

# The Unity Law Throughout The Plan Of Creation

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## Introduction

This paper addresses a theme which lies at the very heart of all of Edward Holloway's work. It takes in creation, Incarnation and Parousia in one sweep. The idea of that one sweep perhaps also holds a key to grasping the importance of what Holloway has attempted to say. As a result, this paper will not confine itself to just the theme of this symposium: it goes beyond the question of society and family, of morality and the social doctrine of the Church. It will pick out certain salient features of the foundations of Fr Holloway's thought and examine them because of their particular significance or because of their developmental potential. In a sense, these features will in no way be extraneous to the major theme of the symposium, and this is due to the seamlessness and synthetic potential that characterises Holloway's thought.

## The Present Context

In his book "Theology and Church", Walter Kasper recognises that the breakdown of the scholastic synthesis of faith and reason has its roots partially in the development of a new philosophy of the world arising from the development of a view which asserts the radical independence or autonomy of science from the values or judgments of any higher department of knowledge.[1] Indeed some believe there can be no such higher set of principles, since the world is all there is. This means that the language and content of theology is seen as being of little relevance since it can in no way be ultimately embedded in what is considered to be the "real world". Furthermore, the worldview offered by the modern sciences means that it is very difficult to assume any possibility of a synthesis of knowledge, since every advance in knowledge brings about a further diversification of disciplines, and there is no longer any metaphysics to give an overall set of principles that could unite the disciplines while at the same time recognise their relative independence. The radical secularism of the western world has thrown these questions into sharp relief. An aggressive assertion of the full autonomy of the world, which in practice means the reduction of religion to the delusional and even dangerous dreams of a small minority (though there always seems to be more believers than the high priests of autonomy admit), begs the question of how far the Church can show that belief in God and in Jesus Christ are essential to human living. Does the structure of the universe itself necessarily point to God or not? If it does, how far can we be sure that such an admission would not reduce modern science in its relative independence to being just a mere branch of theology: without any vitality or unable to function at all on its own terms – and so not function at all? In many ways the old questions of the relationship between nature and grace, nature and supernature assume a

particular relevance. The question is poised in modern theology as the possibility to engage in theology in a pluralist and not univocal manner, given the pluralism of the world and of cultures, without thereby relativising the conduct and the content of theology. In terms of this conference this question has special relevance when examining the reality of the Natural Law and the unresolved question the Natural End. De Lubac had rightly seen that the problem of the Natural End of man had perhaps sown the seeds for the assertion of the complete autonomy of man and the world from religion and its demands: that it was possible to achieve a natural happiness outside of the sphere of grace and the supernatural vocation of man. Modern secularism had its roots in unresolved theology.

### 1. Creation

The first essential point that is maintained by Holloway is that Creation does not exist as an autonomy. Holloway is aware that the scholastic approach to the Natural Law and the natural end of man cannot exclude by principle secularism as a self-contained understanding of reality. This is based on the understanding of the universe as a realm of created natures, each with a life, mode of activity and purpose of existence of its own fundamentally unrelated to that of any other nature. This may in some respects be a simplistic understanding of the Aristotelean view of the natural order, but it is pretty much the conception at the heart of the scholastic debate over the natural and supernatural end of man. This view in purely philosophical terms finds it hard to relate reality as nature with reality as creation. Holloway's proposal of the Unity-Law as the fundamental guide to what it means to be created means that the whole unfolding of creation is not just initiated by God and left to get on with it. It is directly and always and forever relative to God: the whole of creation has an immediate relationship of meaning and purpose, of dependence on Mind – that is, the Supreme Mind who is God. It is Mind that controls and directs matter; matter of its very nature exists as that which is controlled and directed by Mind. It is this view which Holloway sees evinced in the inventions of man: man is able to make new creations using matter, new creations which in themselves cannot be said to be the necessary outcome of evolution, but which matter itself is open to becoming providing there is the creative intervention of free mind to bring matter to this new formulation of its being. Matter then is naturally always open to mind, because without Mind it would not be at all.

