

our access to the mystery of Christ, the sign of the meal. We thank the one who invited us and in the strength of the meal we go about our Christian work. The eucharist is for us, for our sakes, just as all the work of Christ which is represented in it is 'for us men and for our salvation'. We should not turn round and make men for the eucharist.

I have been arguing that in the matter of eucharistic theology there has been no deviation from the traditional and scriptural faith of the Church. I have done this by supposing that it is possible to discover a person's theology of the eucharist by looking at the sort of eucharist he wants celebrated, at the texts and rubrics and general remarks which he offers. Insofar as there is any modern theology which can claim to be centrally Catholic, that can only be the theology which underlies the new *Ordo Missae*, the end-product of the Council and its theology. The controversies of a few years ago over the acceptable and unacceptable uses of such terms as trans-finalization and transsignification were valuable in that they recalled attention to the scholastic dictum that *sacramenta sunt in genere signi*, and Trent's *ut sumatur institutum*. It would now be impossible to theologize about the eucharist in forgetfulness of that. But in all this there does not yet seem to have been any radically new insight into the eucharist. What there has been is much more in the way of a restoration, just as the new order of the Roman mass is basically a restoration. For a real development we will have to wait until the renewal of the classical tradition has worked its way into the hearts and minds of the whole Christian people.

Scripture, Tradition and the Community

by Joseph Rhymer

This is not a time to be digging the old entrenched positions a little deeper and then defending them, so it is worth noting with caution that each of the terms in this title trails with it a long history of old battles and rigid attitudes. In any case, the old certainty about the meanings of the words we use is one of the new uncertainties.

There is even an implicit assumption hidden in the order in which the terms are used traditionally. We take it for granted, perhaps, that tradition is rooted in scripture, and that the community is first formed, and then grows, by a causal combination of these two prior factors. This view holds that the people of the Old Testament

and of the New were 'People of a Book', who were formed by the scriptures which they accepted. They had a clear tradition, as well, handed down to them from the very beginning: 'It was of importance that this tradition should be preserved without deformation; and fidelity to the received tradition was the ultimate assurance that the doctrine proposed was genuine.' A little later in the same article the function of tradition as a vital factor in the formation of the community is explicitly stated: '. . . the spirit indeed taught the Church, but communicated no new word beyond that which Jesus had incarnated and uttered. The content of the revelation, once Jesus no longer dwelt on earth, was secured only by the faithful preservation and transmission of the word among his followers. Tradition must therefore be included among the constitutive elements of the primitive Christian community.'¹

This impression of the independent formation and causal priority of tradition can be further emphasized—and equated with scripture—when discussing the origins and characteristics of the Old Testament community. One has only to think of the place given to tradition by Deuteronomy when it warns that a prophet who teaches anything contrary to tradition is to be stoned, even if he supports his teaching by offering 'to do a sign or a wonder for you, and the sign or wonder comes about'. (Deut. 13, 2.) In the Old Testament, Moses is given a very similar position to that of Jesus in the New, it would appear, when it is a question of the source and authority of tradition, and its importance as the foundation of the community.

So at first sight both Testaments seem to support the kind of sequence expressed in the title of this article, and the implications. I believe this to be a dangerously mistaken point of view, which *falsifies the nature of the relationship to the very experience from the past which scripture and tradition make available to the present community*, for it gives the impression that scripture and tradition are in some sense separate from the community. In point of fact they are both of them dependent on some form of community for their emergence, their transmission and their interpretation. They can exert very strong influences on the development of the community and the shape it takes as it relates to the changing contemporary situation. They can even bring about the revival of the community when it has become moribund, or stimulate the emergence of what may seem to be a quite new community. But they can only have these effects because they focused the experience of an earlier community, and expressed it in a form which could be transmitted and appropriated by other, or later, communities. If this is the case, it underlines the priority of the community, and exposes the danger of using scripture or tradition outside the context of a living community, or with little

¹*Dictionary of the Bible*. By John L. McKenzie, S.J. (Chapman), 1968, p. 897.

regard to the insights gained from coping with the continually changing contemporary situation.

Scripture and tradition are both concerned with the experience of relationship. Primarily, this relationship is between God and man, but spreading out from this central relationship there is further exploration into the relationship between God and the cosmos of which man is a part. The main factor in this experience is the realization that the relationship is fundamentally dependent on God's initiative, and that this initiative is constantly renewed as God feels for response from man. The divine initiative is fundamental—and it is the growing realization of this which marks the progress in the understanding of 'covenant'—but this initiative can only be effective when it evokes response from man. This pattern is deeply rooted in the meaning of love, for the object of God's continually creative activity is to establish a love relationship with man. This means that no other pattern is possible; it can only be one of divine initiative evoking free response. Without a response from man which is in some sense free and within man's own gift, there can be no love in any meaningful sense of the word.

