

Walker Percy, Message in the Bottle

Where are the Hittites?

Why does no one find it remarkable that in most world cities today there are Jews but no one single Hittite even though the Hittites had a great flourishing civilization while the Jews nearby were a weak and obscure people?

When one meets a Jew in New York or New Orleans or Paris or Melbourne, it is remarkable that no one considers the event remarkable. What are they doing here? But it is even more remarkable to wonder, if there are Jews here, why are there not Hittites here?

Where are the Hittites? Show me one Hittite in New York City.

Walker Percy, "Why are you a Catholic?"

The only other sign in the world which cannot be encompassed by theory is the Jews, their unique history, their suffering and achievements, what they started (Judaism, Christianity), and their presence in the here-and-now.

The Jews are a stumbling block to theory. They cannot be subsumed under any social or political theory (Marx, Weber and so forth). Even Arnold Toynbee, whose theory of history encompassed all other people, looked foolish when he tried to encompass the Jews. The Jews are both a sign and a stumbling block. That is why they are hated by theorists like Hitler (fascism/racism) and Stalin (fascism/communism). The Jews cannot be gotten around.

The great paradox of the Western world is that even though it was in the Judeo-Christian West that modern science arose and flourished, it is Judeo-Christianity which the present-day scientific set of mind finds the most offensive among the world's religions.

Judaism is offensive because it claims that God entered into a covenant with a single tribe, with it and no other.

Christianity is doubly offensive because it claims not only this but also that God became one man, He and no other.

One cannot imagine any statement more offensive to the present-day scientific set of mind...