

## THE SCIENTIFIC TEACHING OF THEOLOGY IN THE SEMINARY

THE choice of this particular subject was inspired by the desire to open for discussion a problem that besets everyone who teaches theology for any length of time. (I purposely except here the first couple of years of teaching because ordinarily in these first years "sufficient for the day is the evil thereof.") One is quite happy to keep sufficiently ahead of his class to avoid major blunders. What this paper looks to is the problem that arises when the teacher of theology has the leisure to reflect upon the material he is teaching. To put it in classical form: the point where he can contemplate his subject. For it is at this point that the instructor begins to be a creative teacher or simply the voice of some manual or other.

First of all it must be realized that the elements of this problem are highly complex. Essentially it stems from the need to put into some balanced form for seminary teaching the results of an immense amount of research and discussion. For example, the last few decades have produced an unceasing stream of historical and critical research into the monuments of Christian tradition, Patristic literature, the historical and cultural backgrounds of dogmatic definitions and of heresies have been widely investigated. To this must be added the great development of the scientific and critical study of history. Finally in recent years there has been an extensive and politely heated discussion of the nature of theological science itself. And in the concrete work of day by day teaching this research has produced a number of problems that call for effective solution.

To indicate these problems, even in a general way, is to evidence their complexity. Thus the teacher must decide how to put into balanced pedagogical unity such things as the infallible teaching of the Church both solemn and ordinary, as well as the non-infallible but still authoritative declaration of the magisterium. At the same time he must adjust into the educative process the scholarly contributions on Scripture and the writings of the Fathers together with a knowledge of the historical occasions that produced and conditioned

those writings. The instructor must also strive to synthesize into this organic whole the theological argumentation that is the work of speculative theology. Finally, if his teaching is to have a unified and effective character there must be present some organization of the variety of opinions that have their source in the various theological systems. The question therefore resolves itself into this: How make of all this material a balanced and scientific whole that will suit the needs of the seminary student? What principles must be used in order to set up an organic relationship whereby part is vitally related to part and each part has its integral place in the whole?

By way of preliminary it should be noted that this complexity of equipment should not frighten us. We must avoid the naïve notion that technical theological equipment is so much impedimenta hindering our communion with God. In the long run a faith without theology becomes a faith without dogmas, and a faith without dogmas degenerates into an emotional justification of a particular way of moral conduct. Once, however, it is realized Whose truth is being set forth, the need for such equipment becomes manifest. By the very fact that it is God revealing His own life for our salvation we know that this truth will have infinite depth and manifold consequences. Even from our own experience we know that no single judgment will exhaust the content of a living reality. We are quite aware that to express fully and to define a concept accurately a whole series of judgments, qualifications, and relationships are called for. How much more so, then, when it is question of that "Beauty ever ancient ever new" whose every manifestation commands our reverence and whose revelation necessarily orders our lives. It is because this truth is sacred and necessary in the deepest sense that the utmost in accuracy and exactitude is required. And it is this exactitude and precision that demands complex equipment and sound technique. Certainly, the man in the street does not gag at the vast array of intricate mechanical equipment that empirical science marshals together when it investigates the nature of the physical world. Complex things like atom smashers are cartoon commonplaces. Yet all too many see no necessity of complex equipment when intelligence illumined by faith seeks to penetrate the life of the very Creator of the universe. Such equipment is not baggage dusty with

the centuries but the product of man's vital response to the *donum Dei*. Hence it seems to me that the scientific teaching of theology by its nature calls for a knowledge and skilled use of this equipment if the teacher of theology is to be faithful to his trusts.

To evaluate properly both the nature and necessity of the theological tools, we must first treat of the point of departure of theology itself. Catholic theology like Catholicism itself takes its rise from its absolute and necessary relation with revelation. Its eyes are fixed on the fact that "God Who at sundry times and in divers places spoke in times past by the prophets, last of all in these days has spoken by His Son." It is this fact which furnishes the foundation of Catholic theology and determines its function. Its equipment and its employment of other disciplines are the means that it uses to set forth faithfully, clearly and unequivocally the content of revelation.<sup>1</sup> To overlook or to minimize this necessary and organic relationship is to be forced to see in the theological discipline a largely artificial technique or at best an apologetics casting about for handy polemical weapons. It is for this reason that any technical discussion of theology as a science must describe it as a *scientia subalternata* because its first principles are received through revelation from a higher science—the *scientia Dei*. In the words of St. Thomas "sacred doctrine is a science because it proceeds from principles known by the light of a higher science namely the science of God and of the blessed . . . it believes the principles revealed to it by God" (I, q. 1, a. 2). The true point of departure for theology thus is the connatural knowledge of God which He manifests through revelation. St. Thomas describes it as a *quaedam impressio scientiae divinae*. In short, what fashions the tools of theology into means, not ends, is the intrinsic relation of theology to the science of God.