It is easy to write about God's relationship with man in such abstract terms, but the relationship is not with abstract 'man'. It is with individual men and women who live in concrete situations, and work out their relationship with God in the context of their relationships with other individual men and women. The response to God is a free response, but it is also a situated response, and the language about the response reflects the situation: '... man is at liberty in situation. It follows that when he acts, he acts in a certain situation, when he speaks, he speaks in a certain situation. . . . Human speech is situated; it is tied to the language possibilities, the imagery, and the conceptual framework available in certain circumstances, to the problems raised and the presuppositions accepted as a matter of course in a certain situation.'² The language used to express the experience of relationship is language forged within a particular situation. Words have to be found to express the experience, and even though these words are used in ways which stretch their original meanings there still has to be a firm connection with their original meaning and the situation within which they were used if they are to retain any meaning at all. This truism becomes vitally important when the words are used to express the experience of the relationship with God, and when that experience crystallizes into the transmittable forms of scripture and tradition.

Men and women live in concrete situations, and their understanding of God develops within these concrete situations. The effects of this have been easier to see in some historical situations

²*Man and Sin*. By Piet Schoonenberg, S. J. Sheed & Ward, 1965, p. 169.

than they have been in others, and it may be a help if one of these situations is now examined.

One such situation, in which important parts of both scripture and tradition were emerging in forms which were to exert a strong influence on later generations, was the period of David and Solomon. It was one of the rare 'vacuum periods' in Hebrew history when the people were comparatively free from external political pressures, and it was a period of rapid and radical social change. The political, economic and social structures which emerged during this period had a profound effect on the language and imagery of scripture, and on the forms and content of tradition, some of which are still influencing our own presuppositions and our language about the relationship with God. A closer look at this period may illuminate the whole process of the emergence of scripture and tradition, and the ways in which they should be allowed to influence our own thinking.

During the reigns of David and Solomon the first main period of Hebrew development ended and the national life was given the shape which it was to retain in its essentials for at least the next three hundred and fifty years. The united Hebrew kingdom split at Solomon's death in 931 B.C., and the larger part of it was eliminated by the Assyrians when they destroyed Samaria and dispersed the population of the northern kingdom in 721 B.C.; yet the pattern of life which had been established between 1000 B.C. (when David made Jerusalem his capital) and 931 B.C. survived in its essentials. The stabilizing factors were the institutions, and the power of the symbols which captured the imaginations of the people.

Whatever the circumstances in which the Hebrew people first entered Palestine, or returned to it after the Exodus, they inevitably adopted much of the political, economic and social pattern of the indigenous Canaanites. This involved changes as large, in their way, as the changes in our own way of life from an agriculturally based society to an industrial and technological one during the past two hundred years. The Hebrews changed from a semi-nomadic, shepherd, clan-centred people into a settled, agricultural people with permanent political institutions administered by a centralized bureaucracy backed by a standing army. The royal strongholds scattered throughout the country, and Jerusalem itself, were the most obvious signs of this change, but equally significant were the walled villages with their aprons of cultivated land, and the network of roads connecting with the great international trading routes which passed through the Palestine area. Jerusalem, with its fortifications, royal palace and the Temple adjacent to it, summed up a way of life which in various degrees was to be found all over the country. This way of life was the new situation which provided the available imagery and conceptual framework for the expression of the

experience of the people. The images of kingship, law, sacrifice, temple, priesthood, and the closely integrated local community were the kind of secular language available when there was need to talk about religious relationships, along with such older images as family, father, shepherd and the journeyings of a mobile people.

David saw that kingship was the most appropriate form of government for the way of life which was emerging, and Solomon developed it enthusiastically. The resulting centralization of political authority was reflected in its turn in the beginnings of the centralization of religious authority when the sacred Ark was enshrined in Jerusalem. Just as David had accepted and used the Canaanite institution of monarchy, so too it is at least probable that the Ark, the traditional Hebrew religious symbol when they were a mobile people, was served in Jerusalem by a Canaanite type of priest led by Zadok. David was unable to establish a temple to house the Ark and its priesthood, but Solomon took the process to its logical conclusion, and in time the Temple became so strong a symbol that it performed this function long after the Ark had been destroyed. In a similar way, whatever the original pattern of Hebrew worship had been, it was the sacrificial cult centred on the Temple which became the dominant expression of the nation's relationship with God, and when the Hebrew monarchy collapsed the priesthood emerged as the nation's rulers. It would be a long time before these religious developments reached their final form in the years before the Roman destruction of Jerusalem, but the seeds were planted by David and Solomon, and by the men of their time.

