

# The Difficulty of Making Sense

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## *Reverence and Courtesy*

To believe in the 'infallibility' of the Church is not to suppose that we are reliable, but that God is. It is to believe in the effectiveness of God's act, God's coming as Word and Spirit to the world he makes and, making it, makes his own, his dwelling-place, his temple. It is to believe that this effectiveness is un-faillingly exhibited in the truthfulness of witness borne, in word and action, to this fact, this truth, this Word of life. But this is not easy to believe because the evidence surrounds us on every side that we have been given licence to corrupt, to falsify and to destroy—through egotism, carelessness, incompetence and greed—ourselves, each other, and the world.

We know what needs to be said: there is (for example) nothing obscure or unfamiliar about the Apostles' Creed. But *how* to say what must be said in such a manner as to enable our contemporaries (and ourselves!) to hear, in our utterance of it, that one word for all seasons, one same surprising Gospel for every creature—and not some alien, strange, purely particular and puzzling tale, some kind of ancient folklore or science fiction—this is no easy matter. The difficulty of making sense, of making Christian sense, is the difficulty of so expressing the content of the Creed, in word and action, as effectively and properly to clarify, to throw some light upon, our various circumstances, responsibilities and predicament: our politics and science, our poetry and plans and hopes and fears, our private pains and public enterprises, our disease, and happiness, and tedium, and death.

This task, of saying simply what needs simply to be said, this teaching task, this 'magisterium' that is the Church's mission, can only properly be executed in the measure that, always and everywhere, we are *attentive*, listening before we speak, inquiring before we answer, watchful. This is not a recommendation to regress to pre-critical patterns of interpretative practice. There is no going back upon the lessons learnt in the experiment of modernity, the freedoms (in principle) secured. It is, rather, an invitation to move towards post-critical maturity and, in so doing, to find fresh sense in ancient truth.

The characteristic I have in mind, as called for in all human speech and action, might, with accuracy and some freshness, be described as *courtesy*. The respect required by craftsmen for their materials is a kind

of courtesy, as also is the scientist's attentive care for the details of each particular object of investigation. There is, as Olaf Pedersen has indicated, much of theological significance in the recognition that what the scientist 'finds' is somehow found as 'given'.<sup>1</sup> More generally, our human inhabitation and working of the natural world of which we form a part requires, if it is not to be destructive of that world, a kind of courtesy. 'Gardening', we might say, is a courteous undertaking, antithetical to Baconian 'torturing'. Ecology is horticulture.

In human relationships, courtesy requires us to refrain from imposing opinions, plans, and purposes upon each other 'willy-nilly'. Such courtesy is not a matter of supposing all opinions to be equally correct, all plans sensible or purposes noble. On the contrary: it is when opinions held and purposes furthered with passionate conviction come into conflict that something like courtesy is called for if the outcome is not to be the breakdown of relationship, the domination of one group or individual by another.

At all points in this vast and endless web or network of good manners the paradigm, of course, is prayerfulness: respectful, wondering attentiveness learnt from God's prevenient graciousness to us. And, here, the reticence or restraint which courtesy requires is usually called reverence.

We are required to speak of God. Yet reverence demands continual recognition of the near-impossibility of doing so well. In the next two sections of this paper I shall take the comprehensive requirement of courtesy, a requirement that brooks of no exceptions, as a kind of framework for considering a few familiar ideas concerning nescience and the permanently unfinished labour of interpretation.

We Catholics are well-known for our insistence that Christianity is *pedagogical* in character. We go on and on about the centrality and indispensability of 'teachership'. And yet our teaching habits are, very often, pedagogically bizarre. In my fourth section, therefore, I shall comment on three only too frequently encountered styles of Christian speech and pedagogy which seem to me to fail, in different ways, to meet the requirements of Christian courtesy.

