Scripture

THE LITURGY OF THE WORD—II*

Mediator Dei defines the liturgy as *integer publicus cultus mystici Jesu Christi corporis, capitis nempe membrorumque eius.* What is the role of Scripture to be in this 'public cult of the mystical body'? How are the Scriptures to be mediated to the people? As a kerygmatic 'word'? Or as a fount of divine truth and revelation? Can one speak of a 'liturgy of the word' at all? Our enquiry will have to bear in mind both the nature of the Scriptures, their use in the Church down through the ages, and the preaching of the Church and her ministers. As will be seen, the very circumscription of the Scriptures in time and history, as well as in an ancient Jewish world, has made their integration into the liturgy difficult at all times. Since the liturgical movement is largely a return to primitive forms it is important to focus attention on what the primitive forms and developments really were.

The New Testament itself, viewed in its own historic perspective, presents no great difficulty. Here one finds the foundations of the whole Christian liturgy : the redemptive work of Christ, his death and resurrection, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, the concept of the Church as the body of Christ, the two great sacraments of baptism and eucharist. So far as the participation of the Christian in the Christ-event was concerned, one may distinguish two quite distinct liturgical forms : one was the preaching of the 'word', wherein the Christian encountered Christ by faith ; the other was participation in the sacraments. Were these two distinct forms (especially the word and the eucharist) originally also separate services? So far as the word is concerned, was it primarily a liturgy of proclamation, prayer and praise, or was it a liturgy based primarily on Scriptural readings? Our answers cannot be given with absolute certainty, since the New Testament evidence is sparse and open to various interpretations. At the same time there are sufficient vestiges of the primitive liturgy embedded in the texts to provide some idea of its spirit and make-up.

* The first part of this article appears in *Scripture* 1965, pp. 33–41.

As has been seen,[1] the New Testament preaching of the 'word' was not based on Scripture ; it was a kerygmatic proclamation of the Christ-event, an event which fulfilled the Old Testament Scriptures but which could not avail of Scripture since none was there. The Scriptures of the New Testament resulted from that preaching.[2] At the start, therefore, the very newness of the Christian situation pre-cluded the use of Scripture, at least directly. The 'word' was the proclamation of the Christ-event, directed in the first place to Jews and pagans. But one cannot say that it stopped there. The kerygma continued to be preached to the Christians in their regular assemblies. Since, however, the kerygma presupposed a fulfilment of the Old Testament Scriptures, it was necessary that these should be studied and used, at least in so far as they pointed towards fulfilment in Christ, a study which constituted a sort of theological preparation. It was a *didache* or *didaskalia*. It was a prop for the kerygma, not a substitute for it, nor its source. The kerygma would also be applied to the lives of the people and the relationships of the community in the form of homiletic or *paraenesis*. Thus the ministry of the 'word' would comprise these three : the preaching of the kerygma, the study of the Old Testament in the light of the kerygma and the exhortation of the people to the fulfilment of the precept of love.[3]

The early liturgy of the word has left its mark on the New Testa-ment in the form of many liturgical formulas [4] scattered throughout the books : hymns, blessings, doxologies, formulas of praise, expressions of faith, kerygmatic formulas.[5] Very frequently one finds an emphasis on the 'now', or an antithesis between the 'once' and the 'now', which reflects the newness of the Christian situation. That newness is also reflected in the liturgical formulas, in that, while they naturally

[1] art. cit., pp. 36–38.

[2] Apart from the abbreviated sermons of Acts, in the style of the hellenistic Jewish homily, there is no example in the N.T. of a complete sermon. The Catholic epistles are made up mostly of sermon material. 2 *Clement* (*ca.* 150 A.D.) is the earliest extant complete sermon—a homily of preparation for the coming of the Lord, based on O.T. texts and sayings of Jesus.

[3] cf. Ingo Hermann, in *Neutestamentliche Aufsätze* (Festschr. Iosef Schmid), Pustet 1963, pp. 110–14. For examples of *kerygma* cf. Acts 2:22ff. ; 3:15ff. ; 5:30ff. ; 10:37ff. ; of the use of Scripture (*didache*) : cf. Acts 2:25ff. ; 3:22ff. ; 10:43 ; 13:32ff. ; of *paraenesis* : cf. the concluding parts of the Pauline epistles, or the epistle of James.

[4] cf. Oscar Cullmann, *Early Christian Worship*, London 1953, pp. 21–25 ; Gunther Bornkamm, in RGG³, II, 1002–1005 ; Gerhard Delling, *Worship in the New Testament*, London 1962, pp. 55–127.

[5] *Hymns* : cf. Phil. 2:6–11 ; Col. 1:15–20 ; 1 Tim. 3:16 ; Heb. 1:3f. ; 1 Pet. 1:18–20, 2:21–24, 3:18–22 ; Eph. 1:3–14. *Blessings* : Rom. 1:7, 16:20b ; 1 Tim:1, 2 ; 1 Pet:1, 2b (cf. J.-P. Audet, R.B. 65, 1958, 371–99). *Doxologies* : Rom. 1:25b, 9:5b, 11:36b ; 1 Tim. 6:15. *Praise* : Apoc. 4:8, 5:9f., 5:13, 7:10, 12. *Faith-formulas* : cf. Rom. 10:8f. ; 1 Cor. 12:3 ; Acts 8:37 ; Heb. 4:14 ; 1 Cor. 8:6 ; 1 Tim. 6:13 ; 2 Tim:4, 1. *Kerygmatic formulas* : 1 Cor. 15:3–5 ; Rom. 1:3f., 3:25, 4:25.

