

## Word, Church and Bible

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The Church: what is she? We use many an image. She is our Mother, the Body of Christ, the holy People of God, the Ark of God's salvation, and others besides. The Church is God's communion on earth with us. In these images we think of the Church of God as an institution: an institution which is natural, loving and caring—like the family, which is also an institution and natural to man. Almost unconsciously we put our personal relationship to God into a category running parallel to, yet beside, that relationship to God which we profess in the living body of the Church. Take as an illustration our distinction between liturgical prayer and private prayer. There is, of course, a distinction, but partial and not perfect. In the last analysis all our knowing, praying and loving is prayer of the Church. We pray within the family of the Church. We are brothers and sisters to the physical body of Jesus Christ.

### **The Meaning of Man**

What is the answer to the meaning of everyone's seeking and searching in mind and heart? Who am I? How do I come to be here? What is my meaning? Who wants me? Does anyone love me? Where does my real, all-embracing happiness lie? For we are not fulfilled by sun, air, earth and water, like everything else around. We are not animals. Earth and angel mingle as one in us. We are not fulfilled by possessions, pomp, money and physical excitement. Even power leaves the heart unloved. All these are gathered under a greater, ordered wisdom at the core of the real, ultimate 'me'. This I name my soul or spirit. Earth, air, sun and flowing waters are not my joy-place. God is the joy-place of man. God is reality, peace that is stable, wise joy in thinking, timeless happiness in possessing. God as 'parent' is the answer to human seeking: He is "our Father". Families are at once all personal and all social. So is the Church. The Church is familial, but the 'fatherhood' is not of earth. Mother Church binds earth to heaven—to God.

### **The Foundation of the Church**

Where shall we place the foundation of the Church? Some would say, very beautifully, in the moment of Mary's assent: "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord; let it be done to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) The conception of Christ was the first mutual work of God and men, and Mary is thereby Mother of the Church. There is also the perception of the Fathers of the sacramental life of the Church flowing as donation from the wounded side of Christ. Then there is the priestly ordination of the apostles at the Last Supper—and the Holy Eucharist is at the centre of the Church. And there is a sense in which Pentecost marks the first public moment of evangelisation, and thus of the Church.

In a theology which sees the meaning of all matter in the Word made Flesh, and places the motive of the Incarnation in the ordered flash with which the universe begins, there is another vista for the Church. The primal moment of the Church, utterly personal and utterly social and communal, is when God, having made the man, divides the powers of his life, and Adam recognises Eve as "bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called Woman (*ishshah*), because she was taken out of Man (*ish*)."  
(Gen 2:23) Then with His family, personal and institutional, God walks in the cool of the evening air in paradise. We overlook the prophetic, lovely significance of God walking with them, in the cool of the

evening air (cf. Gen 3:8). All the Earth is Eden, God's Garden of Delights.<sup>1</sup> And the friendship of loving recognition and contemplative love, however simple, marks the primal revelation of God to His people. This surely must be the moment of the Church.

The covenant of perfect friendship is broken by guile and disobedience. Decay and corruption of spirit and flesh follow at once: "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten of the tree of which I commanded you not to eat?" (Gen 3:11). Earth will no longer be Eden, God's royal Garden of Delight. The covenant is broken, but it is immediately renewed in friendship. However this redemption comes with pain. Yet the economy of God goes on unchanged: "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." (Gen 3:15) But sadly the King's Son shall "come to His own home, and His own people will not receive Him." (cf. John 1:11) His star throws a cross-shaped shadow over the crib.

Here is the beginning of the Church: salvation without sin; salvation lost through sin; salvation restored but in redemption's pain.

### **The Unity of Tradition, Scripture and Magisterium**

From this brook in Eden rises the Bible. The rivulet enlarges and runs and rolls through history, as Ezekiel was shown.<sup>2</sup> It is the river of the evocation of the Word of God.<sup>3</sup> There follows a vital truth relevant to this day: Tradition, God's word of teaching, has priority over the word written down. For long ages there could be no Holy Writ, but there was a teaching Church.