### *Ignorance, Agnosticism and Wisdom*

'I', said the interviewer on German television, 'have only what the catechism told me' about life after death, the separation of soul from body, and so on. 'Do you perhaps know more, Father Rahner?'. 'No', said Karl Rahner, 'I know less'. Especially in his later years, the emphasis on nescience, on unknowing, sounded as a central theme in the work of one for whom '*docta ignorantia futurae*' was 'the true pith and essence' of the theologian's message.<sup>2</sup>

For some, this emphasis on nescience, on the radical unknowability of the God we know, arouses suspicions that the theologian has lost his

nerve, been seriously infected by the virus of contemporary agnosticism. There is, however, another possibility, one indicated by David Burrell's remark that 'Aquinas displays his religious discipline most clearly by the ease with which he is able to endure so unknown a God'.<sup>3</sup>

Those of us with good scholastic educations learnt to distinguish between the 'ways' of affirmation, negation, and 'eminence'. This should have had the effect of making all our speech, purified by nescience, disciplined, attentive, wonderingly reticent, shot through with silence and acknowledgement of absolute inadequacy. Too often, however, the textbooks were as garrulous, as liberal with assertion, after negation as before, mistaking eminence for some sort of 'expansion' (God is not good and just as we are: he is much more *hugely* good and *vastly* just) when it is more properly holiness, mind-blinding otherness.

We had, I think, forgotten that the threefold way was, at one level, the formal distillate of the progression from childhood innocence and spontaneity to something like maturity and wisdom.<sup>4</sup> The infant quite properly trusts family and surroundings, takes other people and the world for granted. The wise adult, in contrast, having learnt something from experience (often with much pain), takes nobody and nothing much for granted, cherishes relationship, affection, with respect and courtesy, as quite uncovenanted gift, and knows how little in the world is known or comprehended, and what there is known with wonder. And all of it points to darkness and to death.

Competent handbooks of spirituality have always insisted that austerity of imagination—in purifying counterpoint to the rich exuberance of Christian narrative and imagery—is indispensable for growth in faith, in prayerfulness, in wisdom and the knowledge of God. In modern Catholicism, however, what we first think of when someone mentions 'the teaching of the Church' is far too often a matter of vigorous uncompromising affirmation, unconstrained by wonder or by reticence, by disciplined respect for object and audience alike.

My suggestion, in other words, is that we need to heal the disastrous modern dissociation of 'teaching' from 'spirituality' (each wrongly regarded, in practice, as the exclusive preserve of a minority) so that—without prejudice to necessary distinctions between offices and tasks and ministries and forms and aspects and contexts of Christian education—*all* our life and work and worship may be ordered to growth in that unknowing which is Christian wisdom. 'Simple' faith is not, as adults, where we *start* from but is rather the direction in which each we might each of us be helped to move.

### *Darkness and Clarification*

The language of revelation is used, says Rowan Williams, 'to express the sense of an initiative that does not lie with us'. The temptation is to suppose that appeals to revelation (or to Scripture, or to the teaching of

the Church) can somehow bypass consideration of how we *learn* the language that we use. Thus, commenting on the widespread impatience of English-speaking theology ('conservative' and 'liberal' alike) with 'debate, conflict, ambivalence, polysemy, paradox', Professor Williams remarks that 'this is at heart an impatience with learning, and with learning about learning'.<sup>5</sup> The drift and bias of the present paper, I might add, is meant to serve as a reminder that, unless we place permanent and primary emphasis on what it is to *learn*—from each other and our common history, from the natural world, and from the mystery of God—we shall get 'teaching' wrong.

To be human is to be participant in a kind of education. The history of humankind is a history of interpretative practice, a history of attempting to make sense of our surroundings and ourselves, to make the world a home. Sometimes we learn from our mistakes. Sometimes we do not. Often we forget the things that we have learnt. In all this vast, diverse, often conflictual interpretative labour, however, there are no shortcuts or final solutions.