show a common background with Old Testament and late Jewish forms, yet they also show the Christian liturgy to have been quite independent of Judaism and conscious of its independence. Thus, it is noteworthy that there is never any allusion to *readings* from the Old Testament (as a formal part of the liturgy) or any indication that the early Christian church followed the pattern of the synagogal service of readings.[1]

How remote the pattern of the liturgy of the word was from that of the synagogue may be seen from 1 Cor. 14, even when one allows that the Corinthian pattern probably had much local colour and was not truly representative. The local colour stemmed from Greek (and gnostic ?) influences and the result is an interesting confrontation of Greek and Jewish forms (especially Greek and Jewish forms of Spirit-manifestation [2]). St Paul compares *glossolalia* (='speaking in tongues') with *prophecy*. The former is a characteristic Greek form of ecstatic prayer (cf. vv. 13–19), while the latter, which St Paul commends, is doubtless a proclamation of the word of God in the Jewish manner with a certain dynamic, actualising force. One is struck by the vivid spontaneity of this worship of God on the part of the ordinary members of the community : 'When you come together, each one has a hymn, a lesson, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation. Let all things be done for building up' (v. 26 ; cf. vv. 3, 4, 5, 12). It is therefore a liturgical worship, situated within the church assembly (vv. 23, 26), so that all the community can reply 'Amen' together (v. 16).[3]

What St Paul calls 'prophecy' was fundamentally the proclaiming of the word of God (i.e. the Christian gospel) in a specially dynamic and Spirit-informed way. Quite clearly the early liturgy was infused with a dynamism, a dynamism which did not derive merely from an

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[1] Delling points to the critical attitude of Jesus towards Judaism (op. cit., 3–8), to the totally different cultic language of the N.T. (9), to the different structure of the synagogue service (42f.), to the new situation in the history of salvation (92–95 and 102), to St Paul's rejection of Jewish festivals (166). Käsemann notes the total absence of any allusion in the N.T. to formal readings (Lk. 4:17 is not an exception ; cf. parallels). That the early Christians in Jerusalem continued to worship in the temple is no proof that their own Christian worship was based on the Jewish model, and certainly no proof that Christians elsewhere attended the synagogue. Thus the summary of Acts. 2:42–47 (v. 42 : 'teaching, *koinonia*, breaking of bread and prayers') makes no mention of Scriptural readings. Jungmann's thesis of a Christian adoption of synagogue service is dated ; nor is there any reliable evidence that the synagogue pattern was adopted later. [cf. Jungmann, *Missarum Solemnia*, 1950, p. 20 (=*Mass of the Roman Rite*, Burns Oates, 1959, p. 12)]. Whether the prayers of the *Canon* of the Mass were influenced by Jewish prototypes is another question. It seems to me that even here authorities like G. Dix and Hans Lietzmann altogether exaggerate. cf. Hans Lietzmann, *Mass and Lord's Supper*, Leiden 1954, Fasc. 2, pp. 100–9, and Robert D. Richardson's criticism in his supplementary essay, Fasc. 4, p. 220, no. V (yet to be completed). [2] art. cit., p. 41, n. 1.

[3] On 1 Cor. 14 cf. Cullmann, op. cit., p. 20f., 32f. It is not without interest that the original meaning of *homilia* was *mutuum colloquium*.

exposition of Scriptural texts. Prophecy presupposes personal inspira-
tion, a charism of the Spirit. Now, even though the peculiarly
charismatic equipment of the very early Christian church became more
and more restricted, even at an early stage, to office-endowed leaders
of the community,[1] yet the function of prophecy persisted in the
Church for at least two centuries—in effect, if not by name. Thus, at
the beginning of the second century we read in the Didache (4:1) :
' My child, day and night remember him who preaches God's word
to you (not the Scriptures !) and honour him as Lord, for where his
Lordship is spoken of, there is the Lord.' This implies that the risen
Kurios speaks through the mouth of the preacher of the ' word '
(cf. also Did. 15:1). Again, at the end of the second century,
Hippolytus [2] in his description of the Roman liturgy makes no mention
of Scriptural readings but does recommend to his readers that if there
should be an ' instruction in the word ', they should attend to it, ' con-
sidering that it is God whom they hear speaking by the mouth of him
who instructs . . .' They ' will be profited by the things which the
Holy Spirit will give by him who instructs '. Such dynamic presenta-
tion of God's word did not proceed from Scripture ; rather it produced
it—books such as the late writings of the New Testament or the epistle
of Barnabas, the Didache, or the Shepherd of Hermas. It was inevi-
table, however, that this dynamism would yield to a liturgy based on
fixed Scriptural readings ; and the Greek understanding of the Scrip-
tures would open the way for further liturgical decline.