Granted this necessary and intrinsic relation of theology to revealed principles, then the proper approach of theology to its material is necessarily determined. That is, the first principles of theology determine the light by which it organizes its material. For the science of God is connatural to Him alone; only He possesses it by right and nature and any knowledge of it must therefore be

<sup>1</sup> Cf. Fenton, *The Concept of Sacred Theology*, p. 4.

communicated. Moreover since God is absolutely supernatural that communication will be itself supernatural or by grace. If then the first principles of theology are drawn from the science of God, then it follows that they are communicated by grace which here on earth means supernatural faith. For supernatural faith is a gratuitous and unowed power to perceive truths which are the connatural object of God's knowledge. Hence without faith it is impossible to be a theologian because lacking it one cannot grasp with certitude the first principles upon which his whole activity rests. His work is not scientific but opinionative.

. . . Ratio formalis theologiae sumitur ex lumine divino, habente talem certitudinem quod errare non potest; hoc autem solum convenit fidei divinae infusae; fides enim acquisita innititur principio et motivo fallibili; ergo, non potest theologia in illo fundari. (John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theol.*, T. I p. 446)

It is for this reason that it seems to me that no heretic can be a theologian in the proper sense. For lacking infused faith, what he holds, he holds *propria voluntate et iudicio*. Only by infused faith do we come into true and organic communion with the first principles. This position is borne out quite clearly by Gregory XVI and Pius IX in their condemnation of Hermes and Froschammer, where they insist that the foundation of theological inquiry into the divine mysteries is not rational evidence but supernatural faith in the revealed mysteries (1619, 1642, 1656, 1669).

However, while insisting on this necessary place of faith in the work of theology it must not be construed that faith alone is the *lumen sub quo* of theology. It is pivotal in theological work but theology is not simply an operation of the habit of faith. There is a real difference between faith and theology. For while there can be no theology without faith there can in individuals be faith without theology. The light of theology is constituted by two things—faith and the discursive process of reason. Only when both are present do you have theology. Divine faith is bestowed not on an abstraction but on a living human being and is an assent of the intellect. Faith does not change but perfects human intelligence and the proper activity of the human intellect in response to the divine gift is the begin-

ning of theological activity. It is for this reason that theology is (commonly) defined as an intrinsically and formally natural habit but radically supernatural.

This organic and vital relation between faith and reason, if clearly understood, is the bedrock of theological teaching in the seminary. Without a clear concept of this relationship the whole process of theological teaching loses its proper perspective. For the distinct mark of this process is that the supernatural revelation received by faith is expressed and penetrated in an intellectual manner i.e., in a discursive and scientific form. Consequently while the light of theology is not and cannot be the light of reason alone, yet neither is it simply the light of faith. Rather it is constituted by the living and organic communion of faith and reason. In theology faith develops itself in a properly human manner by informing and directing its activities "in accord with the laws, methods, and resources of reason."<sup>2</sup> Reason submits to faith but does not abdicate its God given nature. The details of this joint activity I hope to make clear by showing their operations in theology itself.

Granted these premises our next step brings us directly to the question formulated in the beginning of this paper i.e., the organic systematization of theological material in terms of teaching it scientifically. In its broadest terms the theological material which is transmitted to the seminary class falls into two general classifications: positive and speculative. Positive theology concerns itself with the articles of faith as proposed by the Church. Speculative theology inquires into the nature of the fact so proposed. The former answers the question *An sit?* The latter responds to *Quid sit?* The organization and use of the theological material is then determined by these functions. Thus theology has as its first principles the articles of faith which are made known by authority. To ascertain scientifically the expressions of authority and the sources of that expression is the object of positive theology. Its domain is the *revelatus*. To come to an understanding of the articles of faith and draw out their consequences, relationships, and bearings on one another is the task of speculative theology. Its domain is the

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Congar, "Theologie" in *Dictionnaire theologie catholique*, XVI, 450.

*revelabilia*. For, as St. Thomas points out, to determine the question by bare authority will give certainty to the hearer that it is a fact but he acquires neither science nor understanding and goes empty away. Each function has a real and necessary contribution to make to scientific teaching. Only when each is given its proper place may the educative process in theology be termed scientific. Lacking one or the other the educational structure is incomplete. Only when we have a sound appreciation of the activity and object of each will we be in a position to organize properly our teaching.

