptic edition by Anderson and Stone, which helps clarify these issues. Toepel returns, guardedly, to E. Preuschen's Gnostic hypothesis on the Armenian Adam books, which are not a coherent corpus nor based on *ApocMos*, as he maintains they are, without referring to Lipscomb's excellent edition and translation or, once more, the present writer's article on their supposed character, which I hold to be non-Gnostic and not "Sethian".

Because of his emphasis on the surviving Greek form, Toepel ignores the story of the Penitence and Second Deception of the Protoplasts, not to speak of the third deception as related in the Chirograph legend. Yet, if one is interested in the aetiology of evil (or of the state of the world -- a distinction very much worth drawing), the repeated stories of the deceptions and their variations are highly significant. The additional variant deception story embedded in the trial by the beast that attacks Seth and Eve, which forms part of the story of

the quest of Seth, is also to be considered, especially when, on the one hand Adam's image is invoked as a means of overcoming the *bestia serpens*, and when the quest, temporarily unsuccessful on the other, is crowned by success at the eschaton.

The chief interest for the present discussion, however, centres on the question of the angelic refusal to worship Adam and, with it, Adam's heavenly character, or in other terms, the meaning of Adam's creation in God's image and angelic jealousy. In contrast with this, which is the basis of Satan's tale of his own motivation to deceive Adam and its consequences, we may set the Enochic explanation of the origin of the state of the world -- demonic infestation resulting from the sin of the Watchers with the human women. The "original sin" or "evil heart" explanation of human sinfulness, Toepel rightly remarks, is typical of and highlighted in 4 Ezra, 2 Baruch and Paul. ApocMos, he would claim, attempts to exonerate or minimize Adam's sin, (though not in the Slavonic version or in the Cheirograph legend).

The question of Satan's motivation for rebellion is related to the understanding of the image in Adam. Satan's refusal to bow down to Adam as being his inferior has two analogues. On the one hand, in 2 Enoch 22:6-7 the tradition of angelic refusal to bow down to Adam appears contrasting with angelic obeisance to Enoch, even before his transformation. On the other, as Toepel remarks, it is strongly reminiscent of Rabbinic materials about angelic opposition to Moses' ascent on Sinai. We venture to suggest that here we have a form of "illicit mixing", the mixing of the earthly with the heavenly, the direction of which is the reverse of the Watchers legend. The Watchers brought the heavenly into the earthly with disastrous results, while Adam's creation involved the combination of the earthly with the heavenly. The implications of the Tower of Babel legend in Genesis illustrate how old this theme was.

In this deeply mythological material, the question of matter / spirit opposition, or

material / spiritual conflict, that infuses certain of the Gnostic fall doctrines and also orthodox Christian theological responses, is not at play, but we are dealing with a mixing of heavenly and earthly, of human and divine, with the inappropriate crossing of the boundaries of discrete areas of being.

Thus, although the evil heart and deception material are so prominent in the first century CE texts from the Land of Israel, already Wisdom of Solomon 2:34, “through the devil’s envy death entered the world” implies a great part of this mythological material. Why one view was prominent at one time and another at a different time remains obscure.

I could continue with this discussion in many respects, for the subjects that Toepel broaches are indeed intriguing. I conclude with a remark made by Annette Yoshiko Reed in a recent paper on Armenian Enoch, which she graciously shared with me. This literature, she remarks, often views Enoch through the lens of Adam. This interplay of Enoch / Adam is brought out in her analysis and it complements very neatly the observations we have made about the complementary functions of the Adam and Enoch materials. The matter is extremely complex as Toepel’s paper has shown, and gets embroiled early in the Christian era in matters of abstract theological import that were not at its heart.

It would be extremely interesting if, taking our departure from Toepel’s remarks, a further comparative analysis were made of the structural and functional parallels of the Adam and Enoch traditions (partly already done by Orlov) and of their relationship to at least some of the to Moses material. In a Noachic perspective, the Melchizedek *redivivus* idea is strikingly parallel to the Adam *redivivus* material of the pseudo-Clementines, but here our associative thinking may have taken us too far astray.