

The Gospel and the Church

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It has been widely acknowledged that Dr Hans Küng's *The Council and Reunion* (fluently translated by Cecily Hastings in a Sheed and Ward Stagbook) is one of the most important of the vast flood of publications released by Pope John XXIII's announcement of his intention to summon an ecumenical council. So far, however, this acknowledgment has not been accompanied by any serious examination of the book, at least by Catholic reviewers in England. Its reception has been generally favourable, even rapturous (see *The Clergy Review*, January 1962, p. 33); but there seems to have been a marked disinclination to enter into detailed discussion. What is particularly unfortunate about this is that the book has become to some extent the manifesto of a party; there is sufficient evidence, though not in print, so far as I know, that a resolute opposition to the book among certain Catholics has been able to take shape in silence. It seems to me that silent opposition and vocal enthusiasm form a particularly vicious combination; and surely the best way of releasing what tension there is is to look at Küng's book critically.

Criticism ordinarily implies detachment; yet it might be claimed that here if anywhere detachment is out of place. What could demand a more passionate commitment than the reform of the Church? The critical detachment which we shall try to practise here, then, is not a detachment from the profound reforming purpose of Küng's book or indeed of the Council itself; but it will be a serious attempt to find a standpoint which is neither simply 'conservative' nor simply 'progressive', nor for that matter simply 'middle of the road'. Every serious attempt to consider and promote reform of the Church, including Küng's book, must of course try to define such a standpoint; and the reason for this is extremely simple: the Church is a mystery of faith, and we cannot apply any of our ordinary categories to it except 'analogically'. It is doubtful whether the quasi-political categories 'conservative' and 'progressive' have any application to the Church at all; in so far as they imply a simple rectilinear sequence in time they certainly need correction, for the time of the Church is not the time of

nineteenth-century ideas of history.¹

There is one other point I should like to make clear in advance. This essay is primarily one written by a Catholic for Catholics. If it should happen to catch the eye of non-Catholics (and I hope it will) I would ask them to bear this in mind. The specific orientation is adopted so as to achieve as high a degree of honesty and clarity as possible, as a 'technique for sincerity'. One of the weaknesses of Küng's book seems to me that he constantly has one eye on his non-Catholic readers; what he says, and the way in which he says it, while manifestly seeking and claiming honesty, is consequently 'slanted' in the same *kind* of way as a certain sort of apologetics. The fact is, of course, that 'honesty' is a complex idea; it admits of degrees, it depends on the writer's or speaker's relationship to his audience, real or imagined, its demands vary in strict accordance with the subject-matter in which it is sought. Since our subject-matter here is the mystery of the Church, our honesty must be sought in the proper dimension of the mystery, so that once again we meet the demand that in all our thinking about the Church we must be careful to criticize our human categories: are honesty in daily intercourse and honesty in, say, the confessional, simply species of a genus? Sometimes, it seems to me, Küng only achieves 'frankness' about the Church; and the trouble about frankness is that it falsifies. One can never be frank enough, on the one hand—one can list abuses, say, indefinitely; and on the other hand, the franker one is in this sense the further one moves towards mere material particularity. I can never be *finally* frank about myself; and even if I could, I would only succeed in misrepresenting myself, because what I am is not simply a sum of items hypothetically capable of exhaustive enumeration: in my deepest self I am an original possibility of *becoming* myself, a 'project'; my honesty is a life-task. Honesty about the Church is more like this sort of honesty than like frankness; it involves constant reference to a perception of the depths of the 'possibility' of the Church as mystery, and this perception itself (a matter of faith, then) is one which is capable of indefinite growth: the mystery of the Church is inexhaustible.