It follows that Michael Dummett's desire for 'an authoritative pronouncement on the limits of admissible reinterpretation of the articles of the Creed'<sup>6</sup> cannot be satisfied. Any such pronouncement would be a text, produced in some particular set of circumstances. It would, accordingly, require interpretation and assessment, and would have to take its place among the library of texts and messages and declarations which forms one strand in that history which is the tradition of Christian interpretative practice. Not all books in this library are, by any means, of equal value—but they are all books! 'Fundamentalisms', whether biblical or ecclesiastical, are (usually unwitting) rationalist evasions of interpretative risk and responsibility.

To insist that there are no short cuts or final solutions does not, however, either hand us over to 'the experts' or reduce Christianity to an open-ended seminar or (worse) some kind of supermarket of privately preferred beliefs. Having for a quarter of a century campaigned, in writing varying from the accessible to the deservedly obscure, against what Dummett describes as 'scientific Protestantism' (which I would prefer to speak of as the illusion of the primacy of academic expertise), I am astonished to find apparently attributed to me the view that 'the ordinary Catholic must simply believe what he is told by the experts'.<sup>7</sup> Ordinary Catholics would, I think, be foolish to suppose they must do any such thing. More generally, we are unwise if we suppose we 'must' believe whatever doctors, economists or meteorologists may say. It would, nevertheless, be most imprudent simply to ignore the part such 'experts' have to play in keeping us well-informed and so assisting us to reach sound judgments and make sensible decisions.

Such analogies, of course, omit consideration of the special teaching role attributed by Catholic and Orthodox Christianity to the episcopate.

Acknowledgement of episcopal responsibility for securing sound doctrine does not, however, entail the supposition that the provision and exercise of episcopal (including papal) office somehow short-cuts the Church's interpretative labour. (And this is so not least because, when bishops, or the pope, wish to declare what Catholic teaching is on some matter, they must first find out what it has been.)

The purpose of Christian pedagogy, of Catholic teaching, is to help us set all speech, and thought, and suffering, and action, into the context of what transpired on Good Friday and at Easter. And the *pattern* of that pedagogy is provided by our uses of the Creed as 'doctrine' in the strict or narrow sense: as that activity which is the declaration by the Christian community of its identity-sustaining rules of discourse and behaviour in relation to the mystery of God<sup>8</sup>

Like any competent and orthodox Catholic theologian, Karl Rahner was insistent on the finality, or ultimacy, of God's self-gift, his mystery's appearing, in one acknowledged to be God's *last* Word (as his first). But Rahner also knew that what appears in Christ, is born in Bethlehem and shines from the darkness of Gethsemane and Calvary, is that hiddenness of God into which, as Jesus did, we die. Hence he could speak of revelation as 'the history of the deepening perception of God *as* the mystery', and add that 'the climax of revelation, the communication of the Spirit of God himself, takes place when a man loses everything in death except God, and *in this way* achieves blessedness'.<sup>9</sup> Hence, against the kind of gnosticism which supposes Christians to have access to straightforward 'solutions' to the manifold perplexities which batter our bodies and bewilder our minds, Rahner could say, quite calmly: 'The Christian has less "ultimate" answers which he could throw off with a "now the matter's clear" than anyone else'.<sup>10</sup> As guardians of humankind's *doctor ignorantia*, it is our teaching-task, as Christians, to insist that there are no short cuts or final solutions to that common interpretative labour, that making sense of things, that redemptive transformation of the world, to which nevertheless, we are, by God's courtesy, enabled in tranquillity to dedicate our lives.

### *Failures of Courtesy*

The darkness of contemporary experience is, in some measure, a matter of sheer bewilderment. A telephone is picked up in Tokyo, a computer keyboard is tapped in Rio de Janeiro, and the lives of thousands five thousand miles away may instantaneously and irrevocably be affected. Power, simultaneously diffuse and most dangerously concentrated, is largely invisible, its lines illegible. In the search for values and for world-views more truthful than the projection of our hopes or preferences or fears, we have no map or compass, nor any common language. And the concrete issues in respect of which we *have* to take decisions (even the irresponsible decision of studied indecisiveness)—issues of war and

peace, of sex and civic virtue, of justice, of dignity, and freedom—seem to be such as to require a degree of coordinated and integrated expertise unattainable by any individual or any group (not least because, on nearly all important issues, expert opinion is deeply divided). It is not easy to make sense.

