

city of the Apocalypse, they stand for the Church triumphant or militant as the case, or the taste, may be. The warlike king, the persecuted poor man, are Christ in his glory and his humiliation, and Christ in his members humbled to be exalted. The psalmist's enemies are Christ's enemies—and if we are fortunate enough to know nobody to whom we can apply Psalm 108, it is at least salutary to remind ourselves of the dreadful possibility of its being applied to us.

I would like to conclude by dwelling briefly on the fact that the psalms are inspired prayers. As St Paul says, we know not how to pray as we ought. We only pray well when the Holy Ghost prays in us 'with unspeakable groanings'. Well, he prayed pre-eminently in the psalmists. Theirs *was* a childhood religion, and it had the directness, the frankness, the immediacy of childhood. God was so much more real to them than he usually is to us. This is something which need not be, but often is lost to the grown-up Christian. God has given us in Christ a revelation which has the wide horizons of the adult world. But from the days when our religion—and our religion of course is identical with the psalmists'—from the days when our religion was in its infancy God has left us the psalms to be the Church's special prayer as well as the Temple's. In the psalms we can respond to the adult experience of the full revelation in Christ with the vital directness and innocence of childhood, and this is the most proper response for those who have been born again as the children of God.



OUR LADY IN THE SCRIPTURES

REGINALD GINNS, O.P.

THE present article continues the study begun in the May number of *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT* under the title of our Lady in Tradition. In that article there was occasion to remark on the benign and gratifying way in which the great organs of the secular press have reported the events connected with the centenary celebrations of the apparitions of

our Lady at Lourdes. But I went on to say that this seemed too good to last, and that the year would not pass without a resurrection of the old threadbare objections to Catholic doctrine and devotion concerning the Mother of God. We have not had long to wait. In a recent review¹ of the new book on Cardinal Newman by the French Oratorian, Père Bouyer, we are treated to such judgments as the following:

'It did not take him (Newman) long to realize that in the Roman Church, as he found it, creative theology was dead. . . . Such new theology as there was, contributed by Manning and Ward, Faber and his *giovani*, was romantic when it was not repulsive or ridiculous; and if this attempt to graft the blooms of Italian mariolatry on to solid English roots had only a qualified success, it was Newman's prestige and deep theological piety which stopped it.'

For a collection of ineptitudes, this would be hard to beat. If the writer imagines that it was Newman who prevented English Catholics from going 'all Italian' under the influence of Faber and his companions of the London Oratory, then he has never heard of Ullathorne and the stolid English Catholic clergy and laity of the nineteenth century. And his phrases like 'solid English roots', and 'the infection of English piety by southern superstitions', smack somewhat of the spirit in which the Puritan Milton boasted that, when God wishes to communicate anything to the world, he first reveals it to his Englishmen. On the whole the tendentiousness of the review recalls the story of the university professor of English Literature who delivered himself of the judgment that Newman's style woefully declined after his 'secession to Rome'. And when a member of his audience objected that this opinion was proved wrong by the masterly prose of the *Apologia* and the elegant diction of *The Second Spring*, the professor replied that the writings of Newman as a Catholic were of no interest to him, and that he had little acquaintance with them. It seems likely that the reviewer might have to make a similar confession about the Cardinal's writings and sermons about our Blessed Lady. But there are people who think that any stick is good enough to beat the dog with.

The language and sentiments of Faber, of course, were by no means those of Newman either about our Lady or anything

¹ *The Times Literary Supplement*, May 23, 1958.

else, just as they were not those of Ullathorne or the old English Catholics who looked a little askance at the bubbling enthusiasm of the new converts. But I doubt if there is anything of a strictly doctrinal character in Faber's, or Ward's, or Manning's praises of the Blessed Virgin which cannot be paralleled in the writings of Newman. Take, for instance, the section on the prerogatives of Mary in the *Development of Christian Doctrine*:²