The original principle subsists to this day in the Catholic Church. She makes no claims for her theologians. For better or worse theologians are only a 'service industry'! But for her priestly and prophetic ministry she claims the right of *Magisterium*: the right of office to interpret the God-given meaning of the Book—if needs be, inerrantly. It was so from the beginning. The Bible is hers. Unless the teaching ministry precedes, there will be no written word. The authority of the written word is one principle with the solemn authority of the teaching word: namely "Lo, I am with you always, to the close of the age." (Matt 28:20) Tradition and Holy Writ are one principle, not two. The written word was, and remains, the one divine teaching. The teacher is teaching to a climax, to His coming in the flesh as Emmanuel. After He has ascended to the Father He teaches still, with divinity, with God's own authority on earth as the *Environer*<sup>4</sup> of man. "I have yet many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak ... for He will take what is Mine and declare it to you." (John 16:12-14)

The principle of the Catholic *Magisterium* is not man's feeble and fallible authority. That indeed would be only the word of the theologian. It is the authority of the Spirit, receiving from the written word and the spoken word of the *Logos* of God. Development is natural to the Church, but God's own, not man's 'new insight'. We have only one teacher, the Christ (cf. Matt 23:8-10). The word of *Magisterium* interprets Holy Writ and past apostolic Tradition. It also discerns whether new developments are true or false. All of this is one

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<sup>1</sup> The linking of the Hebrew word *eden* (pleasure or delight) to the Septuagint rendering by *paradise* (an enclosed garden or park) gives us the sense of "Garden of Delight". It would belong to a great lord, who would go out to commune with guests and courtiers after siesta, in "the cool of the evening air". The Islamic concept of heaven, the two "Gardens of Delight", is very similar.

<sup>2</sup> Ezekiel 47:1-12. The vision begins in his time but reaches out to the Messianic flood of grace and healing.

<sup>3</sup> See E. Holloway, *Catholicism: A New Synthesis*, Faith-Keyway, second edition, 1976, chapter 11, "The Evocation of the Word", pp. 115-134.

<sup>4</sup> The term *Environer* is used to mean God as man's Personal and active environment, not a merely passive environment.

principle: the word of the Word. From this we know that the Catholic Church is at the centre of centres. The fullness of God's revelation rises in her and subsists in her. She is 'Genesis' where God walks with men in familial converse.

### **The Necessity of Holy Writ and living Magisterium**

Because of the familial relationship of God to men which answers the prayer and seeking of the individual soul, and because of the social intercommunion of the word by which men reach out to each other, God must raise up the priest and the prophet through human history. Anthropology is an 'in' discipline (it is hardly a science) just now. It traces the nature of man as human culture develops, throwing up community and society, the king and the counsellor and the council of state. So, by right of nature and of grace, God must raise up the priest and the prophet and the council of priests and teaching rabbis. This is the Church. It is one principle with God walking with Adam and Eve in converse in the cool evening air.

We could not possibly dispense with Holy Writ. It is the witness to the ongoing teaching and communion of God with men through the ages. It is a cliché used when warning young priests and students against writing imprudent or angry letters (Never write when you can speak or telephone!): *scripta manent, verba autem evanescent*—letters remain, the word dies in the air. In a positive sense, how would we know—how could we prove—the wonderful unity and coherence of God's revealing and communing through the ages without the Bible? How could we store the precious heritage of truth and love in the psalms and wisdom books without the written word, as men grew in maturity and civilization? How could we be sure of prophecy and of the all-important evidence of Messianism unique to the Bible, unless the same word of God the teacher were written down?

It is the same even in mundane things: you must have written instructions. But if they are not clear, go to the one who wrote them down. The same principle applies in the Church. She wrote them down, they are her letters, she knows in the last analysis what they mean.

