

## CHAPTER I

### REVELATION ITSELF

#### Its Nature and Object

2. In His goodness and wisdom God chose to reveal Himself and to make known the sacrament of His will (cf. *Eph.* 1, 9) so that through Christ, the Word made flesh, man might have access in the Holy Spirit to the Father and come to share in the divine nature (cf. *Eph.* 2, 18; *2 Pt.* 1, 4). Through this revelation, therefore, and out of the abundance of His love, the invisible God (cf. *Col.* 1, 15; *1 Tm.* 1, 17) speaks to men as friends (cf. *Ex.* 33, 11; *Jn.* 15, 15-15) and lives among them (cf. *Bar.* 3, 38), so that He may invite and take them into fellowship with Himself. This plan of revelation is realized by deeds and words having an inner unity. The deeds wrought by God in the history of salvation manifest and confirm the teaching and realities signified by the words, while the words proclaim the deeds and clarify the mystery contained in them. By this revelation the deepest truth about God and the salvation of man shines out for our sake in Christ, who is both the mediator and the fullness of all revelation.<sup>2</sup>

3. God, who through the Word creates all things (cf. *Jn.* 1, 3) and keeps them in existence, gives men an enduring witness to Himself in created realities (cf. *Rom.* 1, 19-20). Planning to make known the way of heavenly salvation, He went further and manifested Himself from the beginning to our first parents. After their fall His promise of redemption aroused in them the hope of being saved (cf. *Gen.* 3, 15) and from that time on He ceaselessly kept the human race in His care, in order to give eternal life to those who perseveringly do good in search of salvation (cf. *Rom.* 2, 6-7). Then, at the appointed time He called Abraham in order to make of him a great nation (cf. *Gen.*

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<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Mt.* 11, 27; *Jn.* 1, 14 and 17; 1-3; *2 Cor.* 3, 16 and 4, 6; *Eph.* i, 3-14.

12, 2). After the patriarchs through Moses and the prophets He taught this people to acknowledge Him as the one living and true God, provident father and just judge, and to wait for the Savior promised by Him. In this manner, He prepared the way for the Gospel down through the centuries.

### **Perfected by Christ**

4. After speaking in many and varied ways through the prophets, "now at last in these days God has spoken to us in His Son" (*Heb.* 1, 1-2). For He sent His Son, the eternal Word who enlightens all men, to dwell among men and tell them of the innermost being of God (cf. *Jn.* 1, 1-18). Jesus Christ, therefore, the Word made flesh, was sent as "a man to men."<sup>3</sup> He "speaks the words of God" (*Jn.* 3, 34) and completes the work of salvation which His Father gave Him to do (cf. *Jn.* 5, 36; 17, 4). To see Jesus is to see His Father (cf. *Jn.* 14, 9). For this reason Jesus perfected revelation by fulfilling it through His whole work of making Himself present and manifesting Himself through His words and deeds, His signs and wonders, but especially through His death and glorious resurrection from the dead, and finally through sending the Spirit of truth. Moreover He confirmed with divine testimony what revelation proclaimed, that God is with us to free us from the darkness of sin and death, and to raise us up to life eternal.

Therefore, the Christian dispensation as the new and definitive covenant will never pass away, and no further new public revelation is to be expected before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf. *1 Tm.* 6, 14 and *Ti.* 2, 13).

### **Man's commitment through faith**

5. "The obedience of faith" (*Rom.* 16, 26; cf. 1, 5; *2 Cor.* 10, 5-6) is to be given to God who reveals, an obedience by which man commits his whole self freely to God, "offering the full submission of intellect

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<sup>3</sup> *Epistle to Diognetus*, c. VII, 4; Funk, *Apostolic Fathers*, I, p. 403.

and will to God who reveals,"<sup>4</sup> and freely assenting to the truth revealed by Him. The grace of God and the interior help of the Holy Spirit must precede and assist this act of faith, moving the heart and turning it to God, opening the eyes of the mind and giving "joy and ease to everyone in assenting to the truth and believing it."<sup>5</sup> In order to bring about an ever deeper understanding of revelation the same Holy Spirit constantly brings faith to completion by His gifts.

6. Through divine revelation, God chose to reveal and communicate Himself and the eternal decisions of His will regarding the salvation of men. That is to say, "He chose to share with them those divine treasures which totally transcend the understanding of the human mind."<sup>6</sup>

A sacred synod has affirmed that "God, the beginning and end of all things, can be known with certainty from created reality by the natural light of human reason" (cf. *Rom.* 1, 20); but it teaches that it is through His revelation "that those religious truths which are by their nature accessible to human reason can be known by all men with ease, with solid certitude and with no trace of error, even in the present state of the human race."<sup>7</sup>

## CHAPTER II

### THE TRANSMISSION OF DIVINE REVELATION

7. In His gracious goodness, God has seen to it that what He had revealed for the salvation of all nations would abide perpetually in its full integrity and be handed on to all generations. Therefore Christ the Lord, in whom the full revelation of the supreme God is

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<sup>4</sup> First Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, Chap. 3, "On Faith": Denzinger 1789 (3008).

<sup>5</sup> Second Council of Orange, Canon 7: Denzinger 180 (377); First Vatican Council, loc. cit.: Denzinger 1791 (3010).

<sup>6</sup> First Vatican Council, *Dogmatic Constitution on the Catholic Faith*, Chap. 2, "On Revelation": Denzinger 1786 (3005).

<sup>7</sup> Ibid: Denzinger 1785 and 1786 (3004 and 3005).