The special prerogatives of St Mary, the *Virgo Virginum*, are intimately involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation itself. As is well known, they were not fully recognized in the Catholic ritual till a late date, but they were not a new thing in the Church, or strange to her early teachers. St Justin, St Irenaeus, and others, had distinctly laid it down that she not only had an office, but bore a part, and was a voluntary agent, in the actual process of redemption, as Eve had been instrumental and responsible in Adam's fall. They taught that, as the first woman might have foiled the Tempter and did not, so, if Mary had been disobedient or unbelieving on Gabriel's message, the Divine Economy would have been frustrated. And certainly the parallel between 'the Mother of all the living' and the Mother of the Redeemer may be gathered from a comparison of the first chapters of the Scripture with the last. . . . Here, however, we are not so much concerned to interpret the Scripture as to examine the Fathers. Thus St Justin says, 'Eve, being a virgin and incorrupt, having conceived the word from the Serpent, bore disobedience and death; but Mary the Virgin, receiving faith and joy, when Gabriel the Angel evangelized her, answered, *Be it unto me according to thy word*. And Tertullian says that, whereas Eve believed the Serpent and Mary believed Gabriel, 'the fault of Eve in believing, Mary by believing hath blotted out'. St Irenaeus speaks more explicitly: 'As Eve', he says, 'becoming disobedient, became the cause of death to herself and to all mankind, so Mary too, having the predestined Man, and yet a Virgin, being obedient, became cause of salvation both to herself and to all mankind'. This becomes the received doctrine in the post-Nicene Church. And it was the received doctrine of Newman himself. The reviewer is welcome to search the writings of Faber, Ward and

² Chap. X, page 416-7.

Manning, or to examine 'Italian mariolatry' and 'southern superstition', in order to see if he can find anything stronger than that phrase 'Mary . . . became cause of salvation both to herself and to all mankind'. As for the 'romantic theology' with which he credits those writers, he may like to compare the concluding words of Newman who has proceeded from the above quotation to speak of two instances of our Lady's intercession, the first related by St Gregory of Nyssa concerning his namesake, the Thaumaturgus; the other told by St Gregory Nazianzen concerning a Christian woman:

In both these instances the Blessed Virgin appears especially in the character of Patroness or Paraclete, which Irenaeus and other Fathers describe, and which the Medieval Church exhibits—a loving Mother with clients.

To call our Lady a Paraclete might shock even 'southern superstition'. But in the next chapter the Cardinal makes a telling hit against those who speak so contemptuously of southern superstition.

It has been anxiously asked, he says, whether the honours paid to St Mary, which have grown out of devotion to her Almighty Lord and Son, do not, in fact, tend to weaken that devotion; and whether, from the nature of the case, it is possible so to exalt a creature without withdrawing the heart from the Creator. . . . I would here observe that the question is one of fact, not of presumption or conjecture. . . . Here I observe, first, that to those who admit the authority of the Fathers of Ephesus, the question is in no slight degree answered by their sanction of the *Theotokos*, or 'Mother of God', as a title of St Mary, and as given in order to protect the doctrine of the Incarnation, and to preserve the faith of Catholics from a specious Humanitarianism. And if we take a survey at least of Europe, we shall find that it is not those religious communions which are characterized by devotion towards the Blessed Virgin that have ceased to adore her Eternal Son, but those very bodies which (being unfettered by State law) have renounced that devotion. The regard for his glory, which was professed in that keen jealousy of her exaltation, has not been supported by the event. They who were accused of worshipping a creature in his stead, still worship him; their accusers, who hoped to worship him so purely, they, wherever obstacles to

the development of their principles have been removed, have ceased to worship him altogether.

We are all aware that this stricture of the Cardinal's is very much more *apropos* in our day than it was in his.

