

Our Lord's Use of Scripture

Pierre Ch. Marcel

Our Lord's use of Scripture: what a magnificent subject for reflection and what an example for a Christian! Let us study the way in which, with his intelligence and knowledge, Christ quoted, interpreted, expounded, and made use of the Scriptures of the Old Testament. Since he is our Master, without question the most eminent "exegete" of all times, let us derive from his teaching *practical* ideas and precepts concerning the manner in which a Christian, whether a simple believer or a scholar of the Church, can and should use Scripture in the fight of faith or in his witness before others. In this brief study we shall take into consideration only Christ's *explicit quotations*, and we shall pass over those made by the evangelists and those which are no more than allusions. Where there are parallel passages we shall, in the interest of simplicity, ordinarily cite only from Matthew.

I. FORMULAS USED IN INTRODUCING SCRIPTURE

The formulas with which Christ introduced his quotations are familiar: *Scripture, the Scriptures, the Law, the Prophets, the Law and the Prophets, It is written*, and so forth. These designations are very important, for they refer always to the canonical Scriptures. Although they do not describe the limits of the Canon, they suppose the existence of a complete and sacred collection of Jewish writings, which, as separate and fixed, is distinct from all other literature. I leave to others the task of saying more about this, and in particular of explaining why we believe that Christ, in his own quotations, was referring to the same Canon as ours.

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Whether taken from the Hebrew or from the Greek (LXX), the quotations of Christ are very often *free* (John 8:17; Matt. 19:5; 22:37-39) and sometimes *interpretative* (Matt. 11:10; Luke 7:27). On other occasions Christ *chooses* from within the prophecy he is citing that which emphasizes his meaning (Matt. 26:31; 15:7-9). He also shows a great *exegetical profundity*, for example, in Matthew 15:9 (Isa. 29:13), where he combines the Hebrew version and that of the Septuagint by saying: "teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men," or in Matthew 13:14-16 (Isa. 6:9-10), where he gives preference to the Greek version because the historic aorists "is waxed gross," "are dull of hearing," "their eyes they have closed," express exactly that which he wishes to emphasize, namely, that there remains but very little to add to what this people have done up to the present in order to fill up the measure.

In the Sermon on the Mount the formulas "it was said" (Matt. 5:27, 31, 38, 43) or "it was said to them of old time" (21, 33) are quite different in form from those which introduce genuine citations of Scripture. Here Christ makes no pretense of quoting Scripture in its proper sense (cf. 5:43), but the precepts of tradition, supposedly founded on Scripture, which restrict or even modify the scriptural teaching. He is speaking quite simply as an expositor, to the end that we may know what the Law is, what is its object, and what the extent of its application. But the

position of evangelical Christians on this point is well-known; and so we shall not spend more time over it.

Elsewhere, in order to explain the sense and the force of the Law, Christ really quotes Scripture. He does so in connection with the Sabbath, the importance of vows, marriage, and the resurrection.

The Sabbath

The Pharisees regard as a violation of the Sabbath the fact that the disciples had plucked some ears of corn for the purpose of eating the grains (Matt. 12:2), or that Jesus used to heal the sick (John 7:22-24), on that day of the week. But Jesus answers them with Scripture, putting into practice the principle of the analogy of faith: You cannot accuse my disciples without accusing David who, on the Sabbath day, ate the shewbread (I Sam. 21:3-6). That which is forbidden for a particular purpose is therefore rendered lawful by reason of necessity. Do the priests cease from their duties on the Sabbath day? Does not the Law command them to serve in the temple, to offer up animals in sacrifice (Num. 28:9), to circumcise infants (Lev. 12: 3), and to perform all that the service of God demands? From your argument it follows that the Law contravenes the Law. If the temple service sanctifies the manual tasks required in the worship of God, it is the Law itself which shows that these ceremonial demands are not absolute: whoever makes them so *contradicts* the Law. The ceremonial law is subservient to a higher law: the satisfaction of the spiritual needs of the people, the acts of worship by which God is honored and glorified; and so it proclaims restric-

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tions regarding the work of the people at the same time as it commands a temple ceremonial which necessitates work. Restrictions and prescriptions are by no means ends in themselves.