Thus both the attempt to define a standpoint and the demand for honesty disclose the need for some principle or term in regard to which we may orientate ourselves: thus a dimension or axis along which our

¹For some interesting notes and references on the 'time of the Church', see F. Malmberg, *Ein Leib - Ein Geist* (Freiburg 1960, pp. 273-85); on the 'time of Tradition' and 'sacramental time' some remarks by the present writer, *Blackfriars*, November 1959, pp. 450-66.

thought may move, about which our reflection may turn. It is perhaps Küng's chief contribution to our reflection about reform that he determines this principle or term, quite traditionally, as *the Gospel*; though I cannot be sure, from what he says about it, whether he is entirely clear about what he means by it, or whether, with one eye on non-Catholic, primarily Protestant, readers, he has preferred to leave the notion rich and vague. Let us quote the central part of the main passage in which he speaks of the *normative* role of the Gospel (pp. 76 s.; cf. pp. 25-6; 60; 69; 84; 145; also p. 268); he has been maintaining that there are no 'irreformable areas' in the Church, as though these formed one storey, the reformable areas another storey, of a building: every part of the building is liable to renewal, only the *plan* must not be set aside.

But according to what *norm* shall action for renewal of the Church be measured? There is only one norm whose authority is adequate. There is no ordinary human norm which can measure every institution in the Church, Pope, bishops, priests and laity, the whole Church of yesterday, today and tomorrow. The norm to which we can keep looking, in all our action, is Jesus Christ, the Lord of the Church, who speaks to the Church of every century in his Gospel, making his demands upon her. The tradition of the Church will help us to understand the Gospel of Jesus Christ aright; and it is the apostolic Church, which was especially near her Lord, which gave us the canon of Scripture, the Scriptures themselves and Church government in its first form, which, through an understanding of Christ's Gospel, will provide us in a special sense with a model (though not one to be mechanically copied) for renewal of the Church. It is, in fact, a matter of acting according to the Gospel. We can be fearlessly confident that the *vox Evangelii*, being the *vox Dei*, will also be the best possible answer to the *vox temporis*. Neither opportunist modernism nor opportunist traditionalism but fidelity to the Gospel of Jesus Christ is the right frame for a renewal of the Church.

Loyalty to the Gospel involves loyalty to the Church who preaches the Gospel to us. *Sentire in Ecclesia*, thinking in the Church . . . is an essential requirement for any reforming action. Renewal of the Church must not be revolution, must not lead out of the Church but deeper into her. Hence it must be carried out in a genuine, loyal, honest, free *obedience* to the Church's leaders, whose duty it is to feed the flock and in whose voice we hear the voice of the Lord. (pp. 79-80).

This seems to me a very fine passage indeed, one of the finest in the book, and I hope it will be read in its full context. Yet I cannot wholly endorse it, because I am troubled by a sense of underlying conflicts in it, of diverse pressures making themselves successively felt. We may raise two questions. 1. What, formally and not simply in its content, is 'the Gospel?' 2. What does it mean for a Catholic to appeal to the Gospel? These are surely *fundamental* questions; and while I am grateful to Küng for provoking them, I am astonished that he has not raised them explicitly himself. My embarrassment is due perhaps to an uncertainty about the nature of 'ecumenical dialogue'; are we to seek modes of expression which Catholics and dissident Christians alike can use, even, or especially, in matters over which there has been acute difference; or are we, certainly not arrogantly and intransigently, but *honestly* (in the sense indicated above) to seek to define our differences? 'The Gospel' I would take to be the very principle of 'honesty', something about which compromise formulas would seem to be peculiarly intolerable, so that here at least we are constrained to an uttermost striving for clarity; might we not otherwise be muffling the voice of the Gospel itself?

1. What, then, is the Gospel? For a Catholic the truly *normative* answer, binding and regulating his faith, is found in the decree of the fourth session of the Council of Trent, 8 April 1546 (Denz 783). Here we are told that the purpose of the decree is that the essential purity of the Gospel (*puritas ipsa evangelii*) should be preserved, that Gospel which, promised beforehand in the Scriptures by the prophets Jesus Christ first authoritatively published (*promulgavit*) and then ordered to be preached to the whole of creation by his Apostles as the source (*fontem*) of all saving truth and moral instruction. The Synod sees that this (evangelical) truth and instruction is contained in written books and the unwritten traditions which have come down to us, received by the Apostles from Christ's own mouth, or delivered as though from hand to hand (*quasi per manus traditae*) from the Apostles themselves, at the dictation of the Holy Spirit. Following the orthodox Fathers, then, the Synod receives and venerates with equal faith and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testament as well as these traditions, as dictated whether orally by Christ or by the Holy Spirit, and preserved in the Catholic Church by a continuous succession (*continua successione*). The decree concludes by requiring us all to understand the order and the way in which the Synod will proceed after laying the foundations of the faith we confess, and what witnesses it

will rely on when it confirms the Church's dogmas and renews way of life.²

We may sum up: the Gospel has Jesus Christ for its author; it is preached by his Apostles to the whole world at his command. It is not confined to Scripture alone but is also to be found in unwritten traditions handed down from the Apostles and preserved in unbroken succession from them. This Gospel is the source of truth and life, and the foundation of the Church's dogmas.