## PART I

### POSITIVE THEOLOGY

To begin with, positive theology is an integral element of scientific teaching because by means of it theology takes possession of its first principles in a scientific and rational manner. Secondly, it is a true theological effort because its first principles and its light are properly theological i.e., the articles of faith and the union of faith and reason. Moreover if the whole work of theology is to be scientific then its light must be applied to its first principles also. And this application will be positive because it brings to bear upon these articles the positive or historical and evidential techniques of reason. These techniques have a real place in the study of revelation because Catholicism itself is a historical revelation; that is, it takes place in a concrete historical situation, is made by a historical Person, and is witnessed to and proposed by a historical community and tradition. Consequently positive theology must make use of historical and evidential techniques if it is to possess its principles scientifically and in a rational manner. It does not follow from this that positive theology is itself a historical technique simply because it uses the positive resources of reason. For that use is ordered illustrated, and unified by the supernatural light of faith. The historical and evidential techniques are the tools of positive theology and are not to be equated with it. Positive theology in virtue of its properly theological light judges them and they do not sit in judgment on it. I have emphasized this because I feel that all too many of

our manuals leave the impression that they are presenting an apologetic when they set forth the positive part of the matter. This is to lose sight of its relation to faith and hence of its proper and unshakeable certitude as well as its integral place in scientific teaching.

**THE OBJECT OF POSITIVE THEOLOGY.** The object of positive theology (*Objectum formale quod*) is the *cognitio revelatorum* or the *auditus fidei*. This *revelatus* which we receive by divine faith has a twofold aspect. It must be contained in the deposit of revelation and be proposed by the Church.

Porro fide divina et catholica ea omnia credenda sunt quae in verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continentur et ab Ecclesia sive solemnii iudicio sive ordinario et universali magisterio tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponuntur. (DB 1792)

The Vatican Council also states:

Ut autem officio veram fidem amplectendi in eaque perseverandi satisfacere possemus, Deus per Filium suum unigenitum Ecclesiam instituit, suaeque institutionis manifestis notis instruxit ut ea tamquam custos et magistra verbi revelati ab omnibus possit agnosci. (DB 1793)

According to Catholic teaching, then, the magisterium of the Church is the immediate and proximate rule of faith. The truths of revelation are received by divine faith through the medium of the magisterium. How then are we to express the object of positive theology in such wise that both of these elements will be clearly represented? The answer to this question I hold to be a return to an ancient and, what seems to me, more authentic usage of the term *Traditio*.

This use of the term *Traditio* represents such a considerable change from its common understanding that it calls for careful analysis and justification. As we know, the word is patient of a wide variety of meanings. Sometimes it represents the variety of monuments of Christian antiquity; sometimes the non-written content of revelation. At other times it refers to the patristic writings. At still other times it describes the act by which all this is trans-

mitted from age to age. The first to organize these various meanings into a coded usage is Cardinal Franzelin in his volume *De Divina Traditione*.<sup>3</sup> He classifies all these usages under two major headings; *Traditio objectiva* and *Traditio activa*. *Traditio objectiva* is the doctrine which comes down from ancient times to us. *Traditio activa* stands for the acts or series of acts by which the doctrine is transmitted to us.<sup>4</sup> Modern theologians have further refined this notion of *traditio activa* into two elements, viz., *traditio constitutiva* and *traditio conservativa*.<sup>5</sup> Constitutive tradition is the act by which the deposit of faith is definitively constituted by Christ and the apostles. The conservative tradition is the act by which the deposit so constituted is passed on from its first recipients down to us. It is the analysis and research into this concept of active tradition found in a number of modern monographs that I use here to express the object of positive theology. Two particular works are of great importance: A. Deniffe, *Der Traditionsbegriff; Studie zur Theologie, Munsterrische Beitrage* (Munstr 1931) pp. 18-62 and for a large scale treatment see J. Ranft, *Der Ursprung des Katholischen Traditionsprinzeps* (Wurzberg 1931); for a general survey of the history of this development I refer you to Michel's article on "Tradition" in the Dictionnaire (DThC t. 16, 1252 seq.) as well as Father Congar's article on theology in the same tome. Other special articles I have put into a footnote.<sup>6</sup> Here I only attempt to sum up their position and findings on the matter and show how it does express the object of positive theology.

In general this active tradition is the teaching transmitted by the prophets and Christ and the apostles and then passed on by the Church through the ages. This tradition is thus constituted by two elements: one is *constitutiva* and the other *continuativa et explicativa*. The constitutive tradition consists of the teaching of the prophets, Christ, and the apostles to which nothing has been added

<sup>3</sup> Franzelin, *Theologia Dogmatica*, I.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 11-28.

<sup>5</sup> E.g., Van Noort, *De Fontibus Revelationis*, pp. 2-3.

