

Fact, Value and God

A. F. Holmes

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RÉSUMÉ

L'auteur tisse un récit historique mettant en relation les faits, les valeurs et Dieu, depuis l'époque des penseurs pré-socratiques jusqu'à Nietzsche. Il essaie de montrer que, depuis la Grèce antique jusqu'à la synthèse médiévale, il y a eu une tradition commune qui consistait à fonder les valeurs sur l'ordre cosmique. Le rejet par Ockham des universaux et de la téléologie a préparé le terrain pour une séparation nette entre faits et valeurs. La science mécaniste a considéré la nature comme libre de toute valeur et a essayé de fonder l'éthique sur la raison ou la psychologie. Nietzsche se situe à la dernière extrémité de la révolution d'Ockham, avec son rejet de toute morale objective. Holmes appelle les chrétiens à redécouvrir le lien indestructible entre les faits, les valeurs et Dieu. Une thèse remarquable, d'une lecture exigeante.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Holmes entwirft einen historischen Bericht, der die Beziehung von Tatsachen, Werten und Gott ausgehend von der Zeit der vorsokratischen Philosophen bis zu Nietzsche nachzeichnet. Er stellt die Behauptung auf, daß es von der griechischen Antike bis zur mittelalterlichen Synthese eine gemeinsame Tradition gab, die alle Werte als in der kosmischen Ordnung begründet verstand. Ockhams Ablehnung der Universalien sowie der Teleologie hat dann jedoch den Weg bereitet zu einer Trennung von Tatsachen und Werten. Die mechanistische Naturwissenschaft hat die Natur als wertneutral verstanden und war demgemäß darum bemüht, die Ethik in der Vernunft bzw. in der Psychologie zu verankern. Nietzsche stellt die extremste Ausprägung der von Ockham ausgehenden Revolution dar, die jegliche objektive Ethik verwirft. Holmes ruft Christen dazu auf, die unzertrennbare Verbindung von Tatsachen, Werten und Gott wiederzuentdecken. Dies ist eine faszinierende Sichtweise und ein anspruchsvolles Buch.

Holmes has set out to provide an historical survey of philosophical attempts to ground morality. The story which he weaves begins in Ancient Greece and climaxes in the C 19th with Nietzsche.

The Pre-Socratic philosophers began by rooting morality in an ordered cosmos (ch. 1). Plato too is very keen to ground virtues in reality (the Good) (ch. 2). Aristotle thought that the virtues are founded on the *telos* or end of each natural kind. Their good is found in actualising that *telos*. 'God' is pure actuality (and thus pure good). It ('God') is the ultimate *telos* of nature (ch. 3). The different 'God'—concepts of the Greek philosophers and the relation of 'the divine' to the good are investigated. Christian theology fruitfully drew from and modified Platonic and Stoic thinking in its opposition to Gnostic dualism which had divided matter from rational order. That split and its accompanying degrading of matter was undercut by the Logos doctrine (ch. 4). Augustine's Middle Platonism grounds value and truth in God and thus in his creation order. For Augustine then *all* creation is good and *all* creation can be distorted (ch. 5). Augustine's theology and Aristotle's philosophy are masterfully blended by Aquinas. Goodness (*pace* Aristotle) comes from actualising one's *telos*. The ultimate *telos* of humanity and the rest of creation is knowing God. Values are thus founded on the purposes for which God created things (ch. 6).

The story thus far has been variety within an almost unbroken tradition of rooting values in the way the world is—an ordered cosmos. That tradition was broken by the late Medievals Scotus and Ockham. Ockham's rejection of universals and his proto-empiricism led to a denial of inherent natures and final causes. Teleology is gone and only material and efficient causes remain paving the way for mechanistic science. Morality is grounded in contingent divine commands and discovered by right reason (ch. 7). Mechanistic science saw nature as value free and thus sought to build morality on other foundations such as right reason (Descartes), religion (Bacon) or law (Hobbes) (ch. 8). Others look to base values in human psychology (Hume and Reid in their rather different ways) (ch. 9). Kant (ch. 10) and Hegel (ch. 11) are a throw-back to the tradition of basing values in the nature and *telos* of reality. Comte and Bentham, on the other hand, took the omniscience of science to the limits with an attempt to make ethics into an empirical science. Empiricism, however, cannot support the weight of morality as even Mill glimpsed (ch. 12). The extreme end of the fact-value split which began with Ockham is found in Nietzsche's denial of any objective values. There is no God, no natural moral order, no *actual* right

or wrong. Morality is a human creation and projection onto a valueless world (ch. 13). This is essentially Holmes' narrative.