Those who are unfamiliar with recent studies on Scripture and Tradition, particularly as regards the Tridentine decree, will not perhaps appreciate Küng's skill in formulating Catholic teaching in a way which is likely to be acceptable to non-Catholics, Protestants in particular. We must specially note two points here: (a) the description of Jesus Christ and his Gospel as *norm*; (b) the movement from Gospel to Church and Church leaders by way of implication ('loyalty to the Gospel involves . . .').

(a) Firstly, then, it is odd to speak of Jesus Christ as 'norm'; surely if judgment is what we are concerned with, he is *Judge* not *norm*. If *we*, now, are to measure and judge the Church by him (whatever this may mean), it can only be by way of his manifest presence to us: that is, in the Gospel. This is the 'appeal to the Gospel' which we shall consider in more detail later. We must say at once that 'Gospel' cannot mean simply 'Scripture': it must be the whole of that manifestation of Christ in the Church by which he continually reveals himself to us: the Church as revealing and making present the mystery of Christ, e.g., in the sacraments as well as in Scripture, but more particularly in the *word* of revelation, the Gospel *preached*, in Scripture and the teaching of the Church which is not confined to Scripture. In the original version of the Tridentine decree, this Gospel preached was called the *norma* of all saving truth and instruction; in its final form the decree replaces 'norma' by 'fons'. In spite of the abundant material furnished by the Societas Goerresiana *Concilium Tridentinum* it still seems to be impossible to say how this change took place. No objection was taken in the discussions to 'norma'; yet it has disappeared from the final version. We may presume that the change was made in order to avoid the suggestion that the Scriptures were a '*norma normans*' for the Church in

²It should be noted here that in virtue of the direct quotation of this decree in the third session of the Vatican Council (ch. 2; Denz 1787), (supernatural) 'Revelation' in Catholic theology should correspond exactly to 'Gospel'. 'Faith and morals', similarly, is a way of talking about 'hearing and doing the Gospel word'.

a Lutheran sense, i.e., as an *external* norm.³ However this may be, it seems important to recognize the fact that the change was made, and give it due significance. The Gospel is not in the first place a *norm*, but a *source*; it *becomes* 'normative' by being applied interpretatively to and in a given historical situation. Surely one need only look at the Bible without theological spectacles to see that nothing could be less like a norm than this extraordinary conglomeration of writings.

(b) From what has already been said it should be clear that we cannot move from Gospel to Church and Church leaders as though the former 'involved' the latter merely as a *consequence*. The Gospel has Christ for its author; but it comes to us through the Apostles and the apostolic succession. Christ's 'promulgation' of the Gospel is inseparable from his institution of the Apostolic office: he entrusts himself and his Gospel to us through the Apostles and their successors. The Gospel 'involves' the Church and Church leaders as its homogeneous pre-supposition, as its canonical (regulative and normative) organ. Thus the Gospel, as source and foundation, becomes normative, in the last resort, only when it is applied interpretatively and embodied in a decision by that institution in the Church which is the appropriate organ of its authority, since both Gospel and institution derive their authority from a single author, Jesus Christ, who established the institution in order that it might preach the Gospel. As *source* the Gospel is prior to the institution (at least with regard to the *succession*, and as Christ himself with regard to the Apostles too); as *norm* the institution is prior to the Gospel (at least in every new historical situation), in so far as it authoritatively applies and interprets its own Gospel teaching. Or using Ratzinger's alternative terminology in a fine essay on the apostolic succession (*diadoche*), we may say that the 'succession is the form of the tradition, the tradition is the content of the succession', where 'tradition' here is equivalent to 'Gospel'.⁴

³I am not at all enthusiastic about Karl Rahner's attempt to give a Catholic sense to Scripture as '*norma normans*', as reported in *Herder-Korrespondenz*, April 1962, p. 333 (once again in the context of an 'ecumenical dialogue'). He is reported as saying that Scripture is '*eine Norm für das Lehramt*'. The whole point is what is meant by the '*für*'—'imposed upon' or 'for, and in, the use of'.