‘The answer given in revelation clarifies the question a man asks.’<sup>11</sup> Those Christians who suppose it to be the duty of the Bible, or the Pope, to furnish us with answers and solutions, straightforwardly applicable to all the more important questions thrust upon us, will find that statement most unsatisfactory. Against the background of confusion sketched in the previous paragraph, however, the fact that clarification *is available* is, if true, most marvellous good news.

Our duty, then, as Christians, is to throw some light on things, to clarify the situation by setting it in the light of God’s fleshed word. Clarification requires concreteness and precision. And true clarity is incompatible with oversimplification (which merely obscures the truth from view). Teaching which clarifies the question respects both those it serves and the *materials* (the words and facts, the stories and the arguments, the data) with which it works. Such teaching, we might say, is courteous.

On the other hand, when teachers suppose it to be their duty not to throw light upon or clarify the situation, but rather to bring to complex problems and dilemmas ready-made, pre-packaged, answers and solutions, then their teaching is likely to be defective in one of two ways. Finding ‘solutions’ unavailable, they may stay silent, or confine themselves to unexceptionable, abstract generalisation. Alternatively, they may attempt, by raising their voices and flexing their muscles, to override complexity, flattening the facts to the contours of some solution which they seek simply to impose. Both these quite common failures of pedagogic courtesy were by coincidence illustrated in a recent issue of *The Tablet*.

#### *Instance 1: The Uncertain Trumpet*

Responding to Walter Stein’s suggestion that it is high time for the Catholic Church in England and Wales to make clear its position on the nuclear threat, the ‘Notebook’ commented: ‘It is fairly well known that Cardinal Hume called together a high-powered commission of prominent Catholics to do just that. Such were the divisions of opinion that no one could reconcile them.’<sup>12</sup>

The implication would seem to be that, until a common mind is reached, there is nothing specific to be said, no Catholic teaching to be given, on the single most awesome moral issue that confronts us. Yet, all the while, our imaginations are being corrupted, by spurious nationalism and speculative threat to which we have no humanly tolerable response, to get us used to the idea that there is something ethically acceptable

about the fading imperial fantasy of 'independent' deterrence. Had this silence remained unbroken, it would have been a striking instance of our tendency, as Christians, as a Church, to make only vague and muffled noises in the face of urgent and divisive issues (see 1 Cor. 14:8) and, by our silence and unclarity, to collude with most unchristian and inhuman policies and attitudes, thereby deepening the darkness of our time.

As it happened, however, the bishops' conference had, two days before, issued a lengthy statement entitled 'Opportunities for Peace'. It summarized recent developments and previous statements by the conference, and urged all Catholics to work and pray for peace. And yet, for all its unexceptionable qualities, there was a sense of things unsaid and issues blurred, a failure of pedagogic clarity at its heart.

There seems to be a twofold reason for this. In 1980, we are reminded, the conference had said that 'the Bishops were not in a position to give a full and authoritative judgment on all aspects of the morality of the nuclear deterrent', while adding that 'the issues are so grave that all men and women of good will have a duty to inform their consciences so that they may contribute to the clarification of the moral issues'.<sup>13</sup> The notion that the rest of us might have something to contribute to the clarification of the moral issues is, indeed, most welcome. However, the point that more immediately concerns me is the apparent belief that only full and final answers might be matter for authoritative teaching; a belief which seems to rest, in turn, on the assumption that 'teaching' is a *judicial*, rather than a pedagogic, process.