### **The Unity and Continuity of the Old Testament and the New**

It is here that the form critics, and now the redaction critics, of the Bible go so wrong again and again. The culture did not make the Judaeo-Christian religion. The religion formed the culture. God was always a direct actor in the teaching and the writing through long ages. That is why there is *prophecy*, God's direct and personal leading on, only and uniquely in the Old Testament and in no other great world religion, even though elsewhere there is beauty, truth, and a vocation from great souls to their brethren. In religious anthropology revelation is not of one order and kind (*pace* Rahner and others). The meaning of the Bible cannot be ascertained adequately from text and context in the history-conditioned culture of its age. There is always a *sensus plenior*, a fuller meaning of prophecy and type, which is never totally distinguishable from the so-called literal sense. The full sense is perceptible only when we can look back from the future with the hindsight of fulfilment. Yet the *expectation* of that fullness was always there. The whole of the Old Testament is one great season of Advent for the coming of the Messiah. The greatest of the rabbis were convinced that everything in the Law and the Prophets spoke only of fulfilment in the days of the Messiah.

The prototype of the Catholic principle of *Magisterium* and *apostolic Tradition* exists also in the Old Testament. The principles that Newman applied to the coherent development of doctrine from the early Christian Church to now, can be applied in one coherent and continuous order from the Old Testament through to the New, and on to the beginning of the third millennium. There was never simply a written and edited record which every man interpreted as he saw fit (except for the Sadducees, who were the exact counterparts in Judaism of today's liberal rationalists). The scribes and the Pharisees had sat on the Chair of

Moses (Matt 23:2-3). Their Magisterium was imperfect and prophetic, awaiting the day of the Messiah. Yet it was still the Magisterium of God, not of men; and Christ recognised it, while warning against their deviant works.

All the oracles of Israel have but one beginning: “This is the word of the Lord”! It was an imperfect word, but nonetheless the word of God’s own Magisterium, a word of the ‘Church’. Its fulfilment in the perfect word of Yahweh is hymned in the prologue to the Gospel of St John, and also in the *Benedictus*, in which the *Bishop*,<sup>5</sup> who is the ‘Day-Star’ from on high, “has come to visit us” (Luke 1:78).

This continuity of principle and type between the Jewish concept of Magisterium—abiding divine teaching authority—and the Catholic concept may be part of the reason why the laborious critiques of scores of Nordic scholars are consigned to the discard pile of scholarship every fifty years or less. They have little sense of the Semitic mind or of the prophetic divine oracle, a faith speaking to the future. The concept of a divine teaching Magisterium of the spoken word on earth is alien to the theology of the Reformation. It’s denial was the cardinal principle of the rejection of the papacy four hundred years ago.

The devout Christian convert from Judaism Alfred Edersheim was not a Catholic Christian, it is true; but he has in his works all the tenacious Semitic reverence for fact handed down and for the principle of prophecy as the shaping force of Israel up to and including the time of Christ. After a century his works have been reprinted in paperback.<sup>6</sup> He is still relevant and reliable. Whether there will be similar demand for Bultmann in paperback in a hundred years time is matter for prudent doubt!

There is no dividing line between the Old Testament and the New. The Old Covenant lives by God’s oracle, God’s leading on, God’s protection of His word spoken, written and edited down the ages by patriarch and priest, by psalmist and prophet. It gives us living, vibrant, expectant Messianism as the ‘substantial form’ of the whole of the Old Testament. In the prologue of St John’s Gospel this passes in perfect continuity of principle into the fact and Person of the Messiah. Jesus Christ is God from God, God in Person, God in the flesh, *tabernacled*<sup>7</sup> among us.