<sup>6</sup> A. D'Ales, "La Tradition chretienne dans l'histoire" in *Dictionnaire Apologetique*, 1740-83; De Grandmaison, *Le dogme chretien, sa nature, ses formules, son developpement*; Dublanchy, "Dogme" in *DThC* iv, 1574 seq.

since the death of the last apostle. This is the definitive deposit of revelation received by the Church from Christ and the apostles. The continuative and explicative tradition is the faithful transmission of this deposit by the living and divinely guided Church which preserves, proposes, interprets, and develops it. It is this tradition that manifests itself in the monuments which the Church has left through the centuries in evidence of her faithful care and proposal of the deposit. Thus we have the papal, patristic, conciliar, liturgical, and theological monuments as evidence of the *auditus fidei* throughout the centuries.

By this approach to the concept of tradition we not only organize it more deftly but precisely place the whole structure of tradition into an organic relation with the living Church which alone is empowered to teach men the truths of revelation. That this concept of tradition is a valid Catholic usage is certainly borne out by the patristic studies on the point, two of which are outstanding: "Paradosis. Le progres de l'idee de tradition jusqu'a Saint Irenee" in *Rech. de theol. anc. et med.* V p. 155-191 (1933) by D. B. Reynders and *El Concepto de La Tradicion en S. Vincente de Lerins* (*Anal. Greg.* V 1933,) Jose Madoz S.J. Moreover it seems to me that it is a valid, if not necessary, deduction from the statement of the Vatican Council:

Neque enim Petri Successoribus Spiritus Sanctus promissus est ut eo revelante novam doctrinam patefacerent sed ut eo assistente *traditam* per apostolos revelationem seu fidei depositum sancte custodirent et fideliter exponeret. Quorum quidem apostolicam doctrinam omnes venerabiles et sancti Doctores orthodoxi venerati atque secuti sunt; plenissime scientes hanc sancti Petri sedem ab omni errore illibatam permanere. (DB 1836).

Again:

Fidei doctrina (est) tamquam divinum depositum Christi sponsae tradita fideliter custodienda et infallibiliter declaranda. (DB 1794).

Finally from the Council of the Trent.

. . . revelatio supernaturalis . . . continentur in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus quae ipsius Christi ore ab apostolis acceptae aut ab apostolis Spiritu Sancto dictante quasi per manus traditae ad nos usque pervenerunt (DB 1787).

In view of these statements and by reason of the research of these writers into the usage of the term Tradition as I have explained it I would hold that it is properly the object of positive theology. If such be the case then the primary object of positive theology is the magisterium that proximately and formally proposes the articles of faith.

#### POSITIVE THEOLOGY AND THE MAGISTERIUM

Truths contained in the deposit of revelation must be proposed by the Church in order to be the object of faith. Accordingly positive theology will have as its immediate concern the statements of the magisterium in scientific fashion, whether or not it has spoken, and if so, what degree of certitude is to be attached to that authentic proposition. Its first and most important step will be to answer the question: *By what right does the theologian say that some truth or other must be held as of divine faith, or pertaining to the faith, or not to be denied without error?*<sup>7</sup> And its answer will consist in showing by historical and evidential methods, illumined and certified by the light of faith, that this truth is authentically proposed either by solemn or ordinary magisterium. Its second step will be the investigation of the Scriptures and the Fathers to see whether and how this doctrine is contained in the fountains of revelation. This second step is taken not to prove or establish the authenticity of this article of faith but to complete and perfect the scientific investigation by comprehending these remote rules of belief. For Scripture and Tradition must be witnessed to and interpreted by the infallible authority of the Church. Only the Church is capable of determining infallibly what belongs to the *Traditio*. For it is here a question of the certitude of faith and only the Church by right and institution is capable of imposing such an obligation.

To see therefore the full work of positive theology on its object we should see in some detail the organs of the magisterium upon which it brings to bear its light and scientific tools. These organs are divided into two general classifications—solemn and ordinary. Positive theology must investigate both if it is to be true to its task.

<sup>7</sup> On this whole point cf. B. Durst, "De Characteribus Sacramentalibus" in *Xenia Thomistica*, II, 543-548 (1925).

The organs of the solemn magisterium are these: (1) the *ex cathedra* statements of the Pope. (2) The definitions and canons of the ecumenical councils. (3) Particular councils whose doctrine is accepted and approved by the Pope in such wise as to be proclaimed the faith of the Church. (4) Creeds and symbols edited and approved by the Church. All these are the monuments of the *Traditio* and call for inquiry and exact statement by positive theology. To illustrate: *ex cathedra* statements are defined clearly by the Vatican council (DB 1839). Yet in concrete cases investigation is required to establish the solemn character of many such statements. So for example the famous Tome on the Incarnation by Leo the Great is quite generally looked upon as an *ex cathedra* statement, yet it is denied by Bellarmine and Batiffol. It becomes then a matter of applying with evidential exactitude the norms set down by the Vatican council and investigating their subsequent use by both the solemn and ordinary magisterium. And I think that such a procedure is an obligation for the conscientious teacher if he is to achieve a true scientific teaching.

