

Knox argues that "it is because of the decisive significance of this moment [*sc.* "the Church's initial moment," the moment of the church's beginning, or coming to be, otherwise called "the Event," or "the Christ Event"] that *the Scriptures* have their unique authority and worth in the Church. They are called 'the Word of God' because they speak to us *directly* out of the Event [*sc.* "the Church's initial moment"] and help indispensably in preserving its identity, integrity, and power" (*The Church and the Reality of Christ*: 124; italics added).

Significantly, by "the Scriptures" here and in what follows, Knox does not mean simply the New Testament but the Old Testament also. He speaks explicitly of "the documents the emerging Church either absorbed into its life or produced out of it"—the Old Testament being composed of documents that were "appropriated and absorbed in the emerging Church," the New Testament, of "new documents" that were written, preserved, and selected by that church (124, 125). Thus, although the contents of the Old Testament "had been virtually established within the Jewish community" before the Event occurred, "in being appropriated and absorbed in the emerging Church," this collection of writings "was placed in a new perspective, reinterpreted, and to a degree transformed. The ancient Scriptures became in one moment a new book—an anticipatory account of the meaning (sometimes even of the facts) of the Event itself" (124 f.).

The only, or, at any rate, the most serious problem with all this is the untenability of Knox's claims that "[t]hese canonical documents bring us an authentic record of the Event as its impact was *first* felt, and they serve to place us anew, and again and again, within the sphere of its original vitality and power," or that "[t]hey give us a kind of *immediate* access to the Event" (125; italics added). As for his further claim that, "so far as we can see, the Church could not, without them, have maintained that conscious contact with the Event which is essential to its identity and to its authentic being as the Church" (125), one would have thought that as close a student of Paul's writings as Knox was could hardly have failed to realize, upon reflection, that they alone are more than sufficient to falsify any such claim (cf., e.g., 1 Cor 15:3-7).

25 January 1997