And what then is circumcision? It is not a work performed for God, but a sacrament, and thus a blessing of God. It is the religious purification of the procreative organ; it is the sign of a partial healing of the body. Can it be said that on the Sabbath day he who is circumcised does not receive with the sacrament the blessing of which it is the seal? Would not the postponement of its administration because the eighth day falls on a Sabbath be a violation of the Law of Moses? How is it that what is an inviolable law in the case of Moses can, according to you, provide a ground of accusation against me? It is therefore permitted also to heal a man *completely* on the Sabbath day (John 7:23). For Moses, the conferring of a blessing, even a small one (a partial healing), is *so important* that he does not make the Sabbath an obstacle to it; for you, a very great blessing (the complete healing of a man) is *so small a thing* that you make the Sabbath an obstacle to it! How is it that you do not sanction a great thing when Moses *commands* a small thing? "Go and learn what this means, I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matt. 9:13; Hos. 6:6). For faith and spiritual service, with charity, are of themselves pleasing to God; but sacrifices are nothing when they are despoiled of their truth and reality, and are not related to their purpose.

Pierre Ch. Marcel, "Our Lord's Use of Scripture," Carl F.H. Henry, ed., *Revelation and the Bible. Contemporary Evangelical Thought*. Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958 / London: The Tyndale Press, 1959. pp.121-134.

Christ does not abolish the Sabbath by this exegesis in accordance with the principle of the analogy of faith: the divine works do not violate the Sabbath. He restores it to its true purpose. "The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath" (Mark 2:27): it is therefore improper and wicked to convert to the injury and ruin of man that which God has ordained for his benefit.

Vows

In Matthew 15:3-7 Jesus attacks the theory of vows so dear to the Jews and so contrary to Scripture. To establish a tradition without openly abolishing the Law of God, but by means of an indirect transgression, is to "make void the word of God." Engrossed as they were in their own service, the Jews no longer had leisure to give thought to the true Word of God. If their exegesis is at fault, it is because they renew the hypocrisy of the generation of Isaiah, who well prophesied concerning them in saying that their heart is far from God (Isa. 29:13). Now, *the source of all exegesis is in the heart.*

Marriage

The conflict over the subject of divorce, which set the rigorist school of Shammai and the liberal school of Hillel in opposition to each other, is well known. It is the view of Hillel that the Pharisees present to Jesus (Matt.

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19:3-9). They ask whether it is *lawful*, showing that they considered marriage and its dissolution to be a matter of civil legislation. For the purpose of "testing" Jesus (the Gospels emphasize this) the question was indeed well chosen, for it was to be expected that he would be unable to give an answer without placing himself at a disadvantage. If he says Yes, the Pharisees, invoking Shammai, will tax him with laxity; while if he adopts Shammai's position, how will he justify his leniency towards certain sinners? if he rejects both Hillel and Shammai, and declares himself against all divorce, they will be able to accuse him of contradicting Moses.

But Jesus replies that marriage was instituted by God, that it is an ordinance of creation and not a civil institution. Whoever separates those whom God has united by his own *creation* opposes himself to God and his will. He reproaches them for a reading of Scripture that is both partial and partisan. Besides, Moses did not *prescribe*, but only *permitted* the dissolving of marriage in a legal manner, and then only because of the "hardness of their hearts." In no way did the permission of Moses modify the original intention concerning the permanence of marriage.

The reply of Jesus shows the unsuspected resources of Scripture for him who knows it and uses it under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and in accordance with the analogy of faith. It points the Christian to the wisdom and the profoundness with which he can escape from the dilemmas that human casuistry and rationalism propound. Let us seek to follow the example of the Master, and to do so in the same spirit!

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The Resurrection

In Matthew 22:23-28 the Sadducees put forward a purely theoretical and unrealistic question, which envisages an impossible situation, an example of the kind which those invent who study Scripture *with their own logic*, "because they know neither the Scriptures nor the power of God." Moreover, their reasoning is absurd because, according to them, there is no third term; in the world to come the same conditions of existence would prevail as here below.