It will be thought that this is a lengthy introduction to our present subject, and that it should rather have formed part of the preceding article. Indeed, some will object that the order ought to have been reversed, and that the witness of the Scriptures logically precedes the witness of Tradition. This objection will be urged all the more strongly by those who still maintain the principle of the Protestant reformers: that the Bible alone is the rule of Christian faith and worship, and that any tradition not identical with Scripture is of no authority in these matters. But, as Newman indicates in the book just quoted, that is by no means the Catholic view of the case; and this is expressly confirmed by the declaration of the Vatican Council in its dogmatic constitution concerning faith:

Supernatural revelation, as we learn from the belief of the universal Church declared for us by the holy Council of Trent, is contained in written books [of Holy Scripture] and in the unwritten traditions received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself or handed down to us, as though by the hands of the Apostles, through the teaching of the Holy Ghost.³

And when we come to consider the written Scriptures, it must be pointed out once again that, although the Church at her institution by Jesus Christ took over from Israel all the canonical books of the Old Testament, she could not in the same way take over and make her own the writings of the New Testament. How could she, for they were neither written nor yet thought of by man? Consequently, there is no room for the strange delusion that the Scriptures have produced the Church. On the contrary it ought to be recognized that we owe the Scriptures to the Church: for, in the case of the Old Testament, it is she alone that guarantees for us their authenticity, their canonicity, their divine inspiration, and consequently their truth; and in the case of the New it must be said that she herself has written it by the hands of her children, after having lived and taught for a generation before it was written. In the words of one of the greatest biblical scholars of our time, 'the New Testament is the

³ Sess. III, chap. 2.

echo of our Christian religion';⁴ which is to say nothing less than that it is the authoritative and guaranteed account of the traditional faith of the primitive Church, *the faith once delivered to the saints*. But it is not, nor does it ever claim to be, the full and final account of that traditional faith. There is, therefore, that much to be said in favour of giving the Church's traditional witness concerning our Lady before approaching the witness of the Scriptures. And in view of what has been said above concerning the Church's authority guaranteeing the Bible, it surely follows that she and her learned doctors ought to be recognized as the authoritative interpreters of Scripture; that too is a way of passing on the voice of Tradition. Whatever texts she has interpreted officially we must interpret as she does, though in point of fact the authoritative interpretations binding upon us are not very numerous. But to me it seems altogether unreasonable to believe that Almighty God would take the trouble of supernaturally inspiring the sacred authors to write down for the sake of posterity the divine truths which he had revealed to mankind for their salvation, and then to suppose that he had taken no care to make sure of the preservation of those truths in their precise meaning. That would scarcely be in accordance with human, let alone divine, wisdom. To quote again the words of Père Lagrange:⁵

Revelation, once completed, is deposited in a Church. Now it is essential that this precious deposit, if it is to be of any use to us, should be well guarded; and that is what is meant by the Holy Ghost's assistance of the Church, an assistance which extends to the whole of revelation, whether oral or written. All this we learnt in our catechism as children, and we still think it right and fitting, worthy of the goodness and wisdom of God, and well adapted to the needs of our human nature. True, it imposes on us a state of subjection, but how much more reasonable that subjection is than a state of slavish subjection to mere texts!

All this is rendered necessary by the objection, so often repeated in recent years, that Catholic teaching and devotion concerning the Mother of God is quite unscriptural. The first thing to be decided before that point can be settled is this: What do the

4 M. J. Lagrange, *La Méthode Historique* (1903), p. 52.

5 *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

Scriptures say on the matter, and who is to interpret it? It recalls again the memory of Tertullian's advice concerning arguments about the meaning of Scripture texts:

The real and only question at issue is, whose is the faith, whose are the Scriptures; by whom, and through whom, and when, and to whom was delivered that teaching by which men are Christians? You will find the truth of the Scriptures and of their meaning and of all Christian tradition there where you find the truth of Christian teaching and faith.⁶

This was his way of appealing to the voice of living tradition within the Church, a thing upon which the Fathers and writers of the early Church never tire of insisting;⁷ a rule of faith enunciated by Papias a century before the time of Tertullian: 'For I considered that I should not get so much profit from what was written in books as from the voice which yet lives and remains'.⁸ These words recall the striking passage in which Plato reports what his master Socrates had said to Phaedrus to the same effect:

For this, I conceive, is the evil of the written word, and herein it closely resembles painting. The creatures of the latter art stand out before you as though they were alive; but if you ask them a question, they look very solemn but say never a word. And so it is with written discourses. You could fancy that they speak as though they were possessed of sense; but if you want to understand something they say and question them about it, you find that they repeat but one and the same story. Moreover, every discourse, once written down, is tossed about from hand to hand, equally among those who understand it and those for whom it is in no wise fitted; and of itself, it knows not to whom it ought, and to whom it ought not to speak. And when it is misunderstood and unjustly attacked, it always needs its father to help it; for, unaided, it can neither retaliate nor defend itself.⁹

An excellent text to use in arguments about the insufficiency of the Protestant rule of faith!