For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God; the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known. (John 1:17-18)

The whole meaning of the Bible, and all the beauty of its prophetic and wisdom literature, is now fully comprehensible. For, in one who is fully Son of God and fully Son and Prince of Man, the oracle of prophecy has passed in one continuity of principle into final fact and final authority, and into a love for man which is absolute. The prologue of St John’s Gospel is the witness of the transition: the fulfilment of man’s expectation from the time God walked with His own in the afternoon air. It is also the witness that the perfect Light has come into the world when God the Teacher takes flesh and *tabernacles* among His people. The principle of *divine* Magisterium—God teaching in the private mind and heart, in one family of His People; one authority in Holy Writ and sacred Tradition—continues in Christ, God and man.

St Peter was well aware of the tradition of his fathers when, speaking in defence of St Paul his colleague, he reminds Jew and Gentile Christian:

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<sup>5</sup> The Greek word for bishop, *episkopos*, is closely related to the verb to visit, *episkeptomai*. See chapter 8, “The Son of Man: A Meditation upon Psalm 8”.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., A. Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* and *The Temple and its Ministry at the Time of Christ*; both currently published by Hendrickson, USA.

<sup>7</sup> The Greek verb in John 1:14, *eskēnōsen*, usually translated as ‘dwelt’, literally means ‘pitched His tent (or tabernacle)’.

First of all you must understand this, that no prophecy of scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, because no prophecy ever came by the impulse of man, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. (2 Pet 1:20-21)

A little further on (2 Pet 3:15-16) the authority of "scripture" is conferred on Paul's letters, which equates apostolic authority in the beginning of Christianity with the inspired word of God.

### **The Need for an Infallible Magisterium**

So the one principle of God teaching, loving, consoling and redeeming "the men whom You gave Me" (John 17:6) exists in the Old Testament and lives within the Church of the New Testament. Only now God the Messiah lives in His people. He speaks, declares, loves, and offers Himself in them as the sacrifice which takes away the sins of the world. The dimension of divinity is now finalised among men, and the principle of *Magisterium*—God's own Personal Word—lives in her teaching, her priesthood and her Councils. If the Church is not infallible down the ages; if she does not preach Christ infallibly; if she does not infallibly give Christ, communing in the private heart, in the family, and in the whole community of the People of God as Lord, Lover and Saviour, *then there is no divinity in Christ*, and we are of all men the most miserable (cf. 1 Cor 15:19). Once again, the principle of the Christian faith will be the total, divine authority for faith and fulfilment of the word of the Word: Holy Writ and the apostles' teaching through the ages, with the Holy Spirit bringing to their remembrance "all that I have said to you" (John 14:26). Scripture and Tradition are one principle. Tradition knows the meaning of the word. The word is not dead, it lives in a teacher, abiding and declaring.

This writer has mentioned this incident before, but returns to it again because of the profound impression it made on him. It witnesses to the abiding, *divine* authority of Peter and the apostles in the Church through the ages. Men die, men are born, men wax, men wane, and over them all Christ's voice proclaims, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." (Matt 28:18-19) It was the occasion of the definition of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary. One stood in a vast concourse in the humbler spaces of St Peter's Square.

By the authority of our Lord Jesus Christ, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul, and by our own authority, we proclaim, declare and define as a dogma revealed by God...<sup>8</sup>

That is how it is, how it always was: one authority of Christ the Lord, speaking and writing, living and loving, always divine, for God is *tabernacled* among His people. There is no divinity in Christ except within this vision and this power to bind the assent of the proud mind and heart of man.

### **The Authenticity of John**

We must therefore repudiate and resist the effort being made at present in some Catholic circles to diminish the sincerity, the objectivity, and the historical witness of the New Testament. Since the end of the Second Vatican Council human arrogance and smallness of mind has had a field-day. First and foremost, in the matter of the Gospel of St John we reject the suggestion that it is pure late theology of St John, meditating his time with Christ and putting his own words into the mouth of Christ. Similarly, we reject the equally common attempt to make St John's Gospel, and especially the prologue, the combined witness of a

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<sup>8</sup> Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution *Munificentissimus Deus*, 1950. DS 3903.

whole ‘Johannine Community’, who composed the prologue and, among other things, the farewell discourse of Christ (John 13:31–17:26) as the witness of the Spirit to their own minds and hearts, very late in the second century. There is not a shred of evidence, of course, that John did not write his Gospel—most probably, indeed, with editorial help.