However, his real work lies with the ordinary magisterium since this is neither so clearly set down as the organs of the solemn magisterium nor so easily ascertainable. In general these organs are: the teaching of the official members of the magisterium i.e., the Pope and the bishops throughout the world in union with him. Secondly, the witness of the Fathers and theologians. We will see each in some detail because each plays such an important part in theological education.

#### THE TEACHING OF THE OFFICIAL MEMBERS OF THE MAGISTERIUM

*The Pope.* The Pope exercises his ordinary magisterium explicitly through his encyclicals, bulls, briefs, letters, and allocutions; mediately through the pontifical congregations. Implicitly it is exercised when the Pope as legislator for the universal Church deals with matters of liturgy and discipline. In general, too, it should be noted that while these are not solemn judgments, still, he is speaking as the supreme teacher of the faithful. Also, while some of these acts may very well be per se infallible, normally they are not directly so. To all of them we must give a truly obediential and religious assent.

This assent is termed by Billot ecclesiastical faith while Franzelin prefers the term *fides mediate divina*. I myself feel that the usage *fides ecclesiastica* amply fits this element of *Traditio* and think that the case Billot presents in its favor quite cogent. Since, however, this is a matter of some concern in the organization of theological material as well as the work of positive theology, some space should be devoted to it.

Billot describes it thus: "Just as we say that by human faith we adhere to men and by divine faith we adhere to God, so by ecclesiastical faith we adhere to the Church. Ecclesiastical faith is where the Church intervenes in speaking. I say in speaking because this intervention is not by way of proposing that it was said by God but by way of stating its proper opinion and judgment in such wise that it is the authority of the Church itself that the assent of the intellect ultimately rests on. (*De Ecclesia*, p. 438). Franzelin brings out that this assent rests mediately on divine faith because it rests on the authority of the Church which in turn I accept by divine faith. (*op. cit.*, p. 113) This authority does not look to infallible definition but to what Franzelin calls the *auctoritas providentiae doctrinalis* i.e., the security of Catholic teaching. This authority the Church derives from its universal office for the salvation of souls. By virtue of it, the ordinary magisterium prescribes that theological teachings are to be followed or not, as the case may be. Its intention is not to decide a question definitively and infallibly but to preserve and guard the faith of its children. "In declarations of this kind, though it is not an infallible truth of doctrine, there is none the less an infallible security inasmuch as it is either safe for all to embrace it or it is unsafe. Nor can they refuse to embrace it without violating the due submission required by the divinely established magisterium" (*ibid.*, p. 115).

The exact and accurate inquiry into this material is necessarily a part of the work of positive theology. While modernly it has been abundantly evident in the field of moral theology because of such documents as *Quadragesimo Anno* and *Casti Connubii*, it has even larger reference to dogmatic theology. Positive theology, in examining these expressions of the ordinary magisterium must not only take them into account, but by scientific discernment set them up as

guides and norms for the work of speculative theology. At the same time it must be able to avoid the danger of lumping them together under the note *de fide* simply because they issue from the Holy See. By way of illustration one might take the wide ranging applications of the *Mystici Corporis* and the *Mediator Dei*. They offer positive doctrinal guidance and security on many mooted points and it is the work of positive theology to treat them in themselves and in relation to the continuative tradition. But this much remains fundamental:

. . . Sacra auctoritas providentiae doctrinalis vi muneris sui sufficientissimum est motivum ex quo possit et si forma decreti id exigat, debeat pia voluntas imperare consensum. (*ibid.*, p. 115)

*The Bishops.* It is the bishops who form the ordinary magisterium of the Church dispersed throughout the world. According to canon law the organs through which they exercise their magisterial office are: (a) The preaching of the divine word. (b) Seminaries. (c) Schools. (d) The previous censorship of books. Wernz-Vidal in commenting on this section of the Code points out that these are the principal means whereby the Church accomplishes the threefold end of the magisterium namely, the propagation, preservation, and defense of the faith. (*Jus Canonicum IV De rebus* vol. ii, 4)