It is probable that the Sadducees refused to acknowledge any canonical authority other than that of the Pentateuch. If this was the case, we see that Christ refutes their *false deduction* from Deuteronomy by a *valid deduction* from Exodus (3:6), that he elucidates one passage of Moses by another passage of *Moses*, and that at the same time he authenticates the truth of the resurrection of the dead which that patriarch has already made known (Matt. 22:29-32; Luke 20:27). At the level of the texts or of the method he confutes his adversaries with their own weapons and on their own ground, but he causes them to realize that, on the spiritual level, a question of this sort arises from their blindness and not from the Scriptures.

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II. APPEAL TO SCRIPTURE AS A TOTALITY

To each question and to each objection Christ replies with the Scriptures and no one is able to prove him wrong (cf. John 10:32-36). His exegesis—unknown to his interlocutors—reduces them to silence. *By the constant use of the principle of analogy—Scripture interprets Scripture*—he overrules his contradictors, and stands far above the parties from which particular heresies emanate because they see only *a single aspect* of the questions and of the Biblical teaching, devoid of any spirit of synthesis and of any true spirituality. We see it again in the case of the two questions: "Master, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?" (Matt. 19:16) and "Master, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matt. 22:36).

In challenging the rich young man to sell his goods and to give to the poor, Christ is requiring nothing beyond the commandments of the Law, to which he draws attention. The young man has committed no fault outside the observance of the Law, but in the observance of the Law. But as the simple words of this Law convince insufficiently of his condemnation Christ expresses its inner meaning in other words.

In order to understand the importance of the second question we must remember that the rabbis had no less than 613 commandments: 248 that were positive and 365 that were negative. In case of conflict, the more important took precedence over the less. But how was one to judge of their importance? The Sadducees rejected all the commandments of the Pharisees which were not literally written in the Law and did not follow the tradition of the fathers. Was Jesus going to take his stand with them? By his simple and direct reply Jesus avoids any objection that he is overthrowing the Law in its capacity as the permanent standard of justice. The Law, general and particular, negative and positive, material and spiritual, is the perfect and complete expression of the eternal and constant will of God.

The Jews desired to honor and magnify the Law: "Great is the Torah," said the sages, "more than truth, for it contains the Truth, more than justice, for it contains Justice, more than love, more than forgiveness, for the Torah contains Forgiveness, the Torah contains Love." Nevertheless, it is Christ, and Christ alone, who explains and reveals, by the Scriptures alone, the Truth, the Justice, the Forgiveness, and the Love of the Law. That is why when he speaks of "your Law" (John 8:17; 10:34) or "their Law" (John 15:25), and not "mine," far from discrediting the Law, Jesus honors it. His relation to the Law is different from ours: the Law was never given to him. No more can Jesus say of Abraham "our father"; he says "your father" (John 8:56), for Abraham is not his father in the same sense that he is the father of the Jews, and in this way Jesus indicates the difference of his human descent.

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III. FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

As exegete, as prophet, and as teacher, Christ expounds the Scriptures. It is equally by them that he proves himself to be the Son of David, the Messiah, and the King. He affirms it at Nazareth by his reading of Isaiah 61:1-2 (Luke 4:16-19, 21) . This prophecy refers in the first instance to the return from the captivity and has certainly been fulfilled in this sense. Yet it is remarkable that in this place the prophet, speaks in the singular, as though assuming the character of the Christ, so that what he says might be more effective in restoring confidence to the hearts of the faithful. Christ interprets these words as directly concerning himself. He alone, in fact, has received the fullness of the Spirit in order to be the witness and ambassador of our reconciliation with God; he alone, by virtue of his Spirit, performs and fulfills all the blessings promised here. And this word is *fulfilled* in Jesus, the Servant of the Lord and the Messiah, who, at the time when he is speaking, is in the very midst of this fulfillment.