The other side of the story concerns the bishops' unwillingness to acknowledge the extent of their division on matters of morality. The conference expresses its 'deep sympathy with the aim of a comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty', while declining the invitation (from Pax Christi) to support a campaign for such a treaty, on the grounds that the question of how the aim might be best achieved 'is not so much a moral issue as one of tactics and policy'.<sup>14</sup> This distinction, between morality and tactics, is made or hinted at, again and again. It has the advantage of giving the impression that the bishops are united on *moral* issues, and only disagree with each other on questions of mere 'tactics'. But so much is thereby given to 'tactics' as to imply that morality is a matter only of the choice of ends, and not at all a matter of means: an alarming innovation in Catholic moral theory! I am not trying to score debating points, but only to put my finger on a failure of pedagogic nerve which (so far as I can see) is rooted in the conviction that clear and authoritative teaching can only be given in respect of problems for which it is unanimously agreed that a definitive and comprehensive solution has been found.

### *Instance 2: The Steamroller*

Elsewhere in the same issue of *The Tablet*, another episcopal voice sounded with no trace of hesitation or uncertainty. Speaking at a conference sponsored partly by Opus Dei held in Rome to mark the twentieth anniversary of *Humanae Vitae*, the Pope (according to *The Tablet*) declared that to dispute the teaching of the encyclical was ‘“the equivalent of refusing to God himself the obedience of our intelligence”’, and could threaten the very cornerstones of Christian doctrine’. Moreover, ‘to consult one’s conscience specifically to contest the truth of the teaching of that authority’ instituted by Christ to ‘“illuminate the conscience”’ was ‘a refusal both of that authority and of moral conscience’.<sup>15</sup>

There is no need here for detailed analysis of what, if correctly reported, are quite deplorable remarks. Whatever Pope Paul VI expected when, after much heart-searching, he set aside the recommendations of his commission, he succeeded in making of the ethics of birth regulation the most ‘disputed question’ in the history of modern Catholicism.<sup>16</sup> And, as the unceasing flow of speech and writing on all sides attests, it remains so. Bishops know this; priests know it; laypeople know it. It is therefore scandalous that the Pope should seek to make of the matter a touchstone not merely of Catholic orthodoxy but of Christian faith (‘the equivalent of refusing to God himself ...’). This is not teaching, it is demagogery. Riding roughshod over not only the history of the thing, but also over formal distinctions and discriminations carefully secured in Catholic doctrine over the centuries, it respects neither the facts nor the people whose lives it so seriously affects. It is, in a word, discourteous.

Like the English bishops, the Pope seems to suppose issues only on which there is unanimity and on which all problems have been solved and argument ended may be matter for authoritative teaching. The difference is that whereas, on one complex, urgent, practical matter, the bishops—finding neither condition fulfilled—hesitate to teach with clarity, on another (equally complex and equally urgent) the Pope supposes that argument may be ended, problems solved and unanimity secured, by fiat.

### *Instance 3: Rumpole of the Bailey*

There are not only many different groups of teachers but also many different kinds of teaching in the Catholic Church. The ‘teacherships’ of parents or of preachers, of martyrs, poets, or schoolmasters, of bishops, or anchorites, or academics, differ (as they say elsewhere) in kind and not merely in degree. If I take my third illustration of characteristic failures of Christian courtesy from the world of academic disputation I do so, in part, because in Catholic tradition, theologians, as well as pastors, have been said to occupy a ‘magisterial’ office.<sup>17</sup>

Logic, according to Stephen Toulmin, is ‘generalized



jurisprudence'.<sup>18</sup> If this is so, then it is not entirely surprising that academics should behave like barristers (just as, I earlier remarked, bishops tend to construe *their* 'teachership' in *judicial* terms). Notoriously, however, under the influence of adversarial, rather than inquisitorial, traditions of advocacy, truth is of less moment than the construction of an impressive case. (Part of Rumpole's attractiveness arises from the fact that we warm to his private concern for truth and decency.)