### 2. The essence of the Unity-Law

The second point for Holloway is that the Unity-Law is more than just one law or even an overarching law that somehow organizes a previously neutral or chaotic order of matter. It is the universe in action: and it is the universe in continual dependence on the Mind of God. To put it another way, it shows the Mind of God as actively and dynamically knowing and willing the creation as a unity in development, an evolving whole. So the Unity-Law is at one and the same time identified with and through every aspect of the material universe, and at the

same time is the relationship of all these parts as a unity to the Mind of God. What is essential to grasp is that the Unity-Law denotes the fundamental relationship of the Universe to the Mind of God. Control and direction, space and time, meaning and purpose are descriptions of how evolving matter is constituted by Mind in one perpetual act of knowing and willing.

### 3. Modern World Views

Much of Holloway's book, *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, seeks to analyse the approaches to the question of this world by Marxism, liberal humanism and an attempted Christian solution by Teilhard de Chardin. A. The Marxist denies the existence of God but locates a real principle of meaning and development within the structure of evolving matter. However such a location ultimately cannot work because for the universe to have a goal of meaning (the communist state) it would have to have a written-in meaning within itself. It makes no sense to imply that matter can do this for itself since this would be declaring that there is after all an overall meaning to the unity of the development of the universe. And the sheer contingency of the universe, its relationality and its determinism point to the universe being unable to will for itself its development to that Communist End. This means that there must be a Mind that can from beginning to end, from alpha to omega, frame, understand and "intellect" it all. The Unity-Law points once more to God. The Marxists do grasp something important about the evolving nature of the universe, but their inability to postulate Transcendent Mind means that they have no basis from which to assert intelligibility to the evolution of the universe – and so no basis to assert the necessity of the Communist State to the structure of reality. Furthermore Marxism understands the mechanism of evolution to be dialectical. It has applied an analysis of contradiction in the affairs and behaviour of humanity to the whole of the evolution of the universe. There is no concept at all of original sin, apart from an apprehension that old patterns of economics and society are defective and need to be destroyed to advance the advent of the Communist State, the panacea for all previous ills. However modern physics reveals a universe in equational development, existing and evolving with extraordinary balance and harmony. The very work of science discovering the laws of the universe, their fine tuning and their mutual relationship all point to the fact that within matter there is no principle of sheer contradiction: thesis, antithesis and eventual synthesis in the Hegelian/Marxist sense just do not exist. There is no willfulness of aggression within the laws of the universe. The Marxist saw something in the history and life of mankind but applied it (in a sense) anachronistically to the whole of creation. Finally, a major theme in Holloway's work is the spirituality of man. Marxism sees no spirit, no soul in man. We are just one sheer continuum with all matter – and for this reason the Marxist locates the reason for evil in the world within the structure of matter as it attempts to resolve itself into the perfect state of communism. However, none of this helps Marxism account for the uniqueness of man. B. On the previous point the Marxist and the liberal humanist agree. They do not perceive that the uniqueness of man cannot be explained by him being merely a highly developed ape. The earlier point about man's ability to invent puts such a

belief into question. Furthermore, the liberal humanist can see no real point or direction in evolution, unlike the Marxist. However the very structure of matter and the evolution of the brain point to a development which is not utterly random but which at some level has purpose. The idea that nature is random or arbitrary, that it works by chance is blatantly contradicted again and again by the products of human invention: the wheel, the television, the aeroplane, the nuclear reactor all work in a meaningful and purposeful manner; they can be developed and used without a sudden and unaccountable reduction into chaos. This is because matter is structurally open to meaning, to being united within higher unities, to being controlled and directed by mind. All of this has important repercussions for understanding the Unity-Law which we shall now explore.