Apart from Malachi 3:1 (Luke 7:27; Matt.11:10), where Christ confirms the authority of John the Baptist and to his own advantage distinguishes between God, the Messiah, and his messenger, undoubtedly the most categorical assertion of his divinity, confirmed by Scripture, is found in Matthew 22:41-44. According to the Pharisees the Messiah ought to be solely a son of David, a messiah who is merely man, however great his human glory and power may be. Because they read Scripture with blinded eyes, his divinity remained hidden from them. On the eve of Palm Sunday Christ desires to reveal himself plainly as the Messiah, Son of David and King of Israel, at the same time that he is seeking to constrain the Pharisees to trust in him, since certain among them are not far from the kingdom of God (cf. Mark 12:34). But, among the multitude of David's descendants, how is the true Messiah to be distinguished? If the people are not to be left in uncertainty, what is the distinctive mark which would place one of the sons of David above the rest and which would point to him as being beyond doubt the promised Messiah? Scripture must provide the answer to this question! Christ was able to establish his legal descent on the one hand (Matt. 1) and his natural descent on the other (Luke 3:23); but that was not sufficient.

The text to which Jesus appeals is very remarkable: "The Lord said...". *N^e' um Yahweh*; literally, "a declaration of the Lord," a declaration, that is, most secret, of a mystery. "To my Lord": *Adonai*. Christ puts forward the Davidic descent of the Messiah as an incontestable fact. He declares that it is David who wrote Psalm 110, that *Yahweh* can call this

son of David nothing less than the *Adon* of David—a distinction which, even for Jewish exegesis, is here a clear revelation of the persons of the Trinity—, and that it is *in the Holy Spirit* (Mark 12:36) that David wrote this, not in terms of contemporary realism, like many other prophecies, but on the basis

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of an ideal, revealed and realized only in the coming of Christ. If that were not the case, the present line of argument, instead of establishing his deity, would discredit it. In this psalm David distinguishes clearly between himself and the person of the Messiah, his descendant and at the same time his all-powerful Lord; he even announces his glorification and his royalty. To be sure, his divine essence is not expressed explicitly, but it is easy to conclude that it is God himself who is exalted above all creatures.

The Pharisees and the chief priests thought that they were the sole competent judges of the redemption to come, so much so that no one ought to be accepted as the Messiah unless they themselves had accepted him and declared him to be such. They arrogated to themselves the honor of distinguishing, among the sons of David, the authentic Messiah. By the parable of the husbandman Christ demonstrates to them that the contrary is the case, and cites in support Psalm 118:22 (Matt. 21:33 ff.), a prophecy which he in his turn treats in a prophetic manner: it is not at all by the consent of men, but in spite of them, that the Christ will reign by the power of God.

The Jews believed that when Christ came he would set up an earthly kingdom over which he would reign for ever. In signifying the manner of the death he would die (John 12:32) Jesus arouses the question of the multitude, to which he replies, without any explanation, that he himself is the true light. To Nicodemus Christ describes himself as the antitype of the brazen serpent. The miracle of healing by a simple look at the brazen serpent is so real for Jesus that it is the type of a yet greater miracle: whoever believes in the Son, and in the Son crucified, shall have everlasting life. By the verb "to lift up," without the use of allegory, these two liftings-up are compared in their saving significance.

In contradistinction to the Jewish concept of an exclusively glorious Messiah, Jesus appeals to several passages from the prophets (Mark 9:12; Matt. 26:31; Luke 22:37; Matt. 26:53-54; Mark 14:49). The two words which he uttered on the cross, crying with a loud voice, are two quotations from the Psalms which the people were able to hear and recognize as a fulfillment. Only the Spirit of prophecy could have placed at the beginning of this psalm the supreme cry of the agony on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matt. 27:46). It is not because David, who is not here a type of the Messiah, wrote this line that Christ utters such a cry, but it is because Christ was to cry thus that David wrote as a prophet. Contrariwise, in Luke 23:46 (Ps. 31:5) Jesus utters this cry like David, but the latter is only the type. Jesus says "Father"; David was not dying and said, "I shall commit," and God saved him. But the enemies of Christ are already vanquished; his distress is past; he has gained the victory: "It is finished!" It is with peace and joy that he himself commits (note the force of the middle voice: *paratithemai*) his spirit, and it is thus that the Father receives it.