Michael Dummett, deploring the fact that some contributors to last year's debate in *New Blackfriars* sought to combat his arguments 'by propounding crude misrepresentations' of his views, admirably observes that 'it is not by such forensic devices that truth is to be wooed'.<sup>19</sup>

I have already remarked on his carelessness in attributing to me a standpoint I have spent my life contesting. An even more disturbing forensic device, however, is employed on the same page of his text. 'Most of the contributors' to the debate, he tells us, 'propose that each of us should re-invent' the Christian religion, 'or that we should allow the experts to do so'. This is an extremely serious charge because, as he says, 'nothing so invented could possibly be the Christian religion'.<sup>20</sup> In this case, it is clearly not me that he has in mind because he will have remembered my saying that 'I am as deeply committed as is Dummett ... to the central and structuring conviction that that for which, as Christians, we hope and in which we believe is neither our own invention nor our plaything'.<sup>21</sup> It therefore follows that at least *four* from the remaining contributors to the debate (Davies, Duffy, Fitzpatrick, Gifford, Griffiths and Radcliffe) made this deplorable proposal. I invite readers to check the texts again in order to ascertain for themselves that Dummett's contention is, quite simply, false. Once again, as in his original article, Professor Dummett does not seem much to care whether the grave accusations that he makes are true or false. Such insouciant imprecision in the description of viewpoints with which one wishes vigorously to take issue is, unfortunately, still far too common in Catholic controversy. And, in its apparent unconcern for people and for truth, it is discourteous.

### *A Way of Making Sense*

Jack Mahoney's description of the character which moral theology should have seems admirably applicable to all theology, and hence to all teaching in the Church: whether papal or episcopal, formal or informal, pastoral or academic, confessional or exploratory. The attempt

to recover the mystery for moral theology, or to stress its strictly theological character, does not leave man in agnosticism or in impenetrable darkness about moral behaviour any more than it condemns other branches of theology to stunned speechlessness and silence, even though

they too can easily forget the analogy of being and the analogical character of all theological discourse. What it does do, however, is to admonish man to a due humility in his conclusions and in his claims for himself or upon others, and to inject a note of reverence for God and the work of His hands into all moral enterprise.<sup>22</sup>

To teach this way would be, indeed, to teach with courtesy, prayerfully, with patience and respect, permanently mindful of our pupil-status before the mystery of God. That way, whatever our office or function in the Church, we might make better sense of things, contribute more effectively to the redemptive clarification of the world.

It is easy to issue pious generalisations, more difficult to make concrete suggestions as to how our teaching might be more courteously done. In recent years, however, one model for this has begun to come to hand. The way in which the bishops of the United States have taken to preparing pastoral letters through the publication for discussion of successive drafts is a most encouraging development of episcopal *magisterium*. It is to be hoped that other conferences will follow their lead.<sup>23</sup>

One final comment. My remarks on some characteristic failures of courtesy were not offered through a haze of pharisaic self-deception. I recognize aspects of my teaching practice all too well in all three instances (though perhaps, as a matter of temperament, not virtue, more in the second and third than in the first). But then, the day that sinners are required to keep silence there will be no teaching in the Catholic Church!

- 1 See Olaf Pedersen, 'Christian Belief and the Fascination of Science', *Physics, Philosophy and Theology: A Common Quest for Understanding*. ed Robert J. Russell, William R. Stoeger, George V. Coyne (Vatican Observatory, 1988), pp. 125—140.
- 2 Karl Rahner, *Karl Rahner in Dialogue. Conversations and Interviews, 1965—1982*, ed. Paul Imhof and Hubert Biallowans, translation edited by Harvey Egan (New York, Crossroad, 1986), p. 86; see Rahner, 'The Question of the Future', *Theological Investigations*, XII, tr. David Bourke (London, Darton Longman and Todd, 1974), p. 181.
- 3 David B. Burrell, *Aquinas: God and Action* (London, Routledge Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 67; on this, see Nicholas Lash, *Theology on the Way to Emmaus* (London, SCM Press, 1986), p. 114.
- 4 On this, as on many other matters, von Hugel talked much sense: see my discussion in *Easter in Ordinary: Reflections on Human Experience and the Knowledge of God* (London, SCM Press, 1988), where many of the points made in this paper are made more carefully and at greater length.
- 5 Rowan Williams, 'Trinity and Revelation', *Modern Theology*, 2:3 (1986), pp. 200, 198.
- 6 Michael Dummett, 'Unsafe Premises', *New Blackfriars*, December 1987, p. 566.
- 7 Dummett, 'What Chance for Ecumenism?' *New Blackfriars*, December 1988, p. 531. There seem to be two reasons why Professor Dummett holds this curious