#### i) Philosophy

The inventions of human beings point to a by-passing and an answer to the whole Kantian approach to knowledge and being that has dogged modern thought. It is not that we cannot know things as they actually are and instead impose our own categories of comprehension of phenomena we perceive. The fact that our manipulation of matter works, and that we can draw out new and higher syntheses of matter which also work, reveals that in our knowledge we do get to the reality of things: that the meaning of something and our perception of that thing are not two separate moments in knowledge and ne'er the twain shall meet. Instead our knowledge is by real perception of the universal relatedness of a thing: every act of knowledge grasps the object known in its function and meaning which automatically in that self-same moment reveals its fundamental and necessary relationship with the rest of the universe. In this sense, the relativity of all that exists in the cosmos means that when we say all things are relative we are saying that they are universal – universally related within a history of being. This reveals the meaning and purpose of something, and at the same time our mind is able to evoke new meanings and purposes for matter. Not only then is a fundamental difference between man and animal revealed, something that can only be explained by reference to the uniqueness of the mind or soul which has no peer in the rest of material creation; but also we show how the categories of meaning and purpose (i.e., of control and direction) are part and parcel of what it means to be existing matter – and ultimately also to be created at all. They are not then the subjective transcendent functions of mind alone. They are part and parcel of what it means to exist as created.

#### ii) Spirit

Again the reality of the soul, as already mentioned, points to the uniqueness of man, another major theme in Holloway's work. However this uniqueness in no

way excludes us from saying that the soul itself is fundamentally relational too. It is not outside the whole Unity-Law. In a sense the Unity-Law is the expression and working out in space and time (and beyond) of the Plan of God. The whole point of Holloway's argument concerning the evolution of man is to show on the one hand how man really is unique in a way that cannot be reduced to matter (and it is here that his disagreements with Teilhard de Chardin really take off), and on the other hand the continuity of the Unity-Law – that the creation of the soul is not a break in what he calls the overall sweep of the Unity-Law. He commends de Chardin for trying to maintain the overall coherence of the evolution of matter to man and then to Christ, but the fact that de Chardin identifies spirit as a further complexification of the one process of the evolution of matter is deeply problematic. In a way, de Chardin falls into the same trap as the Marxist: spirit is seen as something already latent in matter from the beginning and through the growing power of radial and tangential energies it gradually sees the light of day. However, de Chardin cannot point to any material being in the universe that exhibits within its very structure the freedom of spirit and the ability of mind to control and direct other reality in a purposeful manner. There are no incidents of such spirit in matter, neither at an incipient level nor intermediately, nor again a growing manifestation of it the closer life forms are in development to man. Furthermore, Holloway believes that de Chardin ultimately identifies God and the universe, so that the whole creative urge, its development and complexification is God working himself out. However, the very laws of matter and science (fixed within the first few moments of the beginning of the cosmos, and so not developing beyond their own pattern), and the results of investigation and experiment cannot locate this overarching and active labour of freedom within the very structure of matter which evinces determinism as part and parcel of its meaning.

### iii) Man is spiritual

All of these thinkers – Marxist, liberal humanist and Teilhard de Chardin – attempt to account for evolution, for purpose and for the uniqueness of man: but they fail because they locate patterns of existence unique to man (and even to God) within the framework of matter. Edward Holloway's insight is to show how the development of the brain is directed by its very structure towards the creation of the soul. When the highest point of evolution for the brain in strictly material terms is reached, the brain demands by ontological necessity a higher control and direction which the environment can no longer give. It is in this that the oneness of the sweep of evolution is maintained by Holloway. Matter needs to be determined, and each created thing needs control and direction from its environment, and this is true for the brain of man. For H G Wells, however, man is a kind of disaster. Holloway rather amusingly recalls:

It comes to mind that not long before his death there was a pessimistic interview given by Mr. H G Wells to the representative of a national newspaper, in which he took [a] jaded view of Homo Sapiens. Mr. Wells was bitterly disappointed in the brute. The war was barely over, and had taught him nothing at all, and the top priority use of the miracles of nucleonics to make better weapons, was the last straw. Nature had produced a clever little beast who was too much for himself, and for his environment. He was running out of control, and would destroy himself. Nature would have to begin all over again with some other relatively unspecialized form of the living - Mr. Wells rather thought that rats had developmental possibilities.[2]

But, as Holloway says, if we interpret man only materialistically, as does H G Wells, then man ought not to be here. The fact that he is points to something more in man – and that more is soul. The brain of man then, in order to make sense, in order to function and develop, needs some kind of relationship to an environment because like all matter it is relational by nature. But if it can no longer have an exhaustive relationship with the material environment, it needs a different and higher kind of environment with which to relate. The relationality of matter – a mark of the Unity-Law – is fundamental here. With the creation of the soul, the sweep of creation takes in a new but entirely consequent step. Furthermore, only a new principle of being within man can account for behaviour that steps outside of the instinctual and deterministic forms of behaviour of matter, especially of living matter. The brain on its own cannot explain this. Man's unique ability to control, manipulate, develop, direct and even create goes beyond what matter is structurally and ontologically able to do by itself. The more in man is the soul: but the soul in itself partly the completion of what matter is for – i.e. man.