The constant effort to play down the full, startling vision of John and to ignore its total, obvious unity of theme and detailed eyewitness account, is based, in the end, on the sheer refusal to believe that God *did* become man and *did* so reveal Himself to the disciple He had loved and trained in a unique manner to comprehend His *divine* personality.

It is difficult to resist the conclusion that a cogent reason for the modern denial is, or at least was, the clear and even startling portrayal in Jn of the divine sonship of Christ. If it could be shown that the gospel was not in fact written by one of our Lord’s immediate followers, but by a Christian of later date, the force of the historical evidence would be weakened, thus making it easier to deny its claims.<sup>9</sup>

The sentiment remains true if for “Christian of later date”, we substitute “charismatic Johannine community”.

### **Repudiation of the De-Mythologists**

We have to repudiate also the attempted distinction between a ‘Christ of faith’ and a ‘Christ of history’—there is no *objective* evidence whatever why we should not. For instance, it has been stated that where the infancy narratives of St Luke offend the modern Western mind as ‘mythological’, they may without qualm be quietly ignored. They may not. They mean what they say. They relate with objectivity the most objective work of God in human history. The divine actuality of God in the Incarnation is at stake, both in the virgin birth, and also in the *shekinah*, the actual numinous presence of God overshadowing Mary, so that the Holy One conceived shall be “the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). Likewise, in the *Jerome Biblical Commentary* we read that the account of the Magi and the massacre of the boy infants is quite possibly a *midrash*—a type of creative legend—indulged in by Matthew to set off Jesus Christ as the king prophesied by Isaiah.<sup>10</sup> Thus in this view it never really happened. This in spite of the historical dating of the death of Herod and the stormy context of the barely gained accession of Archelaus.

Do these scholars ever stop to weigh up the psychological state of mind they imply in the evangelists? Herod may have been a depraved beast, but it would be a monstrous crime to frame even Herod with a murderous outrage he did not commit. Do scholars like these know anything about the love of God *as an experience* or the objectivity and peace and truth with which it floods the soul? They obviously do not.

The Fathers of the Church and the great early critical historians of the age of the Fathers did know this experience. They treat in a measured, objective way of the critical problems of the New Testament, but never doubt the objectivity or historicity of the solemn Magisterium handed down: the ‘Holy Writ’, which is the written witness of the actual teaching Church before 100 AD.

There is not a trace of *midrash* in the doctrinal writing of the early Church. If it had been there in the Church’s beginnings, it would inevitably have shown up in the doctrinal development of Christian theology. The early centuries abound in apocrypha and alleged

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<sup>9</sup> W. Leonard, “St John”, in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture*, ed. B. Orchard *et al.*, Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd, 1953, p. 971.

<sup>10</sup> J. L. McKenzie, “The Gospel according to Matthew”, in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. R. E. Brown *et al.*, Geoffrey Chapman, 1969, 43:17,22.

apostolic writings, especially in the Gnostic communities. These and their ilk have no place in the teaching Tradition of the orthodox Church of the great Councils, and every historian of doctrine is aware of it.

It is therefore unacceptable for Rahner and others to suggest that *midrash* exists in the New Testament, and that perhaps at that time people would have been aware of it.<sup>11</sup> If it had been there in the beginning, the Church would have developed as Gnostic and eclectic in type, and the structure and type of the great Councils of the first five centuries would have been impossible. The Tradition of Magisterium, which built upon, developed, and solemnly defined the things that are of Christ, *always* treats the New Testament as inspired, factual and objectively true. There is no other way our Christ can be divine and not a Nestorian creation: a man through whom God most fully worked, but in his radical *person*, a *man*. Rahner demonstrably has problems here as well.<sup>12</sup>

It is a marvel that serious theologians do not see the wonderful clue to the detail, vividness, and confidence of St John's portrayal of the divinity of Christ in the words, confrontations, and prayers to the Father which John records for us. He was the 'beloved disciple' for just this one thing. He was not Jesus' 'little pet' among the Twelve. He was prepared and deepened by sheer contemplative love to recognise before, and more completely than all others before the Resurrection, that "it is the Lord" (John 21:7).