opinion as to my views. In the first place, he wonders why 'so many people' (including me) were 'so very cross' with him, and decides that it must be because we were 'infuriated' by his proposal that things 'having long been taught by the Church' was a reason for believing them. No such proposal would infuriate me because I think it sensible and proper. I was very cross because, on the basis of one article by a philosopher who thinks that the entire history of Christianity has been a deception, Dummett felt entitled to charge what, in his second article, he called 'a large and important sector within the Church ... including significantly many seminary teachers', with apostasy, fraudulence and deceit ('Unsafe Premises', p. 560; see 'A Remarkable Consensus', pp. 430—431). This seemed to me, and still seems, a thoroughly irresponsible manner in which to incite others to share his grave suspicions. In the second place, he mistakes my mention of 'experts'. My suggestion was that he would have done better *directly* to ascertain the views of Catholic New Testament scholars, since these were the people whose orthodoxy and integrity were being so colourfully impugned. I had no other group of experts in mind than those I took to be the target of his diatribe. I saw them not as judges in the case but as the prisoners at the bar.

- 8 See *Easter in Ordinary*, pp. 254—285.
- 9 Rahner, 'The Hiddenness of God', *Theological Investigations*, XVI, trans. David Morland (London, Darton Longman and Todd, 1979), pp. 238—239, his stress.
- 10 Rahner, *Christian at the Crossroads*, trans. V. Green (London, Burns Oates 1975), p. 23.
- 11 Rahner, 'The Foundation of Belief Today', *Investigations*, XVI, p. 9. A similar note was sounded in *Gaudium et Spes*, 33, in which the Council spoke of the Church's desire to 'illuminate' humanity's path 'without always having to hand the solution to particular problems'.
- 12 *The Tablet*, 26 November 1988, p. 1362.
- 13 'Opportunities for Peace', *Catholic Media Office*, 24 November 1988, no. 15.
- 14 'Opportunities', nos. 26 (my stress), 36.
- 15 See *The Tablet*, 26 November 1988, p. 1378.
- 16 The matter is amply documented in Robert Blair Kaiser, *The Encyclical that Never Was: The Story of the Commission on Population, Family and Birth, 1964—1966* (London, Sheed and Ward, 1987) and, without the journalistic *brio*, in John Mahoney, *The Making of Moral Theology* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1987), pp. 259—301. It is not possible to take into account the 'Cologne Declaration' and Bernard Häring's appeal in *Il Regno*, both of which appeared after this paper was written (see *The Tablet*, 4 February 1989, pp. 140—142).
- 17 See Mahoney, *Making of Moral Theology*, pp. 116—120, drawing largely on Congar.
- 18 Stephen Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge, 1958), p. 7.
- 19 Dummett 'What Chance for Ecumenism?' *New Blackfriars*, December 1988, p. 543.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 532.
- 21 Lash, 'A Leaky Sort of Thing? The Divisiveness of Michael Dummett', *New Blackfriars*, December 1987, p. 555.
- 22 *Making of Moral Theology*, pp. 340—341.
- 23 And if the papal contribution to the Church's teaching were similarly made and, moreover, made within the structures of a Synod no longer confined to courtly or 'consultative' status (with the task of such central offices as were required restricted to administration), then the pathologies of the past hundred and fifty years might, at last, be on the way to being healed.