In the final chapter he pulls the threads together to identify four basic positions on the fact-value relationship which he thinks he discerns from the history outlined above. He then outlines in skeleton form an agenda for future thinking on the subject. First of all he argues briefly for resisting Nietzsche and reinstating 'the will of God' as the ultimate foundation of values. Second, he believes that the notion of teleology needs to be reopened for discussion and third, the Logos doctrine and its concomitant theory of universals need to return to the agenda as they provide a resource for grounding values in facts and point to the reliability of human reason.

This is a deceptively lightweight looking book. Do not be deceived. Holmes writes for people who are already familiar with the philosophers under discussion (p. viii) and thus (contrary to some of the comments on the book jacket) it is *not* really an *introduction* for 'readers with no formal training in philosophy'. Holmes writes clearly and competently on a fascinating area of study and gives the lie to the myth that values cannot be grounded in fact. The myth is relatively recent in the history of philosophy. I would have liked the study to move on into the Twentieth Century. It did seem rather arbitrary to halt with Nietzsche. There were also times that one felt that Holmes had wandered from his chief goal of charting the fact-value relation and had got side-tracked detailing the much broader concerns of the ethical philosophy of different characters. I suppose, had he not done so he would have been chastised for not setting his comments in the context of the wider philosophy of the characters. You cannot please all of the people all of the time. Holmes' final sketchy proposals were most interesting and one would very much like to see them fleshed out much more thoroughly. In the end though this book is an agenda setting text that very helpfully sets issues of critical importance to Christian thinkers in broader historical perspective.

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Warum das Kreuz? Die Frage nach der Bedeutung des Todes Jesu

Volker Gäckle et al.

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RÉSUMÉ

Le dogme traditionnel de la substitution pénale à la croix est sérieusement remis en question dans le débat théologique contemporain. On peut donc être reconnaissant aux professeurs de l'Abrecht-Bengel-Haus à Tubingue (RFA) pour cet ouvrage solide de réflexion théologique, également accessible au non-théologien. Dans la partie exégétique, le thème de l'expiation est étudié dans le Pentateuque et dans Esaïe 53. De même, on examine l'interprétation de la croix dans les évangiles et chez Paul. Dans la partie historique, les différents auteurs montrent la continuité et le développement de la pensée chrétienne sur ce sujet à partir de l'Eglise ancienne jusqu'à la Réforme. Ils s'interrogent sur les raisons pour lesquelles le dogme traditionnel a été contesté au siècle des lumières et dans l'idéalisme allemand (Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher). Ils s'intéressent aux interprétations de la croix données au vingtième siècle (Bultmann, Barth, Tillich, Pannenberg). Le livre se clôt par une réflexion homilétique: comment annoncer avec pertinence la croix à l'homme (post-)moderne?

L'ouvrage est une défense intelligente et sans ambiguïté de la substitution pénale. D'approche pluridisciplinaire, il aurait pourtant besoin d'être complété par une étude proprement dogmatique.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das traditionelle Dogma der stellvertretenden Sühne, am Kreuz vollbracht, ist in der heutigen Theologie sehr unter Beschuss gekommen. Wir können deshalb den Dozenten des Albrecht-Bengel-Hauses in Tübingen sehr dankbar sein für ihre solide theologische Arbeit zu diesem Thema, die hier auch allgemeinverständlich dargestellt wird. Im exegetischen Teil untersuchen die verschiedenen Autoren die Sühne im Gesetz des Mose und in Jesaja 53. Außerdem gehen sie dem Verständnis des Kreuzes in den Evangelien und bei Paulus nach. Im historischen Teil zeigen sie die Kontinuität und die Entfaltung theologischen Nachdenkens über das Kreuz von der Alten Kirche bis zur Reformation auf, fragen nach Gründen der Infragestellung des überkommenen Dogmas zur Zeit der Aufklärung und des deutschen Idealismus (Kant, Hegel, Schleiermacher) und beleuchten Ansätze zum Verständnis des Kreuzes im 20. Jahrhundert