Public reading is not, indeed, unknown to the New Testament.
Thus St Paul expected his letters to be read *in ecclesia* (1 Th. 5:27 ;
Col. 4:16). So also the author of the Apocalypse.[3] But the documents

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[1] The proclaimers of the word (whether prophets, teachers or evangelists) cannot
simply be identified with the official leaders of the community, the presbyters or the
episcopoi. This is clear from various N.T. combinations : thus 1 Cor. 12:28 : ' apostles,
prophets, teachers . . .' (at the head of a list of charismatics) ; Acts 18:20 : ' apostles
and prophets ' ; Acts 13:1 : ' prophets and teachers ' (also in Did. 13:1f.). However,
already in the pastoral epistles, a gradual narrowing down of the charisms to the
presbyters is apparent, and in Did. 15:1 (beginning of 2c.) the official leaders clearly also
have the function of prophecy and teaching. cf. Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testa-
ment*, 1955, II, 100–10. The term ' evangelists' (Eph. 4:11 ; Acts 21:8) probably con-
noted travelling missionaries who were not apostles (Bultmann, *ibid.*, p. 106) ; ' teachers '
(*didaskaloi*) would have been equivalent to ' those who catechized ' (Gal. 6:6) or taught
the *didache* ; ' prophets ' proclaimed the ' word of God ' *in ecclesia* ; theirs was an
essentially liturgical function. While, however, the proclaiming of the word was done
chiefly by charismatics, the administration of the sacraments belonged rather to the
leaders of the community. (cf. Bultmann, *ibid.*, p. 109.)
[2] cf. G. Dix, *The Treatise on the Apostolic Tradition of St Hippolytus of Rome*, London
1937, p. 61f.
[3] cf. Apoc. 1:3 : ' Blessed is he who reads aloud this prophecy and those who listen
to it '. Also 22:17 : ' The Spirit and the Bride say, Come ! And *let him who hears* say,
Come ! '

here in question were highly personal messages from their authors, almost equivalent to sermons. Not until their historical and temporal relevance had ceased would they become ' Scripture '. Public reading, presumably of the Old Testament, is mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:13 : ' Till I come, attend to reading, to preaching, to teaching.' (The parallels show that it is public, not private reading, that is in question.) But such reading of Scripture would be subordinate to the kerygma, not its source. In the immediately subsequent verse Timothy is warned not to neglect the charism that is in him, which was mediated by the imposition of the hands of the presbyteral college, which itself was guided by ' prophecy ' (4:14). The earliest unquestionable attestation of liturgical reading is found in Justin (Apol. 1:67 c. A.D. 150).[1] In his description of the eucharist, Justin informs us that the service began with ' reading(s) from the memoirs of the Apostles or the writings of the Prophets, as long as time permits '. These were followed by a sermon from the president of the assembly, and this in turn by the eucharist itself, which consisted of prayer, the kiss of peace, the bringing of the eucharistic elements, the eucharistic prayer, the communion. By Justin's time some books of the New Testament have already been canonised, and readings from these are mentioned in the first place.[2] But, as the wording shows, the sermon has greater importance.

From Justin it is clear that the service of the ' word ' and the eucharist were united in one ceremony. Were there ever distinct services, the one in the morning, analogous to (but not based on) the synagogue service, the other in the evening (and therefore a ' supper ') ?[3]

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[1] cf. MG. 6, 428f. The English translation will be found in Jungmann, *Missarum*, I, 22 (=*Mass*, p. 14).

[2] Justin's final clause ' *as long as time permits* ' and the order in which he mentions the readings (' Prophets ' in second place) make it reasonably clear that what we have here is no borrowing from the synagogue service, as Jungmann maintains (*Missarum*, I, 20 =*Mass*, p. 12).

[3] Three questions are at issue : *Firstly,* the *day* on which the eucharist was regularly celebrated. Already in the N.T. (1 Cor. 16:2 ; Acts 20:7) the Christian sabbath seems to have been transferred to the first day of the week ; this is the ' Lord's Day ' of Did. 14:1, the ' day of the sun ' of Justin (Apol. 67), the *stato die* of Pliny (Ep. X, 96, 7). *Secondly,* the *hour* at which the eucharist was celebrated. In the N.T. it was in the evening (cf. Acts. 20:7 ; 1 Cor. 11:21—the 'Lord's *supper*'). Probably also in Pliny : *rursumque coeundi ad capiendum cibum,* i.e. the eucharist, in the evening. (On the other hand, according to Lietzmann, the morning services in Pliny, *ante lucem,* were probably not services of the word but baptisms. See Bultmann, *Theology,* II, 145 *note*). But in Justin the whole service appears to have been in the morning, and the eucharist has lost its character as a real supper. *Thirdly,* the relationship of the word-liturgy to that of the eucharist. On this the critics are divided. Cullman is strongly against the assumption of separate services (' one of those dogmas so often repeated in the textbooks that they are now taken as facts ', op. cit., p. 27). Käsemann (RGG³ IV, p. 402f.) and H. Riesenfeld (RGG³ II, p. 1761f.) are in agreement with him. But Bultmann (*Theology,* II, p. 145) and Delling (p. 147, with reservations) as well as most earlier critics hold that the ' word '

There is no reason why there should not have been special services of the word, such as baptismal or catechetical instructions, but these would not have been for the benefit of the whole community. On the other hand, it does seem probable that in the regular worship of the community the eucharist was normally preceded by a word liturgy, even from the earliest times. One clear example of this is to be found in Acts. 20:7ff. (on the 'first day of the week' and in the evening). Hints of a similar practice are to be found in St Paul. Thus the outline of a eucharist service has been detected in 1 Cor. 16:19–24.[1] Paul visualises the context in which the closing words of his letter will be heard by his audience. His letter has been read in the *ecclesia* (cf. 1 Th. 5:27; Col. 4:16), taking the place of a sermon, Then follow allusions to an invitatory (implicit in v. 22; cf. Didache 10:6: 'if any man is holy, let him come'); a 'holy kiss' (v. 20); a warning to the unworthy, presupposing a confession of sins (v. 22); a eucharistic prayer (v. 22: *Maran-atha*—'Our Lord, come!'). The eucharist itself would have followed. (Similar echoes in Rom. 15:30–33; 16:25–27; Apoc. 22: 14–20 [2]; Didache 10:6.) This sequence corresponds closely with that described by Justin. The conclusions of most of the Pauline epistles with their repeated emphasis on 'greeting' (*aspasmos*), 'agape' and a 'holy kiss' (*philēma hagion*), make it a reasonably probable conclusion that all his letters were normally read to the assembled community as part of the word-liturgy prior to the celebration of the eucharist.[3] The former would include, above all, the preaching of the 'word' but also hymns, responses, confession of sins, profession of faith.