(a) The preaching of the divine word. This offers three means by which we can determine the magisterial activity of the individual bishops: sermons, missions and catechetical instruction. Here also will be pastoral letters from time to time. For example, such a widely received letter as the late Cardinal Suhard's "Growth or Decline" or some of the joint statements of the American hierarchy issued yearly. These are not and cannot be infallible per se but they carry much weight and certainly fall within the episcopal *auctoritas providentiae doctrinalis*. In addition, what the bishop allows to be preached in his diocese *scienter et volenter* is to be attributed to him. Normally though, the most easily available source lies in the matter of catechetical instruction since this is ordinarily channelled through approved catechisms. In fact since the Council of Trent the catechism has been the prescribed basis for the catechetical instruction of the faithful. This is also the mind of the Vatican Council and of our own II Plenary Council of Balti-

more. (*Acta et decreta sacrorum conciliorum* VII, 663 ff; *Acta et decreta Conc. Balt.* II n. 387; III n. 217, 281). It might be noted too that the Fathers of the Vatican Council discussed and elaborated upon the schema which made the Roman Catechism the basis of such catechetical books. To illustrate this whole point we might point to the present Roman or Catholic Catechism edited by Cardinal Gasparri. In view of its papal approbation for universal use it has special weight and value. It has been translated into a number of languages and its vernacular editions now receive episcopal approval for use in a large number of individual dioceses. Likewise we can take the Catechism of the Council of Trent which has been employed by so many bishops as the basis for the instruction of their charges by means of the Sunday sermon. In passing it might be remarked on this point that the constant and widespread approval and usage of our own Baltimore Catechism lends it great weight as an organ of the ordinary magisterium. (Nor, in contradiction to a recent statement, does the fact that it was not composed by saints lessen its magisterial authority).

(b) Seminaries. These are given equal status as organs by the ordinary magisterium, and Canon Law leaves no doubt concerning the bishop's direct responsibility not only for their support and administration but also for what is taught therein. The reasoning behind this is clear. It is in the seminaries that the coadjutors and instruments of the bishop's magisterial office are given the doctrine that they are to deliver to the faithful by the authority and in the name of the bishop. From this it is inferred that the bishop must approve explicitly or implicitly the doctrine taught in his seminary. This approval will of course apply to the instructors themselves and be concretely evidenced by the manuals approved for use.

With regard to the teaching of religion in the schools, much the same procedure would hold with regard to the approbation of the teacher training, the teachers themselves, and the textbooks used. Accordingly I am of the opinion that these are not directly matters of choice on the part of the individual schools. In the matter of the previous censorship of books the material for positive theology is only present in a restricted and negative form and appears not too much by way of help.

The important thing to be realized in this whole matter, however, is that while the individual bishop is not infallible nonetheless he is the authentic and authoritative teacher in his diocese. Moreover, when the study of these organs shows a moral unanimity in considering a particular doctrine as revealed then the matter has moved to the line of divine faith, i.e., there is present a proposal by the ordinary and universal magisterium. In the words of Pius IX:

Namque etiamsi ageretur de illa subjectione quae fidei divinae actu est praestanda, limitanda tamen non esset ad ea quae expressis oecumenicorum Conciliorum aut Romanorum Pontificum hujusque Sedis decretis definita sunt, sed ad ea sunt quoque extendenda quae ordinario totius ecclesiae per orbem dispersae magisterio tamquam divinitus revelata traduntur ideoque universali et constanti consensu a catholicis theologis ad fidem pertinere retinentur. (DB 1683)

All this shows how important a consideration for positive theology is the universal and ordinary magisterium and how much it is the work of scientific theology to determine it. For the work of positive theology concerns itself with the *revelatus* or a scientific inquiry into the *auditus fidei*. Hence it must necessarily give full place to the investigation of this aspect of the ecclesiastical magisterium which also proposes infallibly, divinely revealed truth contained in the deposit of faith. As a matter of fact it is a note that is very often slighted in the presentation of theology in the seminary and the theological manuals despite its equal status with solemn judgments.

#### THE WITNESS OF THE FATHERS AND THEOLOGIAN

This point directly affects the magisterium and should be of great concern in the teaching of theology. This witness or testimony has a number of important bearings. First, it can bear testimony to the fact that the magisterium teaches certain doctrines as articles of faith. Secondly, because of its close and special relationship with the magisterium it is of considerable importance in the interpretation of Scripture and the employment of the patristic writings themselves. Thirdly, it is a sound norm to illumine and

guide the inquiries of speculative theology. Each of these usages therefore has a real place in the teaching of theology.

*The Fathers.* First of all it must be noted that the Fathers *qua* Fathers do not constitute the ruling and teaching Church. Although the greater number were bishops, some were not. (Jerome, John Damascene, Ephraim, Justin Martyr, Prosper of Aquitaine.) As Fathers they bear a special relationship to the adolescent Church and even though bishops that relationship is in terms of the universal magisterium, rather than their particular diocese. And it is this relation to the whole of the infant Church that makes their witness to have such great weight. The peculiar force of their position in the Church is testified to by the Fifth Ecumenical Council of Constantinople,<sup>8</sup> Pope Agatho and the Roman Council of 680,<sup>9</sup> the Council of Trent,<sup>10</sup> Pius IX,<sup>11</sup> Leo XIII,<sup>12</sup> and Pius X.<sup>13</sup> For the theological analysis of their place Franzelin,<sup>14</sup> Billot,<sup>15</sup> Scheeben,<sup>16</sup> and De San<sup>17</sup> should be consulted. For a brief but well organized summation of this theological work Van Laak is invaluable.<sup>18</sup>