#### iv) Sin

Finally, the evil behaviour of man, located by the Marxist within matter, is not natural to him. What is natural to him is for his whole being to be relational in a further way. The soul is part and parcel of the Unity-Law of control and direction and so is not a complete, closed in entity sufficient to itself. As a consequence, this is true of man as a whole being, body and soul. Here the question of the natural end of man is addressed. Man is made for relationship with God, a relationship of dependence and more. God's entire "one sweep takes in all" plan has as its end the fullest gift of His charity – that we be made co-sharers of His Divine Nature. This is a relationship that cannot be defined as by right since nothing – not even the whole of creation – exists in a mutually demanded relationship with God. All is by divine charity and the one end planned by God for man belongs to the same order. God is our Environer and just as the environment gives to a living being its own life, so God will do so for us; but the environment does this only because it reflects the more perfect gift that God

makes for man. That is “natural” to us. Sin is different. This is where the contradiction, perceived by Marxism, truly arises and it is a contradiction inherited through the material in man. This is because by sin man pushes matter out of its natural moorings – its relationship with the material environment, with the Unity-Law, which is by nature obedient to and expressive of the Wisdom of God – and so we, in body and soul, are deeply wounded, pushed out of the fundamental ontological relationship that should define us – being with God (after all, we are made in His image and likeness). This damage we inherit through matter and we cannot manipulate matter back into its natural ordering by ourselves because to do this implies an ability to act outside of our bodies: and in fact all our actions are always actions of the whole man and so cannot escape from the logic of the material damage that is inherited. This of course is relevant for the question of concupiscence, human relationships, sexuality, family and society. All are damaged. Freud’s reduction of fundamental human behaviour to an expression of the libido is, according to Holloway, itself a result of that sin: original sin tends to make certain passions and drives take the driving seat in man; it overdevelops them beyond the normal instinctual balance that is exhibited in the rest of the living material creation. Freud has reduced man again to the merely material, but again cannot show why the bizarre behaviour of man has no peer in the animal kingdom. If all we are is matter, then Freud’s theory should be exhibited everywhere – but it is not. Furthermore, the dynamic of original sin points again to the fundamental pervasiveness of the Unity-Law: matter is pushed to react and exist in a particular way and continues to hand that on in a determined manner.

#### 4. All to God through Christ

What defines man is his relationship with God. Because of matter, the soul and his final destiny in God, man is also defined by his relationship with others. Man is therefore naturally religious and social. How he is to work out his relationships in society is defined by his primal relationships, of which God and the family are foundational. All of this is only fulfilled in Christ. Because man is material as well as spiritual, and because a defining principle of the Unity-Law is that what is controlled and directed must come into real contact with that which controls and directs, man’s relationship with God must be more than spiritual. It must be physical as well. So God will become man in order that we can have a properly human contact with Him; at the same time, God assumes a full human nature to Himself so that Christ becomes the principal principle of communion with God – and the means, and the end. This is not to assert that God is somehow constrained by anything “prior” in man to become incarnate. Rather the Incarnation is part and parcel of the whole freely made decision by God to create at all. God creates with a view to the Incarnation. It is within this perfect, free and wise gift of love that the Incarnation is seen as fundamental to creation. Again, because the Incarnation is therefore essential to man, we see that all this is