The development of the liturgy of the word in the early centuries would therefore seem to have been on the following lines: (*a*) in the

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was a morning service analogous to (but not necessarily based on) the synagogue service, while the eucharist was in the evening. Jungmann's evidence of an original separation of the two services is both late and weak. (cf. *Missarum*, pp. 20, 262 and 391f.=*Mass*, pp. 12, 188 and 258f.). The fact that the foremass and the eucharist were sometimes celebrated in different places does not necessarily indicate that they were separate liturgies.

[1] cf. J. A. T. Robinson, 'The earliest Christian liturgical sequence?', JTS, NS IV, 1953, pp. 38–41 (=*Twelve New Testament Studies*, S.C.M. Press, 1962, pp. 154–7).

[2] Apoc. 22:17 also presupposes a reading of the prophecy prior to what appears to be an allusion to the eucharist in vv. 14–21: an invitatory, with bans, in v. 14f.; the epiclesis prayer in vv. 17 and 20.

[3] Delling argues (p. 49f.) that the openings of the epistles are not only Pauline expansions of the classical greeting-form but above all expansions which borrow from liturgical usage. If this is true of the openings, it is certainly true of the conclusions. Delling, however, maintains (p. 170f.) with less probability that the borrowing was from the service of the word (in the morning) rather than from the eucharist service. Thus the 'kiss' clearly introduces the eucharist service in Justin (Apol. 65), while the kiss of peace and the greeting (*aspasmos*) introduce the eucharist after the consecration of a bishop, according to Hippolytus (*Tradition*, ed. G. Dix, p. 6). On parallels between Hippolytus and St Paul cf. Lietzmann, op. cit., pp. 145–9.

early stages, a kerygmatic preaching of the Christ-event, with a *didache* or instruction on how the Old Testament Scriptures were fulfilled (but no fixed or formal readings), and a *paraenesis* applying the gospel to the lives and relationships of the community, as well as hymns, prayers, responses. For at least two centuries kerygmatic preaching, or ' prophecy ', was primary, and there were no fixed Scriptural readings ; (*b*) a second stage, when the New Testament canon was coming into being and readings from it, as well as from the Old Testament, had a place in the liturgy. The readings, however, were not fixed, and the sermon continued to have primary importance ; (*c*) a third era may be distinguished, the beginning of which is not easy to determine, when readings had become fixed and acquired an established place in the Mass, while the sermon had become more detached and was no longer looked upon as an essential part of the liturgy.[1] Side by side with this development, and to some extent the cause of it, as well as of the decline that set in at an early stage, was the influence of Greek philosophy and ideas as a force shaping the liturgy of the Church. This was especially true of the liturgy of the word. Instead of being a concrete and dynamic kerygma addressed to men in a concrete historical situation, the ' word ' (=*logos*) came to be equiperated with the Scriptures and to be looked upon more and more as a divine and absolute *logos* revealing the divine reality and truth. To add to the difficulty these Scriptures of the Jewish world were not easily understood by the people of the Greek world, whose language and thought were so different. The Scriptures themselves tended to become part of the cult-mystery. The ' word of God ', as a concrete word demanding a concrete response, was uttered not so much by the Scriptures as by the preacher so long as preaching remained an integral part of the liturgy.

THE SCRIPTURES IN THE CHURCH

So far as our purpose is concerned, i.e. the liturgical mediation of the Scriptures as a ' word of God ', it will suffice to review three great schools of homiletic, as well as the ideas and philosophy at the back of them : the Alexandria school, the Antioch school and the early Latin Fathers.

[1] Jungmann's statement that ' the reading of Holy Scripture represents the proper content of the foremass, in much the same way as the Sacrament forms the heart of the Mass proper ' must be questioned. On the contrary, it would seem that the recession of kerygmatic preaching proceeded *pari passu* with the fixation of the Scriptural readings, and therefore already signalled the beginning of the later decline. What Jungmann says of *some* liturgies was to some extent true of them all, once the principle of fixed readings became established : ' the liturgical lesson then merely became a symbolic presentation of God's word ' (*Missarum* I, p. 409=*Mass*, p. 267).

Of the first, the greatest representative is Origen († 254) [1]—if one except the Jewish writer Philo and St Clement of Alexandria, of whose homiletic works little remains. Origen has left about two hundred sermons, mostly on the Old Testament. His approach is erudite and spiritual, rather than rhetorical ; he exhorts and comforts, rather than teaches. As a scholar he is interested in the text, less, however, in its direct, literal and historical meaning, than in its hidden truth. For Origen brings to the interpretation of Scripture a middle-Platonic philosophy, and thereby introduces an ideology which is quite different from that of the Bible, especially that of the Old Testament. Since he starts from a Greek concept of verbal inspiration,[2] he will not stop short at what the sacred author meant by what he wrote, but searches rather for what the Holy Spirit intended. And since he starts from a Greek concept of the *logos Theou*, as a divine *ratio* or revelation, he is not so much interested in the historical unfolding of revelation, or the history of salvation, as in the structural reality *(logos)* behind Scriptural revelation, viewed not historically but absolutely. Whence the *triple sense*, which left its mark on almost all future interpretation up to the Middle Ages : the *somatic* sense (grammatical, literal, historical) ; the *psychic* sense (moral); and the *pneumatic* sense (' spiritual ', i.e. allegorical). Of these three senses (in practice they can be reduced to two, the literal and the spiritual), the spiritual or the allegorical is no less a true meaning of Scripture than the historical. Similarly, Origen lays stress on integral revelation *(logos Theou)* rather than on the kerygmatic message *(d*e*bar Yahweh)*.