### **The Essential Witness of Divine Magisterium**

The solemn Magisterium of the Church is now under attack from disobedience as never before. We are at pains to assert that, just as the oracle of God leading on to a climax was the divine Magisterium of the Old Testament, so the Magisterium of Christ in His Church—solemn and infallible in Pope and Council—is the same one principle of God's divinity among His people now on earth. It was the Truth which prompted and protected Holy Writ. And there is no other way in which the Truth can save that Writ from corruption under the critical mind and imperfection of fallen man than by a teaching Tradition through the ages, which is the final word of the Word Incarnate. The Church too, in her spiritual leaders, must have the courage to use that power. It is a power which carries a duty to men and to Christ who ever lives in His Church.

If there is no effective power to define and declare the living truth of the Living God, who was made man, and who witnesses in the New Testament, then after two thousand years those words have only a relative, history-conditioned beauty and truth. They do not bind us. It was all a long, long time ago, and people were very simple in those days. Why, they could not even distinguish disease from possession by devils! Jesus Christ did not know exactly who He was supposed to be, so the Christian claim for Him to be 'divine' has only a limited sense. We cannot trust John. He was a dear, beautiful old man running a loyal charismatic community. He rhapsodises about the Master he knew, loved and so sorely missed. It is all very beautiful, and true in a mystic sense (whatever that is, dear!). We can be edified, forget it, and push on with organising the third millennium.

The Bible alone, subject to such interpretation as the 'Spirit' may give to each and every reader, cannot save Christianity in the third millennium. This has to be said at the beginning of a decade of evangelisation. There would be no authority left with which to preach and proclaim.

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<sup>11</sup> K. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, (German original 1976) English translation Crossroad, 1978, p. 376: "In the New Testament stories it is not impossible in certain circumstances that we find forms of midrash and that they were originally intended to be such, so that according to scripture's own meaning the 'historical' truth of a story can be relativized without any qualms."

<sup>12</sup> See, e.g., K. Rahner, *Foundations*, pp. 244-246, 280-300.

What we require from the pages of the Gospels, and from the teaching and pastoral epistles which back them up and apply them, is first and foremost the sheer impact of Jesus Christ: *the personality of God Himself and the authority of God Himself*. There is only one 'I' in Jesus Christ: the 'I' who said "before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58). The 'act-centre' which speaks in the New Testament is, as St John's prologue so vividly declares, the Living Mind and Love through which all things were made, visible and invisible. We don't want a Jesus who was just like us, but more holy under pain. It is a falsehood which has spoiled too much post-conciliar theology, that before the Church was 'let free' we emphasised too much the divinity of Christ and suppressed His humanity. Both accusations are false, and devotions like that to the Sacred Heart of Jesus give the retort to either error. The whole of the Messianic urge of the Old Testament culminates in the Episcopate of God the Messiah, and there is no power in the New Testament unless we accept St John in particular just as he is.<sup>13</sup>

### **Requirements of a New Evangelisation**

Such has always been the life, witness, love and solemn declaration of the Roman and Catholic Church. In the modern world it is not the Bible alone which will save Christianity, but the word of magisterial, divine teaching which first wrote the Bible through apostle and evangelist, and then developed and defined it through the centuries. Scripture and *exercised* Magisterium is the sole hope of any evangelisation in a world which has long ago lost its certainties, but not the lusts which helped it forget them. We must have a new apologetics, not the courteous indifferentism of *Weaving the Web* and similar catechetical exercises, which neither teach the divinity of Christ to men nor form His divinity in the souls of men. Human beings are going to grow more godlike in all their power over matter and the engineering at the bases of the universe. It is pitiful to base any re-evangelisation on a scheme of Christianity which is founded upon human interpretation of a holy book which, in that tradition of theology, has already been abandoned by its theologians, and worse, by its bishops. If there is to be any meaningful ecumenism—and there has been little up to now—then this crisis over the divinity of Christ and the claims of Christ upon the human conscience must be faced.