During the same period seeds were planted with similar potential in the fields of law and of historical writing. The older methods of law making and law enforcement grew out of the extended family and the clan as the normal social unit in a semi-nomadic society. The new pattern of village life, the change to an agricultural economy, and the centralization of authority all led to new laws, new law-making processes and new institutions for the administration of law. It was no longer sufficient for the head of the family, or the elders of the village, to hear the cases, remind their listeners of the laws and precedents, and rely on the authority of a small natural community to make the decisions effective. The central authority began to legislate for the more important aspects of national life, and more and more of the cases which arose went to the king's court for decision. The traditional body of Hebrew law was expanded by absorbing Canaanite law, and by borrowing from any neighbours whose experience was relevant to the changing Hebrew situation. New laws were decreed, and along with the growing practice of bringing cases to the king's court the idea of the absolute authority of the king was applied, in time, to the law. As with the prestige of the Temple, this development did not reach its fullest form until the post-exilic period, but the first signs of it were already there in

David's time: 'He (Absalom) would rise early and stand beside the road leading to the gate; and whenever a man with some lawsuit had to come before the king's court, Absalom would call out to him and ask, "What town are you from?" He would answer, "Your servant is from one of the tribes in Israel". Then Absalom would say, "Look, your case is sound and just, but there is not one deputy of the king's who will listen to you." . . .' (2 Sam. 15 2-3.)

In the field of historical writing, which emerged from the custom of recollecting the national and local history on the main occasions when the people gathered to sacrifice, *there were very close interactions between the contemporary patterns of life and the ways in which the stories were selected and structured.* The unification of the people into one kingdom by David and Solomon was helped by the wide acceptance of a common national historical tradition, centred on the escape from Egypt, the Sinai covenant and the possession of Palestine: as the stories were told, within this situation of national unification, there would be emphasis of the unity of the people, all descended from a line of common ancestors, and on God's repeated demonstration of his special choice of the nation through the covenants with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The new instruments of central government stimulated the keeping of records, so that oral tradition was gradually replaced by written accounts; but the actual contents of the new historical records and the ideas expressed in them were equally affected by the experiences of the people who wrote them. *The historical records in the old Testament reveal far more about the experiences and presuppositions of the generations by whom they were written than they do about the times and people which they describe.* The beginnings of this process are already discernible in the earliest of Hebrew historical writings, and in the earliest editorial work shown by the J and E sources; later, the deuteronomic and priestly schools of historical writing were to use their versions of history as a main teaching technique. Throughout its existence, the Hebrew community repeatedly *restated its past history in terms of its present experience*, in order to explore and express the continual relevance of the relationship with God.

The relationship with God was in this way expressed in terms of the contemporary forms of government, law, worship and society. Nevertheless, running through the whole process was a single thread which saved it from mere historical relativism. The language, the imagery and the conceptual framework developed and changed from generation to generation, but it was an organic development and change, for it was always related to the central belief in a God whose initiative towards them was consistent, and whom they believed required from them an equally consistent response. The language they used about God was forged in their everyday experience within the ordinary secular community (in which religion had a natural place), but that language expressed the conviction that

God's saving power was the key to every situation, and that the Exodus situation of human need and divine action was the standard one. Human fulfilment and satisfaction is found by effective response to God within the full human situation, whatever it might be, and this is the message of salvation. *One's own existing human community is the basic human situation, and the relationship with God comes alive in terms of this basic human situation of community, though in a complex and double way: the relationship with God both is discovered and expressed through the relationships formed with the other members of the community, and re-creates and transforms those relationships on the model of past but different experiences of God's initiative of saving love.* The Hebrew community of David's time is just one example of this, where the processes can be examined easily.

If this is somewhere near the heart of the matter it means that both scripture and tradition, as vehicles for collecting and transmitting experience, are secondary to the community. It also means that they are always servants of the community even when they are contributing to its development or when they are being used as controls to decide whether new developments are proceeding along acceptable lines. They focus previous human experience, so that truths are presented in terms of needs and situations which may be very different from the present ones. Under such circumstances the past experience has to be selected and translated with care before it can be related to the needs and situations of any later community: any attempt to apply it literally can only lead to fossilization. This is fairly obvious when we read and use the Old Testament. It is less obvious, perhaps, but all the more important when it comes to applying the New Testament, and the traditions of the Church, to the needs and situations of the present day.

Theology and Developing Countries

by Marcel Boivin, W.F.

The Unambiguous View of a Group of Priests in Zambia

I took advantage of updating sessions in Zambia last summer to put the following question to Zambian and missionary priests that I met: 'Has your training really prepared you for your ministry?'

The question was deliberately ambiguous; training could be interpreted as spiritual, pastoral or theological. The question was put to eighty-eight priests, and it is revealing that nearly all of them