The allegorisation of the Alexandrians was repudiated by the school of Antioch : Didorus of Tarsus († 392), St John Chrysostom († 407) and Theodore of Mopsuestia († 428), who followed rather the philosophy of Aristotle. Instead of allegory they opted for *theoria*, i.e. the typological application of the literal sense. With typology one returns from the sphere of the absolute to that of history or *Heilsgeschichte*. But the Antioch school failed to build its *theoria* into a system as all-embracing as that of Origen. In applying the *theoria* to the liturgy, Theodore of Mopsuestia [3] did not get away from symbolism. He simply exchanged an ' historical ' for an allegorical symbolism. (Thus the various actions of the liturgy would, for instance, represent various events in our Lord's life or passion.) He pushed his views too far, and thus came up against the common teaching of the Church. The upshot was that, whereas St John Chrysostom was the greatest homilist of the

[1] On Origen see article by Daniélou in DBS VI, pp. 884–907.
[2] cf. art. cit., p. 41, n. 1.
[3] On Theodore see R. Devresse, R.B. 53, 1946, pp. 207–41 ; also Paul Ternant, *Biblica*, 34, 1953, pp. 135–58.

Greek Church and, as such, had great influence on later preaching, yet the system of Origen prevailed. At least the exploitation of the triple sense, and the conceptual reality at the back of the allegorisation, that of the Greek *logos*, prevailed throughout the whole Church, both east and west. [Note : In practice, however, the philosophy could be overlooked, and so one meets with considerable variations in the different Fathers. It is generally true, however, that in the Greek Church the Scriptures were emphasised in their *logos*-character as a source of divine revelation. Their kerygmatic aspect, as a ' word of God ' mediated within the liturgy, was lost sight of. Moreover, the liturgy of the word—even though it was in the vernacular and did not present the same problems as the break-down of Latin did in Europe— became altogether subordinated to the splendour and drama of the Byzantine cult-mystery. Worshippers in the post-Nicene Greek Church were no less ' onlookers ' than in the later Latin Church of the West.[1]]

In the West, the liturgical usage of the very early Roman Church is shrouded in obscurity, an obscurity which only begins to clear in the sixth century. So far as the ' word ' is concerned, the fundamental basis for later Latin usage was established by Tertullian, St Augustine and St Jerome. There were two important factors : (*a*) the fact that the Greek word *logos* (with its rich philosophical content) had no equivalent in Latin. The nearest approach was *sermo* or *verbum*, both of which emphasise the spoken rather than the conceptual character of the word. Thus the way was opened from the start for a kerygmatic rather than a philosophical approach ; (*b*) the fact that both Tertullian and St Augustine apply to the Scriptures the principles of ancient classical rhetoric ; whence, again, the accent is on the immediate meaning of the words. Tertullian[2] lays down clear and perceptive rules, approaching the Scriptures without philosophical preoccupations, stressing the literal sense, seeking out the textual, historical and conceptual context so as to explain the part in the light of the whole, the unclear in the light of the clear. Wherever he is obstructed by textual obscurity, he gets over the difficulty not by allegorisation but by appeal to the tradition of the Church.

But the greatest exponent of the ' word of God ' in the Latin Church, especially in its concrete application to the life and situation of his own

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[1] cf. G. Kretschmar, RGG³ II, p. 1766f. ; H.-J. Schulz, L.Th.K., 6, p. 1087; J. Quasten, in *Gedächtnis von O. Casel*, 1951, pp. 66–75. The advantage of the Greek liturgy was that it remained vernacular. But, while kerygma cannot be mediated except in the vernacular, a vernacular liturgy is not necessarily kerygmatic.

[2] On Tertullian as exegete, see Otto Kuss in *Festschrift Iosef Schmid*, Pustet, 1963, pp. 138–60.

flock, was St Augustine.[1] Modern existentialists look upon him as one of the founding fathers of their approach to philosophy. In fact, however, St Augustine too, is in the tradition of platonic or neo-platonic philosophy. He too holds fast to the revealed ' reality ' of the faith as expounded in the councils and by the teaching authority of the Church. He too can make use of the ' spiritual ' interpretation, especially when the sacred text presents some inherent problem or obscurity. But, as a former professor of rhetoric, St Augustine knew how to apply the principles of language to the expounding of Scripture and, indeed, to theology. In his tract *De Trinitate*, his metaphysic of the relationships of the divine Persons is built up especially on the logos-formulas of St John's prologue, not however on the conceptual structure of the Greek logos but on the notion of the *verbum*, which was the prevailing translation of *logos*, and the only one used by Augustine. The Son proceeds from the Father as the *word* (spoken internally) proceeds from the *mind* (conceptual) ; *love* (attraction of the will) constitutes the third of the Triad. The Word is the *verbum internum et eternum* of the Father ; from him come the *verba sonantia* of the Scriptures (Conf. XI, 6, 8ff.), spoken in time and place. For the *Verbum eternum* can speak in time and history to any one (cf. Conf. XIII, 5, 7 : ' O truly speaking Light, I adjure thee, speak ! '). While the *Verbum divinum* remains transcendent and absolute, yet there is another transient *verbum* which reveals itself to the Christian in his passing encounters with God ; whence the possibility of continued existential revelation.