All the same it would be a grave error if I seemed to favour the opinion that, possessing the living voice of tradition, we can dispense with the written teaching of the Holy Scriptures. On

⁶ *De Praescriptionibus adversus haereses*, 19.

⁷ Cf. *THE LIFE OF THE SPIRIT*, August 1957.

⁸ In Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii, 29.

⁹ *Phaedrus, Lysis and Protogoras*, trans. by J. Wright, p. 106.

the contrary, although, as the Vatican Council declares, there exists an oral tradition within the Church which is distinct from the Scriptures, nevertheless most of the authoritative teaching of the faith consists of the Church's magisterial interpretation of Holy Writ. And this, as we have just seen in the words of Cardinal Newman, is especially true in the development of doctrine concerning the Mother of God, just as it is true in the doctrinal development of the truth of the Incarnation. Indeed the two doctrines naturally go hand in hand. Let me quote again from Ullathorne's treatise on the Immaculate Conception which was drawn upon in the preceding article concerning our Lady in Tradition.

The sum and conclusion which results from this exposition is that the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of our Redeemer is as ancient as the mystery of the Redemption. It forms a component part of that grand scheme of human reparation disposed before the ages in the all-conceiving mind of Eternal Wisdom. The first intimations of the mystery reach our ears from the earthly Paradise. The words of the Almighty resound across the ages from the Book of Genesis. And amidst the cries of woe and distress from our apostate progenitors, amidst God's terrible denunciations of their crime, amidst the tempest of maledictions which come pouring on the world, amidst the awful curses with which the wrath of the Eternal overwhelms the infernal author of our ruin, there breathe tender notes of his love for man, which prelude the solution of the world's catastrophe. They announce the coming of a new Mother, a Mother of life, a Mother who, as well as her offspring, shall be victorious over the devil, and shall pass untouched by his evil influences to the fulfilment of her great office. And the first intimation of the Gospel of peace is the proclamation of that Immaculate Mother. And as the Old Testament begins by proclaiming her, so the New Testament begins with the words addressed to her from Heaven: *Hail, full of grace, the Lord is with thee*. That is, as an ancient Father writes, 'Hail, formed in grace'.¹⁰

It would be unreasonable in the short space of an article to look for a treatment of all the texts of Old and New Testaments

¹⁰ *The Immaculate Conception*, Ullathorne, p. 200.

which have reference in their literal or spiritual sense to prerogatives of our Lady. Indeed one article would hardly suffice to discuss the linguistic and exegetical problems which arise from the one text of Genesis iii, 15, to which our attention is drawn in the above extract. The same might be said of the Gospel text in question, occurring in the Annunciation narrative of Luke i, 26-35. But in one case as in the other we may safely rely, as Ullathorne and Newman rely, on the Church's traditional interpretation made clear to us both in the writings of the Fathers and in the pages of the New Testament. If we are content to accept the New Testament as 'the echo of our Christian religion', the faithful mirror of the life and faith of the primitive Church—and unbiassed biblical scholarship has now no hesitations on this point—then we can have no doubts about how the first generation of Christians interpreted the mysterious text of Genesis, which we may translate legitimately, according to the opinion of sound Catholic exegesis, as follows: *I will put enmities between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It (her seed) shall crush thy head, and thou shalt wound (or lie in wait for) its heel.*