Again, it is by the Scriptures that Christ witnesses to his kingship. Reply-

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ing to the indignant priests, by the prophecy of Psalm 8:3 (Matt. 21:16), he affirms that it is indeed as the Son of David, the Messiah-King, that he has come, and all those who acclaim him do exactly as he desires. In Matthew 26:64 (Ps. 110:1; Dan. 7:13), before the supreme tribunal of his nation, it is *under the testimony of an oath* that Christ affirms the true reality of his office and person, and foretells his glory and his future coming. They will see him henceforth no more until they say: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord!" (Matt. 23:39; Ps. 118:26). Enlightened by the Holy Spirit, some will see him in this world with the eyes of the spirit, and in heaven with direct vision; but in the case of those who have hardened themselves, that which took place in the days of Noah or of Lot will likewise take place at the coming of the Son of Man (Matt. 24:37-39; Luke 17:28-30). Here Jesus is stigmatizing that blindness which is wicked, culpable, and damnable. All the preliminary signs of judgment will be explained "naturally," "reasonably," even "scientifically," if it is necessary, until the fatal day dawns. Nonetheless, the writings of the prophets will be fulfilled.

It is by the witness of Scripture again that Christ *refuses miracles and calls to repentance*. At Nazareth he justifies his attitude by the example of Elijah and the widow of Sarepta (I Kings 17:9) and of Elisha and Naaman (II Kings 5:14). On several occasions the Jews request him to confirm his vocation by a miracle (John 6:30-33; Matt. 12:38-42; Luke 11:29-32). This is symptomatic of the Judaism of that time! It no longer knows the blessing of hearing and keeping the Word of God; it turns its back on the signs of grace and forgiveness brought by Christ, and, like so many in our own day, desires only a sign "from heaven," nothing more than a prodigy!

Christ replies, in the first place, that *he himself* is the miracle they seek: the living bread which comes down from heaven, in order that he who eats of it may live forever. As his questioners have cited Scripture, Christ expounds Scripture and explains what was the bread of Moses and what is the bread of God. Since the Jews reject this miracle of grace which is the Christ, Christ refuses them any other miracle, for another miracle would be impossible to God or to himself except by discrediting all the other signs which Jesus gave *or was*, or by abandoning the plan of grace. The sign of Jonah is both appropriate and sufficient for them: not his preaching, but his disappearing into the belly of the great fish, where he was thought to be dead, but where he was preserved safe and sound, and whence he came out alive, as from a sepulchre, to go and preach to the Ninevites, according to the will of God. As a miracle of God's omnipotence, Jonah is the type of the resurrection of Christ. When Jesus is in the tomb the Jews will think that his career is at an end, but it will not be so at all: he will come back and his powerful work will continue according to the divine will. They will hear the voice of the risen Prophet, though they refuse to receive him now. The Ninevites and the Queen of Sheba will rise up in the day of judgment,

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together with this generation, and will condemn it: "For here is a greater than Jonah, and a greater than Solomon." "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish!" (Luke 13:5). Like every

calamity, the collapse of the tower of Siloam (Luke 13:4; Neh. 3:15) is a warning from God to escape from everlasting destruction, a divine appeal to repent *in time*. Anticipate the scourges of God, therefore, by a voluntary repentance! If, like the Samaritans in the time of Hosea (Hos. 10:8), you fail to do this, you will prefer sudden death to the horrors of a long siege (Luke 23:30).

"The Father which sent me, he hash borne witness of me" (John 5:37). In the Scriptures the Father has borne a complete witness, provided long since and which abides for ever. Abraham himself saw the day of Christ and rejoiced at it (John 8:56). Why then do the Jews not receive this witness? Because, says Christ, "you have never heard his voice, you have never seen his face, and his word does not dwell in you at all, since you do not believe in him whom he has sent" (John 5:37-38). The Scriptures praise and magnify Christ throughout their length; for without Christ the Law is empty. Now the Jews were sure that they had eternal life in the Scriptures, but they thought they could have it *without the Christ*. How could the Law confer life without Christ when it is he alone who gives it life? That is why Jesus cries: "Search the scriptures, because ye think that in them ye have eternal life; and these are they which bear witness of me; and ye will not come to me, that ye may have life!" (John 5:39-40). Jesus is trying to overcome their unbelief. He confronts them with the Scriptures in which they put their trust. To turn away from this confrontation is to acquiesce in the judgment of Jesus. But to reject the Christ is to reject Abraham and to reject Moses: "There is one that accuseth you, even Moses, on whom ye have set your hope. For if ye believed Moses, ye would believe me; for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:45-47). The true Moses—not the image which they had made of him—is the one who will condemn them! These verses are weighted with terrible significance.