Another outcome of Augustine's rhetorical training was his meta-physic of signs. Since a word is a sign, therefore he always seeks for the *res* signified by the words of the sacred text. The accent, therefore, is always on the meaning and application of the concrete word. But he goes further. If a word can be a sign, so too a sacrament can be a sign of a transcendent action or grace of God. Again here it is a word which determines the sign-character of a sacrament and makes it present : *accedit verbum ad elementum et fit sacramentum* (*In Ioann.*, 80:3). Now this Augustinian theology of the sign brings us back to the sign-actions of the Old Testament prophets. Just as the sign-action of the prophet was itself a ' word of God ', so for St Augustine the sacrament itself was a word of God, and therefore demands faith and the response of faith. By emphasising the sign-factor of both word and sacrament, St Augustine at the same time emphasises the actuality of the sacra-ment, the aspect of personal encounter here and now—as distinct from the absolute and transcendent reality behind the sacrament. Thus his

[1] cf. G. Strauss, *Schriftgebrauch, -auslesung und -beweis bei Augustin*, Tübingen, 1959 ; also F. Van der Meer, *Augustine the Bishop*, Sheed and Ward, 1961, pp. 277–82, 405–49.

concept of the *verbum* as a word-action puts him in line rather with Hebrew thought than with Greek philosophy. (One can understand why he was popular with the Reformers.) At the same time, his neo-platonism also remains intact. He is heir of the past, as well as being a profound and original thinker. The theology of Origen, of Tertullian and of the Antioch school, all meet in Augustine and are welded by him into a harmony. His sermons—some thousand of them altogether !—are models of the practical application of God's written word to the needs of his people. For him, as for Cicero, the aim was *docere, delectare, flectere—ut veritas pateat, placeat et moveat*. A sound programme for the implementing of the liturgy of the word ! Unfortunately, it would probably be true to say that with Augustine the liturgy of the word in the West had reached its apogée—at least from a liturgical point of view. From then on decline set in.

At this point our enquiry will have to follow briefly two paths, the one scriptural, the other liturgical. So far as scriptural commentary is concerned, the groundwork of later mediaeval development had now been laid—with the Greek Fathers, St Augustine and the Vulgate of St Jerome. There was one other factor, namely the spread of the monasteries and the practice of *lectio divina*. The sermons of Popes Leo and Gregory followed the pattern established by St Augustine of applying the scriptural word to the personal lives and relationships of the people. Pope Gregory's *Moralia in Job*—the title gives a clue both to the approach and the content—was already an outcome of the *lectio divina*. But Gregory was much more prone to allegorisation than Augustine had been.

The break-down of Latin into the vernacular dialects of Europe made the study of the Scriptures, as well as their mediation within the liturgy, more difficult. The aim during the early Middle Ages was to conserve and consolidate rather than to break new ground. It was the era of the *homiliaria* and the *promptuaria*.[1] Commentaries were restricted to the liturgical texts and compilations were made, for the benefit of preachers, of excerpts from the works of the great Fathers (especially

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[1] To what extent was this work fostered and influenced by Irish monks ? That the *Céili Dé* (Culdees) under Maelruain of Tallaght engaged in it is very likely. An Irish example of a *promptuarium* would be the *Leabhar Breac*, a curious compilation not only of homilies but also of ' passions ' (of Christ, the Apostles, the early martyrs) and religious lore, with plenty of stories and anecdotes. The tendency to allegorise Scripture is very strong, and the influence of St Gregory clearly evident. Following the Irish precedent, English and continental monks—Bede, Alcuin, Hrabanus Maurus, Paschasius Radbertus , all of the eighth to ninth centuries—continued this work of compilation but adhered more closely to the Fathers and avoided the curious eclecticism and pedantry of the Irish monks. cf. Bernhard Bischoff, *Wendepunkte in der Geschichte der lateinischen Exegese im Frühmittelalter*, Sacris Erudiri VI, 1954, pp. 189–281. Also C. Spicq, in DBS IV, pp. 608–26.

Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory and Leo). The commentary of Scripture in the light of the tradition of the great Fathers became the rule, and was reflected in the *catenae* of Patristic interpretations. Only with the growth of the Schools in the twelfth century was there a keen revival of interest, not merely in the works of the Fathers but in the direct, literal interpretation of the sacred texts.

From the *liturgical* point of view, several factors contributed to bring about a decline. Firstly, the rise of the vernacular dialects in the Franco-German empire meant that people attended passively at a Latin Mass which they did not understand. (Missals came into widespread use only in this century!) Secondly, sermons came to be divorced from the liturgy, either through being on subjects other than the liturgical texts, such as the dogmas of the faith, or the virtues, or the Saints of the calendar, or through being separated from the liturgy altogether and taking the form of special sermons at different times. The rise of the Franciscan and Dominican orders and their special mission of preaching witnessed to this growing separation of preaching from the liturgy. Thirdly, popular devotions in the vernacular, separated from the Mass, became widespread. On the other hand, the kerygmatic aspect of the liturgical word almost disappeared, with the growing submersion of even the readings into the mystery of the Mass. The mystical speculations of (pseudo-) Denis the Areopagite[1] (=after A.D. 533), based on a platonic philosophy and the triple sense of Origen, gained ground in the West as well as in the East. Liturgical allegorising was furthered in Spain by Isidore of Seville, in France by (pseudo-) Germanus of Paris, and was in vogue through the Middle Ages.[2]

In effect, therefore, the kerygmatic aspect of the liturgy of the word had atrophied by the early Middle Ages, and the situation remained the same until our own time.[3] The reforms of the Council of Trent[4] did not touch on this aspect of the liturgy. If anything, the Canons directed against the doctrine of the Reformers (*sola fides*, and therefore

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[1] The works of *Denis* and *Maximus Confessor* were translated into Latin by John Scotus Eriugena († ca. 870), one of the very few early mediaeval writers who knew Greek. John Scotus's own speculative theology had considerable influence on scholasticism and later mysticism.