again the full working out of the Unity-Law. Furthermore, precisely because this is for all men, and men are social beings, religion can never be wholly an individual affair and certainly never private. Society is willed by God but Religion even more so, and society will only reach its fulfillment through Religion. So although there is a distinction between the state and religion, it is important to recognise that in the last resort a primacy is given to religion. There cannot be any complete autonomy in this sense. This is true for science too. The idea that one area of life, or even of knowledge, has nothing to do with any other, that it can have no relationship, no common basis with anything else, flies in the face of what the Unity-Law is all about. Evolution shows a pattern of relational matter building up into higher unities which themselves exist in relationship to even higher unities. Even the evolution of the brain brings it into a relationship of ontological need with the soul – the new being that results then finds his ultimate fulfillment only in relationship to God through Christ. In the same way, all knowledge is connected because all being is inter-related. Now because certain realities in the universe do not become automatically part of a higher unity – the sense that an atom in itself has its own consistency that does not demand that it can only ever be part of the higher unity of man – it is right to postulate distinctions of method, object and approach to science and the other branches of knowledge. But these distinctions are not absolutely final since many branches of knowledge de facto relate to others (for example, physics to philosophy, or psychology to biology). Again the example of the atom is useful here: a particular atom has its own consistency but it does have a real relationship to man, to what I am, since I am in part made up of atoms, even though that atom need not be part of me in order to exist. Ultimately again all branches of knowledge find completion in the Wisdom behind the whole universe – the Word made flesh, the Son of God become Son of man. Philosophy, indeed all knowledge, is ultimately the handmaid of theology, but being a handmaid is different from ceasing to exist or to have any consistency in oneself at all. Thus, even in the realms of knowledge the same fundamental principles of the Unity-Law are enacted and worked out.

##### 5. Redemption

So Christ fulfils all things, all people. But He also becomes the source of our redemption. This is because the Incarnation is the final aim of the Unity-Law: it is made in His image. The universe is made for Christ and He is the root image of what man is destined to be. He is the fundamental basis and at the same time the Head of humanity. If He is to lead us to our final end, He must heal the damage that detached us from our true ontological moorings and from the one towards whom our being is meant to be poised: our final end, God. As Holloway says, this work is an ontological interior work, not an imputation. It needs to be because the very pattern of the Unity-Law means that our nature is now determined by sin towards self and self-worship, and it needs to be re-determined, re-controlled and re-directed away from that towards God. This demands the real impact upon us from within of a Personality who is healing and life in Himself. This real impact would have taken place anyway – it was our “original end”. In this sense again the sacraments are part of the one sweep of

creation and are needed because of our physical nature, though it is true also that some of them were instituted only because of sin.

## 6. The Church

In consequence, the Church too is fundamental to creation. It is the true Religion: it is the fulfillment of all other religions but is based on a line of development from Adam onwards which comes about because of a real and historical Revelation by God. All of this religion is the building up of the Unity-Law of the Wisdom and Love of God that is finally enfleshed in the Person of Christ. We can note here an ascending and descending movement to this whole concept: ascending, because we see in early religion, then in Israel, the formation of institutions, kingship, prophecy, priesthood, sacrifice, liturgy, all of which are reflections and types of the true Exemplar, Christ; and descending, because in Christ God takes flesh in Person and draws to Himself all the good, all the movements and tendencies of humanity towards God - all that is formally revealed and all that flows from the innate disposition of the heart towards God. In Christ religion is perfect. The Church is the continuing presence of Christ in person throughout history: the sacraments, the teaching, its institution, and its charity – all embody and further the Incarnation of Christ. For Holloway the Eucharist is the “final end” in time of the Incarnation of Christ and it is the *pignus vitae aeternae* – the pledge of the eternal life to come. The infallibility of the Church is the necessary consequence of the Divinity of Christ and of the oneness of the faith all are called to share. All of this is the fulfillment of the Unity-Law by which God loves, teaches and communes with His creature. And ultimately the Church points forward to her final consummation. The Church’s social doctrine is aimed at helping man in his earthly pilgrimage to live according to the fundamental Unity-Law which alone makes sense of man and answers his many problems. It is the Unity-Law of the Wisdom of Christ: but in a world of sin it will lead ultimately to the crucifixion of the Church until Christ finally completes the work of the Unity-Law, which is His work, by which God will be all in all.

[1] Walter Kasper, *Theology and Church* (London: SCM Press, 1989), 1-16, 32-53.

[2] Edward Holloway, *Catholicism: A New Synthesis* (Surrey: Faith Keyway, 1976), 80.