But just as the Jews hardened themselves against the preaching of Moses, they harden themselves against the preaching of Christ. Thus the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled unto them (Matt. 13:14-15; Isa. 6:8-10), susceptible as it is of repeated applications, in the time of the prophet, in the time of Jesus, and in every age, because of the general principle which it contains. Certain events of the New Testament are, in fact, of the same nature as those of the Old: they are parallels. Thus Jesus applies to himself what David spoke of himself (John 15:24-25; Ps. 35: 19; 69:5). For the Jews who have hardened their hearts against the word and the works of Moses and the prophets, harden them equally against *the works* of Christ, though they be such as "none other has done." They are therefore in no sense better than their fathers who had hated David. That is why all the murders which have been committed, from that of Abel unto that of Zachariah, will be

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judged in the persons of them all (Luke 11:50-51), for in their wickedness they are the authentic posterity of Cain.

IV. USE OF SCRIPTURE IN TRIAL AND TEMPTATION

The use which Christ makes of the Scriptures *against temptations and occasions of stumbling* is very interesting. When he first quotes Scripture it is in order to overcome temptation: "It is written" (Matt. 4:4, 7, 10). In defending himself Christ wields the shield of Scripture, "a shield,

not of straw, but truly of brass," says Calvin. This is the one and only way of waging battle if we wish to win the victory. When Satan misuses Scripture by mutilating a quotation from Psalm 91:11-12, with a view to making the life-giving Word of God become mortal to Christ and to changing good food into poison, it is once again with Scripture that Christ repulses such insinuations. As always, it is the principle of the analogy of faith.

When Jesus quotes Micah 7:6 (Matt. 10:35-36) it is for a *pastoral purpose*. He warns his disciples of the hostility which they may encounter, because of their faith, in their own families or in the world, because of the corruption which is revealed wherever the gospel is present. Let no Christian be troubled when he finds that his faith and his person are the object of disparagement or of hatred, and sometimes the cause of distressing separations.

In a whole series of texts Jesus seeks also to protect those who are his against every offense resulting from the scorn of which he will be the object, and particularly his sufferings and crucifixion (Mark 9:12; 14:19; John 13:19; Matt. 21:42; 26:31, 53-54, 55-56; Luke 22:37-38; 24:26). It is also "even as it is written of him" that John the Baptist, the last Elijah, was treated (Mark 9:13), where Christ undoubtedly refers to I Kings 19, Elijah being the type of John the Baptist, as Jezebel is that of Herodias. In this way Christ instructs his own concerning the *necessities* required for our redemption, concerning his *perfect knowledge* of events, and concerning the *freedom* with which he goes of his own accord to death—things which we ought to know in order to be able to glorify God.

Since, however terrible and offensive the spectacle of his humiliation may be, these things are *written in Scripture*, believers ought not in any way to be troubled at them, so much the more as they are not distant nor separated from Christ. *The disciples must accept the Redeemer such as God had already promised him to be*: the Christ of Isaiah 53. A necessity is enclosed in every prophecy, however ancient it may be, a necessity which follows its course across the centuries until the present. No prophecy can fail of fulfillment. But, in fact, this necessity is found in God alone: the necessity of his love, his eternal and free will to save the world by Christ, not at all an abstract necessity which we can discuss in a philosophical manner, as though God could not have done otherwise. It is *in this way* that it is found ex-

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pressed in the Scriptures. A spirit, a will, a plan are at work in history, where God is accomplishing his purposes, even before they take shape as occurrences. Nothing comes to pass apart from his providence and his free determination. It is for this reason that the Scriptures must be fulfilled. "When some absurdity astonishes us," says Calvin, "there is no more suitable remedy for removing the offence than the recognition that so it was pleasing to God, and that whatever happens as a result of His ordinance does not come about rashly or without a good and just reason, *especially* when the event which we see taking place has been predicted of old." When the will of God is manifest to us we have no other duty than to keep silence and to maintain our obedience to his decrees.