⁴See J. Ratzinger, in Rahner-Ratzinger, *Episkopat und Primat*, Freiburg 1961, p. 49. References to further literature in Y. Congar, *La Tradition et les Traditions*, Paris 1960, and J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrines*, London 1960, ch. 2. The outstanding work on the early period is D. van den Eynde, *Les Normes de l'enseignement chrétien dans la littérature patristique des trois premiers siècles*, Gembloux-Paris 1933. I should also like to say here how much I owe to Père Congar's earlier book, *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*, Paris 1950. It is instructive to reflect that this massive book (648 pages) had to be withdrawn shortly after publication.

2. But it is possible then for all Christians, apart from the authoritative custodians of the Gospel, to 'appeal to the Gospel?' It is an essential purpose of this essay to maintain that they can and must appeal to the Gospel, even beyond and behind the given historical manifestation of Christ in the Church: that they are entitled, as members of the Church, to bring the Gospel to bear, critically and interpretatively, on the given historical situation of the Church. The *mode* of this appeal to the Gospel is what we must now turn to consider.

One example of this appeal has already been provided in this essay: the use and application by the present writer, who is *not* an authority, of the decree of the Council of Trent. The acts of the Council provide another example of an especially lively and interesting kind. Towards the end of the general congregation of 5 April 1546, after discussion of the original version of the decree, the Dominican Nachianti, Bishop of Chioggia, rejected the phrase *par pietatis affectus* as 'impious'. In reply to objections to his term, he defended himself by saying that it was impious to maintain that prayer facing eastwards deserved the same *pietas* as the *evangelium*, meaning (as appears from what follows) the Scriptures. Asked by Cervini what his views were about the canon of the Mass, he affirmed that this was indeed worthy of the same religious veneration as the gospels (*evangelia*). But this did not satisfy the conciliar fathers, who rose up against him, *universa synodus in eum insurrexerunt, eum damnando* (*Conc. Trid.* V, pp. 71-2). We should not allow ourselves merely to be surprised by this veneration for the canon of the Mass; the point is not that this particular canon, with the complicated liturgical history we are now better informed about, is on an equal footing with the gospels, but that the essential life of the Church, become manifest in the Eucharistic text, is itself 'evangelical', 'Gospel': though not inspired still revelatory. The whole life of the Church as a sign for faith is Gospel of Jesus Christ. So *Mediator Dei*: 'Thus the whole liturgy contains the Catholic faith, in as much as it is a public profession of the faith of the Church' (AAS 39 (1947), p. 540; CTS translation, p. 28).

A third example of 'appealing to the Gospel' may be taken from Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*. It will be remembered that the *Essay* was not in the first instance intended for publication, but was undertaken as a private examination of conscience; in the course of its eventual printing the author 'recognized in himself a conviction of the truth of the conclusion to which the discussion leads, so clear as to supersede further deliberation' (Advertisement to the first edition, Postscript), and in consequence joined the Catholic

Church. In chapter 5, significantly entitled 'Genuine Developments contrasted with Corruptions', Newman writes:

I have been engaged in drawing out the positive and direct argument in proof of the intimate connexion, or rather oneness, with primitive Apostolic teaching, of the body of doctrine known at this day by the name of Catholic . . . I have maintained that modern Catholicism is nothing else but simply the legitimate growth and complement, that is, the natural and necessary development, of the doctrine of the early Church, and that its divine authority is included in the divinity of Christianity (p. 169).