At the heart of the matter is the need to answer the question of the meaning of man, and the control and direction of man's fallible but free and powerful spiritual intellect. Matter is controlled *within* the universe; man is not. We must vindicate anew the reality of a soul in man which is not one with matter-energy, nor some sort of incoherent 'self-transcendence' which is intelligible neither in the order of science nor in the order of free spirit. The only sign we have to give to modern men and women that human life does have, as we would expect, a controlling and directing Spirit leading us towards our fulfilment and salvation, is the continuity in time and the continuity in principle of that one, unique, divine Magisterium which is the Bible and Tradition as one and the same revelation. Then we can show the Church's life as one of development and definition, which again is in strict continuity with that one same principle. The divinity of God in Christ must exist on earth and be bravely exercised on earth—for teaching, not just for reading. It can be shown to be there through the ages. But the courage to re-proclaim it is not too evident just now, as good men and women agonise in doubt.

The teaching Tradition of solemn doctrine, for which the infallibility of God is claimed, is a double miracle. The miracle consists partly in the Magisterium's very existence on earth: it is a corollary of the claim for Christ of a real teaching ministry until the end of time. And it consists partly in the fact that through the development and definition of doctrine

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<sup>13</sup> See chapter 8, "The Son of Man: A Meditation upon Psalm 8"; E. Holloway, *Jesus: Did He know who He was?*, Faith Pamphlets, 1978.

it answers the needs of God's people. Answers must be given; human nature demands them. They must be final, or human nature disregards them.

At this time of great crisis we must expect that God will give new support and a new prophetic vision in His Church—the Church continuous with the teaching oracles of God, the Church at the centre of centres. When this is done—and we think it is—there can then emerge a new vision and a new insight into the mind of God in Christ and the love, human and divine, in Christ. It will renew and command the spirit of man. There will follow from this insight a call to a deeper conformation of us all to the personality of Christ as Son of God, and Son and Prince of Man. As God and man, Jesus is the norm of human joy and fulfilment. We are made to the image of God. It is to God that we approximate. A new vision must make the vital point that man is not self-fulfilled nor morally autonomous. There is for us a control and direction, a law of life and being. It is centred in God. God has communed with us and is in communion with us. The growth and noble deployment of a truly human personality does not and cannot consist in technological self-mutilation or the abdication of human responsibility in our loving by ever more brilliant pills and chemicals. The true vision of human holiness and the self-dignity of human love, given to the young, would thrill many of them. We know it does. There is no guarantee or expectation that all, or even most, will accept that way. Did they when men crucified Jesus?

But to all who received Him, who believed in His name, He gave power to become children of God; who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)

### **From Genesis to Apocalypse**

This is the meaning and mission of the 'Church' from Genesis, from 'Beginnings', until now. Perhaps later someone might ponder the perspective in which this 'inculturation' into Christ should be done in sermons, schools, groups, the intimacy of the home, and the communing of Christian friendship. Then, beyond renewal in the Church, lies the going out to other faiths in sweetness and utter humility. This article has been concerned with *the main wonder* of God's communing with men: the coherence and utter continuity of God's control and direction in the spoken word and the written word of divine Tradition until now. Sweetly and wonderfully, in the original communion of innocence; through priests and prophets under the labour of sin; and now finally in the painful and most loving communion of redemption, God has walked and talked with us as friends in mutual communing in the cool of the evening air. This is Word, Church and Bible.