It was needful also that the disciples should be warned of their own feebleness: when the shepherd has been struck down the flock will be dispersed. As this dispersion is made known to them in advance, it will not dishearten them to such an extent that they imagine themselves to be shut out from all faith. They will learn, besides, to rely on their Shepherd, for Zechariah adds the promise that God will stretch out his hand in order to lead his dispersed flock back to himself.

In the prophecy relating to Judas (John 13: 18; Ps. 41:9), Christ reveals *his perfect knowledge*. What offense the treachery of Judas, an apostle chosen by Christ, could arouse in the hearts not only of his companions but of believers in every age! They must not believe that Jesus has been commonly betrayed and that he is the powerless victim of a man; from the apparent "success" of the traitor they must not draw conclusions capable of calling into question his deity or his divine power and knowledge. That is why Jesus not only declares that he knows all about Judas, but that he had chosen him *in order that he might betray him*. It had to be so, because it had been foretold. Jesus knew that Judas was only a son or a product of eternal damnation, *a son of perdition* (John 17:12), a title which was given him not because of the treachery which he committed (*ex eventu*), but because he was actually going to perdition, "to his own place," according to Acts 1:25. Indeed, if in Psalm V David is the type of Christ, Ahithophel is that of Judas. It is not possible that Judas was unaware of this allusion or that he failed to remember the tragic manner in which Ahithophel ended his life by hanging himself (cf. II Sam. 17:23). Oh the kindness of Christ who by this quotation as well as by the dramatic end which it suggests seeks, if possible and before it is too late, to touch the heart of Judas and to call him to repentance! We see the perfect knowledge of Christ who, once again, prophesies by making use of a prophecy of Scripture.

Knowing all this, Jesus shows, finally, the perfect freedom with which he goes to the cross. It is Jesus himself who authorizes the success of Judas, for he knows his intentions and is able, if he wishes, at any moment to frustrate his plans. It is Christ himself who ought not at any moment to do anything to escape the death to which he knows the Father is calling him. In the

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Garden of Gethsemane he had only to speak for his opponents to be thrown back to the ground: he therefore commits himself voluntarily into their hands. Thus the Scriptures are fulfilled *in order that the disciples may believe*. Christ is not at the mercy of Judas: on the contrary, Judas is in fact at the mercy of Christ. Christ was not captured by the guards: that was something they could not do. Let them not have, then, even this opportunity of pride and this personal satisfaction of boasting of victory gained! The schemings of wicked men, however, will not succeed in robbing Christ of his dignity: he will maintain the place which the Father has ordained. "It is marvellous in our eyes!" the wonder of the love and omnipotence of God.

Acting in this way, Christ reveals the existence of a *continuous* process throughout the whole of history. The use which he makes of Zechariah 1.3:7 and of the prophecies relating to his sufferings and death introduces a new conception of *the meaning* of history. Undoubtedly, these passages are prediction, and the life of Christ is their fulfillment which cannot be found elsewhere. Undoubtedly, the prophecies of the smitten Shepherd and of the Servant of the Lord

are also a summary of the history of Israel. The connection, however, between a prophecy and its fulfillment is deeper than the simple foreknowledge of an isolated event and its fulfillment. In a certain sense we are able to say that the event is foreseen *because it is already in reality a fact*. God calls things which are not as though they were, for it is sufficient that he should call them for them to be. The relationship of God with Israel, moreover, had been established in all its essential factors since the most remote times. It is in an authentic and true sense that "the Lamb has been slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8). That is why in this, the profoundest penetration of the meaning of history that we can conceive, Christ is able to say: "All things concerning me have been fulfilled" (Luke 24:44). These prophecies do not depict the portrait of Christ such as he ought to be, but such as he was. An original prophecy and its quotation by Christ are not found to be *remote* from each other: they prove, both of them, to be *at the very heart* of the same course of events; they reveal the visible action of forces operating long since in human history and, at their point of culmination, leading to the drama of the cross. This is the sole satisfactory interpretation both of these passages and of the drama of the cross. "The things which God foreshadowed by the mouth of all the prophets, that his Christ should suffer, he thus fulfilled" (Acts 3: 18). "All this is come to pass, that the scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled" (Matt. 26:56).