Technically this position may be summed up in the words of Van Laak. "*Patres, si in consensu rem ad fidem et mores pertinentem rata et firma sententia docent, a vero abberare non possunt.* By reason, therefore, of the approbation of the Church there is set up a relation to the Ecclesia Docens by which the morally unanimous teaching of the Fathers can be a certain and unerring witness to the teaching of the Church. It must of course be on a matter of faith and morals and that consent must be one of moral unanimity. We will see a little later on something of the ways to determine this unanimity of consent but it will be used here to set down the means

<sup>8</sup> Cf. Mansi, IX, 201B.

<sup>9</sup> DB 288.

<sup>10</sup> DB 786.

<sup>11</sup> DB 1657.

<sup>12</sup> Cavallera, *Thesaurus Doctrinae*, p. 75.

<sup>13</sup> DB 2145-7.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 164-205.

<sup>15</sup> *De Immutabilitate Traditionis.*

<sup>16</sup> *Dogmatik*, I, n. 372-84.

<sup>17</sup> *De Divina Traditione*, pp. 139-203.

<sup>18</sup> *Theses Quaedam de Functione Patrum et Theologorum in Magisterio.*

by which it is determined that they are dealing with the content of revelation. Van Laak gives seven: (1) If they assert that this doctrine is the tradition of the Apostles, or the Church, or the orthodox Fathers. (2) If they refer to a fact held at the time by faith or the persuasion of the Church, i.e., by saying *credimus, confitemur*, etc. (3) If they insist that every Catholic is obliged to believe or feel in this way. (4) If they say that the matter is revealed and at the same time it is evident from the circumstances they are treating of the public revelation committed to the Church. (5) If they term the opposite doctrine as heretical or impious or to be avoided by Catholics or if they state that those who hold such a teaching are heretics or impious, or must be avoided. (6) If they assert that without this teaching the faith of Catholics cannot stand, the opposite opinion is opposed to the Catholic faith. (7) Very often, too, if they inculcate some doctrine in catechesis, or preaching or writing that has the purpose of instruction. Here it is a case of wishing to form Catholics and such formation cannot take place save through doctrines which look to faith and morals.<sup>19</sup>

Other details will be seen when we treat the patristic writing as a *fons revelationis*. All that is essential here is the realization that the unanimous consent of the Fathers can and does play a part in determining the revelatus.

*The Theologians.* As with the Fathers whose place they take in the life of the Church, the theologians as such are not a part of the official magisterium. Their function is to witness to it and their authority as witnesses arises from their relation to the Church.

In general a theologian is described as one who has taught the sacred disciplines *viva voce* in class or by his writing, in which case his work must be done *sub vigilantia et ductu Ecclesiae* (Van Laak, Franzelin). This teaching is not authoritative or authentic in the sense that it is imposed by form of jurisdiction (i.e., papal or episcopal). It is rather *magisterialis* in the sense that under the authority of the Church they assert that certain truths are revealed or connected with revelation and advance reasons for their assertion and explain and defend them. The authority of such assertions has

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

its source in the fact that they are either deputed to their office by ecclesiastical authority or their written work receives its approbation from that source.

This relationship may be illustrated by considering their ordinary activity which is the instruction of clerics in the exposition and defense of the doctrine of the Church. By this means they form those who will give to the faithful the teaching of the Church. Hence if the theologians teach with moral unanimity on a matter concerning faith and morals they cannot depart from the truth (cf. Van Laak). Otherwise, as Lainez points out in his Tridentine Disputations, error would pass from the theologians to the clergy, thence to the faithful and so the deposit of faith would be corrupted. It must be kept clearly in mind, though, that such inerrancy refers only to certitude concerning matters of faith and morals. If, for example, they are morally unanimous in holding that a particular teaching is *probabilis* or *probabilissima* then there is no guarantee that this is a certain sign of the truth of the proposition. The importance of this theological witness ought not to be lightly passed by in the teaching of theology. All too often we are liable to allow their disputes and divergencies to obscure their place in the magisterial work of the Church. Yet there is ample papal testimony<sup>20</sup> to the fact that they hold such a place and extensive theological exposition of this function.<sup>21</sup>

Up to this point, then, we have been concerned with an analysis of the media by which the *Ecclesia Docens* sets forth the revelation intrusted to it. As is quite evident, any scientific presentation of such teaching will by its very nature call for the utilization of evidential and historical techniques. For it is impossible to set it forth in a scientific manner without recourse to the monuments which contain the acts of the magisterium. Any study of these monuments worthy of them and properly theological calls for the employment therefore of the evidential and historical sciences. As was already mentioned these are the tools of positive theology and while their use and application is guided and ordered by faith, an effective use calls for the development of these rational techniques to the best of