The interest of this passage in the present context is clear: it is that the 'primitive Apostolic teaching', the Gospel, is one with modern Catholic doctrine; that the Gospel is the unique continuing life, the vital subject, of its own immanent development and progressive unfolding. Appeal to the Gospel here is the effecting of an insight into the continuity, the unity in time, of the teaching of the Church: the discovery of the first times in every given now. Newman's investigation is a striking commentary in advance of the well-known passage of *Humani Generis*:

It is also true that theologians must always return to the sources (*fontes*) of divine revelation; for it is for them to point out how the doctrine of the living teaching authority (*vivo Magisterio*) is to be found either explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures and in Tradition. (Denz 2314; Pontifical Court Club translation, p. 32).

A little earlier (Denz 2313; p. 31) the Magisterium had been called 'the proximate and universal criterion (*norma*) of truth for all theologians'.

A certain dissatisfaction with the foregoing examples may and ought to have been felt by the reader. Isn't the discussion too academic, too much to do with the activities of professional theologians? But the Newman example at least should have brought out the existential interest of these considerations: concern for the purity of the Apostolic teaching, *puritas ipsa evangelii* in the Tridentine phrase, was precisely what brought him to submit to the Catholic Church of his own time, on the basis of a recognition of the living continuity of the Gospel. We may say that our three examples have shown us that appeal to the Gospel, by whosoever it is made, requires an eye (an eye of faith) for the active presence of the Gospel in the Catholic spatial breadth and temporal length of the Church.

But the really critical point, of course, suggested by the Newman example, is the uniquely privileged status of the time of beginnings, the primitive, primordial and original in Christianity. The sense of

the eternally new in Christianity, the unfailing spring and source to which we must always return, Christianity as a *Neuheitserlebnis*, is inseparable from Christian consciousness in faith in every succeeding generation; and it is the inalienable task of every generation to re-realize that newness in its own time. The Church has given authoritative sanction to that sense of the unfailing newness of Christian origins precisely by determining the canon of Scripture, and determining it as an acknowledgment of the inspiration of Scripture by the Holy Spirit (cf. Vatican Council, Denz 1787; also K. Rahner, *Über die Schriftinspiration*, available in a rather unsatisfactory English translation). The Scriptural monument of the Church's Gospel mediates a special and permanent presence of the Holy Spirit poured out at the time of beginnings. In the 39th of those letters in which he announced the date of Easter to the churches of Egypt, St Athanasius lists the books he regards as canonical and goes on to say: 'These are the fountains of salvation, that he who thirsts may be satisfied by the (living) words they contain (an obvious reference to 1s 12: 3 and 55: 1); in these alone is the teaching of godliness gospelled (*euaggelizetai*). 'Jesus Christ himself is the well and fountain, the "source" of the living water of the Spirit in the written Gospel (cf. John 4). To read the Scriptures in the faith of the Church is to meet Christ there in his Spirit: a perpetual Pentecost at which we must be hearers like those who heard the Apostles preaching and giving witness at the first Pentecost. In this sense the word of the Gospel is the sword of the Spirit, piercing and dividing: out of the mouth of one like a son of man a sharp two-edged sword to judge the seven churches' (cf. Eph 6: 17; Heb 4: 12-13; Apoc 1).

To appeal to the Gospel is to surrender inwardly to the word of God in the Church, the presence of the Spirit in the Church; to take away from our hearts the veil which conceals the glory of the Lord who is Spirit (cf. 2 Cor 3); to let the Spirit in our hearts answer to the Spirit in the word: to submit to judgment. This *first*; and this hearing of the Gospel embodied in a doing of the Gospel, the Gospel become 'normative' in our expression of it, and normative only *potentially*, in submission to the only *authentic* interpreter of the Gospel, the magisterium of the Church.