By the sequence of his admonitions by means of Holy Scripture, by their growing precision and frequency until the fatal moment, by his vision of history, we see to what point Christ carried—and still carries—the concern for strengthening those who are his, his warnings full of instructive meaning, the delicacy of his love, the care which he takes to prepare the hearts of his

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disciples of all times for an authentic glorification of God and his work throughout the world's history. Here, again, is an example for us to follow.

This revelation of the prophetic meaning of the Scriptures and of the purposes of God—a cause of joy, of assurance, and of victory—is fully granted by Christ to the disciples of Emmaus and to the Eleven (Luke 24:25-27, 44-47). "Beginning from Moses and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." *Jesus himself is found in all the prophets*. The whole economy of the Old Testament is centered in Christ. The gospel therefore is found also throughout the Old Testament where nothing can be understood without Christ. In the Law one can, one must, discover Christ, his covenant, his mediation, his kingship, the universality of his reign. We would give a great deal to have a list of the passages which he cited, and much more to know his exegesis. But we must search for them ourselves, ceaselessly claiming the enlightenment of his Spirit. Indeed, "He opened their mind, that they might understand the Scriptures."

Lord, open our mind also, so that we may understand the mysteries of God and of thy salvation, and may search them out as they are contained *in the Scriptures* alone, since thou dost not give us thy Spirit to do away with the use of thy Word, but so that it may be useful and salutary to us!

Conclusion

From the manner in which Christ quotes Scripture we find that he recognizes and accepts the Old Testament in its entirety as possessing a normative authority, as the true Word of God, valid for all time. He believes in inspiration by the Holy Spirit since the time of Adam (Matt. 19:5), in the infallibility of the oracles which he utters to the instruments which he has chosen (Matt. 13:14-15; 15: 7-9), in the Davidic authorship of Psalm 110, for example, and in David's full inspiration.

He seals with his authority numerous facts which are related in Scripture, and the historicity of numerous events: we are therefore instructed to believe them all. He believes in the creation by God, in the existence of the first couple (Matt. 19:4), of Cain and Abel (Luke 11:51), of Noah, in the reality of the flood and its results, and of the ark and its saving function (Matt. 24:37-39); he attests the destruction of Sodom and the tragic death of Lot's wife (Luke 17:28-30, 32).

Moses, to whom he accords divine inspiration (Matt. 15:3-4), is his prophet (John 5:46). Ever since the creation and all down the ages, in the laws and institutions, the ceremonies and rites, the prophecies and promises, Christ is continually present in the mind of Moses who, in his person and in his office, is a type of the coming Mediator. Thus Christ emphasizes the continuity and the consistency of revelation in its entirety, the unity of the old and the new dispensations of the Covenant. He believes in the miracle of

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the manna (John 6:31-33, 48-51), in the healing of those who, trusting in the promise of God, simply fixed their eyes on the serpent of brass (John 3:14). He believes in the miracle whereby the widow of Sarepta was sustained in the time of famine, and in the healing of Naaman. He believes in the miracle of Jonah who spent three days and three nights *in the belly* of a great fish, in the repentance of the Ninevites, and in the salvation of a large number of them (Matt. 12:39-41; 16:4; Luke 11:32).

"The Scripture cannot be broken" (John 10:35). It is unalterable, indestructible in its truth, indifferent to every denial, to human ignorance and criticism, to charges of error, and to subjective attacks. Let us then be instructed and convinced! The Holy Spirit prevents us from accepting the opinion of those who say that Christ was governed by the intellectual outlook of his time and country, and who *oppose* his testimony in the name of "modern scientific methods." For us, the thought of the Master is canonical. It is an external authority superior to all the most venerable rabbinical, ecclesiastical, and scientific authorities. The witness of the Holy Spirit in our heart disposes us to prefer the affirmations of Jesus. For us, the authority of Christ is a mystical fact of the first order, for we know the power with which his Word is impressed on our faith. In humility we receive his witness which guarantees to us the formal authority of the Old Testament and its divine inspiration, which is the principle of this authority.

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Prepared for the Web in April 2009 by Robert I. Bradshaw.

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