[2] St Albert combatted it vigorously, but not with great success. cf. Jungmann, *Missarum* I, p. 113f. (=*Mass*, p. 85f.).

[3] It must be emphasised, however, that the kerygma itself did not die. Nowhere, for instance, will one find the ' word of God ' (in the N.T. sense) preached with greater warmth and vitality than in the writings of St Bernard. What happened was that the kerygma became detached from the liturgy, and remained so until our own time.

[4] The effects of the Council reforms were chiefly the *Missal* of Pius V and the setting up of the Congregation of Sacred Rites. cf. Jungmann, *Missarum*, I, p. 133ff. ; *Mass*, p. 100ff.

sola Scriptura) led to a further retrenchment behind Tradition and a further estrangement even from the Scriptures. Whether or not the Council so intended it, the canon which established the ancient Latin Vulgate as the 'authentic' text of the Church meant that, until the promulgation of *Divino afflante Spiritu* by Pius XII in 1934, encouragement was not given to translations from the original Hebrew and Greek texts. In the English-speaking world the Douay version was the only one used by Catholics, until the Knox version appeared, and even this had the Latin Vulgate as a basis.

CONCLUSIONS

The new *Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* is therefore a truly epoch-making document, in so much as it announces a total and far-reaching reform of the Roman liturgy. Now that the vernacular liturgy is being put into effect, the Scriptures, or the 'liturgy of the word', are going to have a very important role. In view of the experimentation already going on, the following conclusions are appended for what they are worth. In some cases they are not conclusions but questions which the writer would like to see further discussed.

1. *A liturgy of the word?* Although the phrase is to be found in the Constitution (no. 56), it is not clear in what precise sense one can speak of a *liturgy* of the word. A liturgy implies a corporate participation on the part of a congregation ; it implies ceremonial or symbolical action ; in the Greek Church the word is now a proper name for the Mass.[1] How can one speak of a liturgy of the *word* ?

(*a*) Is it a liturgy by a sort of metonomy, in so far as the 'word' prepares for the sacrament ? As has been seen, it is doubtful whether in Catholic tradition the liturgical service of the word was ever separated from the action of the Mass. If it has always been orientated towards the eucharist, then the 'liturgy of the word' would be so called because of its essential link with the eucharist.

(*b*) Is it a 'liturgy of the word' in so far as the congregation actively participates in a dialogue ? If so, then the 'word' would connote not primarily the readings but the homily, as well as the responses of the congregation, the public confession of sins, professions of faith, community prayers, hymns, etc.

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[1] According to the *Constitution* (no. 2), the liturgy is that 'through which the work of our redemption is accomplished, most of all in the divine sacrifice of the eucharist'. In the *Directoire pour la Pastorale de la Messe* (no. 1), issued by the French hierarchy, the liturgy of the word is defined as follows : 'The word of God is a proclamation within the Church of the mystery of salvation which is realised in the eucharist.'

2. *What is the function of Scripture in the liturgy of the word ?* How can Scripture be a word ? Since the ' word of God ' in the Scriptures always had an existential aspect—as a dynamic word proclaimed to a definite people in concrete circumstances—the Scriptures themselves are not properly a ' word of God ' but a record of the word. Only the Church can make the Scriptures into a kerygmatic word for successive generations. Continuity lies in the function of *preaching*, which itself brought the Scriptures into being. [Note : The fact that the Scriptures are inspired does not make them *per se* a ' word of God '. The tra-ditions about the early patriarchs in Genesis, or the Psalms, or the Proverbs, or the genealogies of Christ, are not technically ' words of God '. The greater part of the Bible does not consist of kerygma but of *didache* (what we would call ' tradition '). Nor is it a convincing argument to say that the Scriptures are a *sacrament*, in so much as they mediate grace. The analogy is too weak. Spiritual books can equally well ' mediate ' grace. Therefore, only the mediation of the Scriptures in the Church's liturgy can make them a ' word of God ' here and now —especially their application to the lives of the people through the homily. The homily is primary and must be regarded as an essential part of the liturgy of the word.]

3. *What theological principles lie behind the new insistence on Scripture ?* As has been seen, the proclamation of the kerygma and the response of faith—in God's *action* here and now, as well as in God's truth or the ' mysteries of the faith '—is a fundamental aspect of New Testament religion. The ' word of God ' is, as it were, the concrete revelation of God, mediated within the divine cult, in so much as it impinges on the individual in his concrete situation. Faith entails a vital response, or decision, rather than mere intellectual assent. Linked with this is the new emphasis (in both catechetics and liturgy) on ' salvation-history ' (*Heilsgeschichte*) rather than on dogma, on God's plan rather than on God's truth, because man's situation is basically historical and therefore the historical continuity of the divine plan of salvation must be kept in view. Similarly, the ' word of God ' must entail an ' encounter ' with God in a concrete situation ; whence a renewed emphasis on the *d^ebar Yahweh* aspect of revelation, without prejudice to the *logos* aspect which is not only the traditional concept of the Church but also has its place in the New Testament. All in all, therefore, the new approach puts emphasis on certain ' existential ' aspects of revelation and faith.