A last example may help to clarify this point. In that long movement of reform of the clergy which Dominicans like to see as the prehistory of their own foundation as an Order, the exhortations of St Peter Damian play a special part.⁵ The watch word of this movement was

⁵For all that follows see especially Mandonnet-Vicaire, *Saint Dominique*, vol. II, pp. 163-202, 'La règle de saint Augustin, maîtresse de vie apostolique'.

the *vita apostolica*, thought of as summed up firstly in the so-called Rule of St Augustine, and behind that in two Scriptural texts, one describing the life of the post-Pentecostal community in Jerusalem (Acts 4: 32 s.), the other describing the mission of the first disciples (Luke 11: 1-7 and par.). The movement of reform, then, was conceived of as a return to origins, *instar primitivae Ecclesiae*; the rule of the canons was seen as deriving from the 'norm of the apostolic life (*apostolicae vitae norma*)', by which the 'tender infancy of the suckling Church might be imitated (*teneram quodammodo lactentis Ecclesiae imitatur infantiam*)'.⁶ What we have to note here is the remarkable interplay of prophetic spirit in St Peter Damian himself, the continual support and encouragement of the apostolic institution in the person of Gregory VII, and the recourse to the Scriptures as providing an image of origins—all issuing in a concrete *regulation* of canonical life: the apostolic life seen as potentially normative and given authoritative normative sanction in a historical situation very unlike that of the primitive Church.

We need not be members of the official apostolic institution to enjoy the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; but that inspiration is always orientated to the institution if it is authentically from the Holy Ghost.⁶ In the present case we may say that the Gospel is undoubtedly committed to the apostolic institution for its faithful preservation and interpretation; but it is preached to us and lives in our hearts: so St Paul gives thanks to God that the Roman Christians have 'obeyed from their hearts unto that pattern of teaching into which they were initiated' (*paredothete*, Rom 6: 17). A profound treatment of this point may be found in the joint pastoral letter of the Dutch Hierarchy on the coming Council, in a section entitled 'The sense of faith in the community of the Church and in its hierarchical leaders'.⁷ Here we are first reminded of God's twofold appeal to us, in the 'public revelation' of Christ's saving deeds addressed to us by the Church, and in the inner 'instinct' and illumination of faith. As regards this light of faith, *lumen fidei*, the pastoral says:

⁶See the fine essay by Congar, 'Le Saint-Esprit et le Corps apostolique, réalisateurs de l'oeuvre du Christ', in *Esquisses du Mystère de l'Eglise*, Paris 1953; and consider the 'charismatic Apostle', St Paul. Malmberg's critique of Congar, *op. cit.* pp. 185s., is quite unconvincing.

⁷In a colophon the letter makes special acknowledgments to Fr E. Schillebeeckx for help given in the composition of the pastoral; it was first published in the first issue of the new periodical *Tijdschrift voor Theologie*, January 1961. French translation: *Le Sens du Concile: une Réforme Intérieure de la vie Catholique*. Desclée de Brouwer.

The tradition of the Church teaches unanimously that the accuracy of the light of faith, as an expression in us of the saving activity of the Holy Spirit, is of itself infallible. A belief which is really prompted by the sense of faith cannot be false (p.13 of the separate edition, *De Bisschoppen van Nederland over het Concilie*).

In the concrete human psyche, though, the impulse of the Holy Spirit, leading us into all truth, is obscured by all the complicated experiences of daily life, including our sins; we must, then, take into account the *collective* belief of the Church's community of faith. Yet here too the common experience in faith of the Church needs to be purified and refined, by a long process of reflection, discussion, criticism and exploration, until the massive conviction matures that some definite conception is really the expression of something which the Church has long lived by and has its origin in Christ's saving deed or word. St Thomas is quoted (IIa-IIae. 2.a.6 ad 3): 'The faith of the universal Church can never err'. But it may be that complete clarity is still not attained; a *judgment* is required, by the only competent authority—the teaching authority of the Pope as head of the apostolic college of the world episcopate. 'In virtue of the charism of office and the infallibility bound up with it, the teaching authority of the Church is alone capable of infallibly determining whether a given collective belief of the faithful really proceeds from the consciousness of faith, whether, in other words, it derives from the sense of faith, by nature infallible' (p. 15). Not that the rôle of the teaching office consists merely in ascertaining the facts. Its pronouncements are authentic judgments, finally settling matters of faith for the Church, in appropriate terms.

It is clear from all this that the infallibility of the papal office may not be detached from the totality of that faith in which it was placed by Christ (p.16).