Even a cursory acquaintance with the epistles of St Paul makes it abundantly clear that in his eyes the seed of the woman destined to crush the head of the serpent is the seed of Abraham in which all the nations of the earth are to find their happiness; and that seed is none other than Christ, as he declares in Galatians iii, 16. *The God of peace crush Satan under your feet speedily*, he writes to the Romans, xvi, 20 certainly with this text of Genesis in his mind. Likewise the author of Hebrews when he says (ii, 14): *Therefore because children are sharers of (the same) flesh and blood, (Jesus) also himself in like manner hath become a sharer of the same, that through death he might destroy him who had the empire of death, that is to say, the devil.* And finally, John in his first epistle (iii, 8): *For this purpose the Son of God appeared that he might destroy the works of the devil.* It was inevitably, then, that the Mother of the Son of God should be associated with him in the mind of the Church in the great work of his Incarnation, as she was associated with him in this first of the biblical prophecies. And therefore the Fathers of the Church, carrying on the ancient tradition of primitive times, make the woman Eve a figure of the second Eve. But the second Eve reverses the role of the ancient Eve, just as

the hymn declares that she reverses the name—

Sumens illud ave
Gabrielis ore,
Funda nos in pace
Mutans nomen Evae.

It was not that the Angel's *Ave* merely reversed the name Eva. All that Mary stands for completely changes the situation of Eve. Eve had entered into friendly and idle gossip with Satan, thus exposing herself to the temptation to which she yielded; and so she brought death to her children, despite the fact that she received her name *because she was the mother of all the living* (Gen. iii, 20). The second Eve was to be Mother of all the living in a better sense. We salute her so when we sing to her, 'Our life, our sweetness, and our hope, to thee do we cry, poor banished children of Eve'. Between the second Eve and Satan there were to be no friendly dealings, but stark and undying enmity because of the fruit of her blessed womb. Enmity between mankind and serpents is natural because of the character of the serpent. The Son of Mary was to deal with the great serpent in the way that dangerous reptiles are generally dealt with; he would crush its head with his heel and so render it powerless to harm.

These first pages of the Bible carry our thoughts to its closing pages, where we are able to read some of the latest Scriptural testimonies to the traditional teachings of the infant Church. Newman reminds us of this in one of the passages of *The Development of Christian Doctrine*.

The parallel, he says, between 'the Mother of all the living' and the Mother of the Redeemer may be gathered from a comparison of the first chapters of Scripture with the last. It was noticed in a former place that the only passage where the serpent is directly identified with the evil spirit occurs in the twelfth chapter of Revelations; now it is observable that the recognition, when made, is found in the course of a vision of a 'woman clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet': thus two women are brought into contrast with each other. Moreover, as it is said in the Apocalypse, 'the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went about to make war with the remnant of her seed', so is it prophesied in Genesis, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. He shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise

his heel.' Also the enmity was to exist, not only between the serpent and the Seed of the woman, but between the serpent and the woman herself; and here too there is a correspondence in the Apocalyptic vision. If then there is reason for thinking that this mystery at the close of the Scripture record answers to the mystery in the beginning of it, and that 'the Woman' mentioned in both passages is one and the same, then she can be none other than St Mary, thus introduced prophetically to our notice immediately on the transgression of Eve.¹¹

In other words, as the Cardinal has already reminded us, and as the earliest and most constant tradition of antiquity insists, the special prerogatives of our Blessed Lady are intimately involved in the doctrine of the Incarnation itself. The Fathers of Ephesus summed them all up in the one pregnant word *Theotokos*, Mother of God. When you have said that you have said all.

¹¹ *Op. cit.* pp. 415-6.



THE QUEST FOR GOD IN THE JUDEAN DESERT

I. The Men of Qumran

ROLAND POTTER, O.P.

IT is an age-old commonplace of spiritual writers that God is mysteriously nearer to those who would flee 'the world' and seek him alone in solitude. Such writers can justifiably point to the origins of monastic life in the deserts of Egypt, as also to the constant renewal of a monastic ideal by a return to the desert as can be seen in Cîteaux's efforts. In our own day a Père de Foucauld lived and died like an eremite of old; and that precious life and death would seem to have begotten a thriving new spiritual movement in the Church. That solitudes and deserts can foster and nurture spiritual realities is certainly a traditional and valid theme. We can always retain the doggerel-like text 'O