It may be added that, absolutely speaking, the Church is not tied to the use of the Scriptures in the liturgy. She could use other texts, or create her own texts. If she adheres to the canonised texts of the Scripture, she has good reasons for doing so. All people and all

religions have always felt the need of some sort of communication between the eternal God and man in his ephemeral existence. The dialogue has sometimes taken the form of 'spirit illumination' or charismatic *enthousiasmos*, a phenomenon which has been cropping up ever since New Testament times.[1] The liturgy of the word provides a control against the excesses of spirit manifestations ; for, as St Paul implies, what one might call 'liturgical prophecy', based on canonised written scriptures, is no less subject to the inspiration of God's Spirit than the glossolalia of the ecstatics (cf. 1 Cor. 14:12, 19, 31–33). The primary thing is not spirit manifestations but the 'building up' of the Church (1 Cor. 14:12).

4. *Has Protestant theology exercised an influence ?* Protestant theology has undoubtedly always emphasised the kerygmatic function of the Scriptures. Even the sacraments are subordinated to the principle of *sola fides*. But in stressing the kerygma of the Scriptures, Protestant theology has impaired the kerygma of the Church. It is the Church that proclaims the 'word of God', preaches the kerygma, interprets the Scriptures, mediates them to the people.[2] Without the Church there never would have been Scriptures. It is the Church alone that makes the ancient canonised texts meaningful for people of successive eras and different societies. Only in the preaching of the Church can the 'interpretative problems' of the Scriptures be overcome, through the application of the Scriptural message to the lives and problems of the people.

At the same time, the modern Catholic biblical movement has learned a great deal from non-Catholic theologians. Not least would this seem to be true of the insistence on the kerygmatic function of the liturgy. The existentialism implicit in it would derive—after St Augustine—from thinkers like Kierkegaard, Heidegger or Bultmann.

5. *How is one to safeguard the priority of the sacraments ?* Firstly, by keeping in view the true nature of the Scriptures, as records of the

[1] On the whole, the Church has been remarkably free in the course of her history from illuminist movements, a fact which must be ascribed no less to the power of the liturgy than to the vigilance of authority. Illuminist movements have always been on the fringe, heretical or near-heretical—notably : the Montanists in the early Church ; the Fraticelli or Béguins in the Middle Ages ; the Anabaptists and Quakers of the Reformation ; the Quietists of the seventeenth century. cf. Ronald Knox, *Enthusiasm*, Oxford 1950.

[2] In saying 'Church' one includes, of course, the active presence of Christ—the risen Christ, or the Spirit of Christ—in the community. cf. Rom. 10:17 : 'Now faith is through hearing, and hearing is through the word (*rhēma*) of Christ'. St Paul is not referring to the 'word of Christ' in the written N.T. (which did not exist), nor to the transmitted word of the historical Christ, but to the word of the risen Saviour (=*Christos*), mediated through the preaching of the Church. cf. also the excerpts quoted above from *Didache* and *Hippolytus*.

preaching of God's people. The Church's preaching is primary. This fundamental principle of Catholicism should not be weakened or lost sight of, for it is also a fundamental principle of the Bible. Secondly, by keeping in mind that this is a *liturgy* of the word, something in which the whole community participates. The accent is on corporateness, rather than on mere evangelical proclamation. Thirdly, by remembering that the liturgy of the word is (or ought to be) orientated towards participation in the sacrament.[1] It can be argued that the philosophy behind the sacraments—at least in St Paul's writings—is, like the *Logos* of St John, that of the Greek world ; that both the *Logos* of St John and the sacraments (known to the Greek Church as *mysteria*) represent communications within this world of the absolute ; that, therefore, whereas the ' word ' entails a *Begegnung* or encounter with God by faith, the sacrament entails a *communion in the divine reality*. This being so, one could say that both ' word ' and ' sacrament ' complement each other, the one involving an encounter by faith, the other culminating in a supernatural experience or communion. In other words, there is only *one* liturgy, in which the ' word ' and the ' sacrament ' each has its role.

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REVELATION AND GNOSIS

This is an attempt to integrate scriptural data and scholastic tradition, by considering an apparent scholastic inadequacy, a New Testament paradox and a possible scholastic solution.

I have surveyed the biblical data on revelation,[2] and arrived at certain conclusions from them without making more than passing reference to what the scholastic theologian has to say about revelation ; and that passing reference was only to suggest that such a definition of revelation as Garrigou-Lagrange proposes in his manual of apologetics

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[1] Thus the *Constitution* (no. 56) : ' The two parts which, in a certain sense, go to make up the liturgy of the Mass, the liturgy of the Word and the eucharistic liturgy, are so closely connected with each other that they form but one act of worship ' ; also no. 48 : ' (Christ's followers) should be instructed by God's word and nourished at the table of the Lord '. Even no. 35, 4 (' the celebration of the Word of God is to be encouraged, especially on the vigils of solemn feasts ') is prefaced by the covering clause at the beginning of no. 35 : ' in order that it may be clearly seen that *in the liturgy ritual and word are intimately linked . . .*' cf. Ml. Schmaus, *Die theologische Ort der kirchlichen Verkündigung*, Festschr. J. Pascher, Munich 1963, pp. 286–96.

[2] cf. *Revelation in the Bible, Scripture*, 1963, pp. 1–6 and 103–9 ; 1964, pp. 16–21.