Even this bald summary allows us to see that the authoritative norm of our faith is homogeneous with that faith itself: the Spirit which preserves the teaching office from error in its judgments is the same Spirit who illumines the eye of our faith. It is the baptismal birthright of every Christian in the Catholic Church to appeal to the Gospel, in the sure confidence that the Spirit who prompts him will preserve him from error *through the apostolic institution*; and this even when he appeals to the Gospel behind its historical manifestation at any given time.

One final point must be made before concluding. In their brilliant little book on *The Riddle of the New Testament*, recently reprinted in a paperback, Hoskyns and Davey write: 'The critical and historical study

of the New Testament is therefore the prime activity of the Church' (edition of 1931, p. 12). This is perhaps the classical statement of an attitude which the Catholic Church has only assimilated with enormous difficulty (witness the Modernist crisis) because, adopted as an *exclusive* attitude, it challenges the fundamental conviction of the Catholic Church: that it is, in virtue of the protection of the Holy Spirit and the continuity of its apostolic succession, the Church of the origins, the Church of the New Testament; that the Gospel it now proclaims with its living voice is identically one with the Apostolic kerygma (even when it is talking about birth control). Yet the Catholic Church *has* assimilated this attitude; we have only to look at modern Catholic biblical studies, which would be unthinkable without the work of a Hoskyns or a Dodd, a Cullmann or a Kittel. This is not simply a 'spoiling of the Egyptians' but the acknowledgment and acceptance as her own of what, in virtue of the activity of the Spirit in these non-Catholic exegetes (and this is a limitation too), was already her own. The appeal to the Gospel, the return to sources, must now be for the Catholic as critical an activity as it is for any non-Catholic; but it remains for the Catholic an activity regulated by the homogeneous norm of his faith present in the Church's teaching authority as the living expression now of a Gospel which is her own voice through the centuries.

To sum up. The Gospel is variously manifested in the life of the Church. It is manifested normatively and regulatively in the magisterium. It is manifested with privileged, inspired purity in its Scriptural source. It is manifested with very diverse degrees of purity in the sacred history of the Church. Any local manifestation of the Gospel in a given historical situation may be in need of purification, so that the Gospel may shine forth more brightly. Every Catholic Christian has the power to perceive that Gospel in the inadequate manifestation, and exercise his prophetic spirit by appealing to the Gospel behind the manifestation, in such a way that it might manifest itself more clearly in a succeeding historical situation. He may propose a normative application of the Gospel he perceives, in the confident trust that if false his application will be authoritatively rejected. He submits himself to the judgment of the Gospel which he proposes to apply, inwardly in the Spirit and outwardly in obedience: it is the same word of God which judges him interiorly or exteriorly, immediately or mediately. The Church is judged by the Gospel which is *within* her, which is her own intelligible life.

It will be seen that the views expressed here correspond in many ways to Küng's, though I hope the difference of emphasis is clear. No authority is claimed for my views; they are in no sense 'inspired'. It had originally been my intention to discuss other topics raised in Küng's book, in particular 'the Church of sinners' and 'Marianism' (I do not understand how Küng could have omitted to mention the *ecclesiological* bearing of recent Catholic Marian theology, as for instance in A. Müller's *Ecclesia-Maria*). Perhaps the Council itself will make all such discussions otiose.

Patriarch of the West and Supreme Pontiff

C. J. DUMONT, O.P.

The Orthodox Churches are unanimous in their hostility to the existence of Catholic Churches of Byzantine rite. They fear that Catholicism seen within the framework of the rite that they know must needs be more attractive to Orthodox people than when seen within the framework of the unfamiliar Latin rite. But this tactical objection is not the only one. Behind it lies a deeper conviction, two convictions in fact.

First, there is the conviction that it is the Orthodox Churches, and not the Roman Church, that have remained wholly and completely faithful to Christ's teaching and to the tradition of the Apostles and the primitive Church. This is so much so that in Orthodox eyes to make an act of adhesion to the Roman communion is to give up something of the revealed faith and to cut oneself off from the true Church founded by our Lord Jesus Christ. We believe this conviction is mistaken, and we indeed have good reasons for doing so. But we must recognize that it is a conviction that governs the Orthodox attitude.

The other conviction is connected with the first one. It is that the Roman Church is not and cannot be anything but the patriarchate of the West, whose head is the bishop of Rome; she is therefore of her