<sup>20</sup> E.g., DB 1576, 1579, 1620, 1652, 1657, 1680, 1683.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Van Laake, *op. cit.*, p. 49 seq.

our abilities. Recognizing that in the normal processes the teacher of theology cannot become an expert in all these fields, nonetheless he is under obligation to attain a degree of competence whereby he can use the results of this scholarship in his own field intelligently, effectively and scientifically. His vocation demands a continuation of reading and study that will enable him to bring to the service of his teaching what the experts in the various fields have produced. Simply because he is not called to be a specialist in one of these fields by no means excuses him from making intelligent use of them or from presenting the positive function of theology in a scientific manner. Church History, Patrology, and Archeology are taught in the seminary as separate disciplines but this division was not intended to bring about a set of parallel developments in the mind of the seminarians, but to give students a proper and scientific background for their study of theology. It is not, however, the duty or function of the seminarian to integrate the results of these disciplines into his theological formation but rather the obligation and function of the theological teacher. Only the teacher is truly in a position to crystallize the results of such studies into a living structure of positive theology. Because this is his obligation he cannot rest content with hazy memories of his own seminary courses in these fields but must be constantly building on the foundations given in those courses. Tragedy far outweighs the humor of cases where the students are far better informed than the one who is supposed to be using these disciplines as tools in the service of the science of faith. All too often the memory of positive theology in the mind of the student is that of a mess of dry bones, unarticulated and without life or meaning.

Through this means we can come to a very thorough knowledge of the problems and errors that produced this or that particular magisterial act. By means of these same resources it is possible to set that act in its concrete historical circumstances and thus come to a fuller and more exact understanding of its importance and meaning. Thus only by a full understanding of the Arian controversy are we enabled to come to a real understanding of the tremendous consequences of the distinction between *homousion* and *homoiousion*. This approach should not and, if rightly used, will not

transform the theology course into Church history but it will breathe life into our teaching and confer on it a truly scientific character.

#### FONTES REVELATIONIS

The work of positive theology begins with a scientific but theological inquiry into the magisterial activity of the Church since that activity is the proximate norm of the *auditus fidei*. But this work is incomplete unless it also embraces a scientific and theological inquiry into the sources of revelation.

Without this the full riches of the *auditus fidei* are not made available nor are the first principles of theology rightly possessed. For only where the whole task is accomplished is the full work of speculative theology prepared for. Some space therefore must be devoted to these sources, viz.: Sacred Scripture and the writings of the Fathers.

*Scripture.* The place of Sacred Scripture in the scientific teaching of theology has been the occasion of much heated discussion. The extensive work of Catholic scriptural scholarship and the failure on the part of many theological writers to make use of this work has given rise to a number of acrimonious statements by both sides. Here, however, we are not passing judgment on the debate save, perhaps, indirectly. Our primary concern is to determine how Sacred Scripture is to be integrated into the teaching of theology. That it must be there is of course obvious since in the words of Leo XIII "it is the soul of theology." The point here is how does it fit into the scientifically organized framework.

To ascertain this it must be remembered that it is to the Church that the whole of revelation has been committed for indefectible transmission and authentic declaration. Thus while Sacred Scripture is a very special and distinctive part of this deposit, being itself the work of divine inspiration, yet it too is committed to the Church. And like the whole of revelation it is not only a matter of the material word of the Scriptures but the true and Catholic understanding of the realities contained in. Sacred Scripture is not the divinely constituted teacher of revelation but only a source of that teaching.

It is only the authentic magisterium which does not err in judging the true sense of Scripture and explaining it (Franzelin, p. 183). This is the teaching of the Council of Trent whose teaching has been reaffirmed by the Vatican Council in these words:

"In matters of faith and morals which look to the building up of Christian doctrine that must be held as the true sense of Scripture which Holy Mother Church holds and has held. For it is the office of the Church to judge of the true sense and interpretation of Scripture. No one therefore is allowed to interpret it contrary to that sense or even contrary to the unanimous agreement of the Fathers" (DB 1788).

In view of the preceding we must hold that no scriptural interpretation can be true which understands a text in a sense contrary to the proximate rule of faith. As Leo XIII puts it: "To illustrate, prove or expound Catholic doctrine by the legitimate and skillful interpretation of the Bible is much; but there is a second part of the subject which is equally important and equally difficult, the maintenance in the strongest possible way of its full authority. This cannot be done save by means of the living and proper magisterium of the Church."<sup>22</sup> It is the Church, then, which is the interpreter of Scripture and the guide of its critical investigation. It is because of this that Pope Leo tells us that it should be "the first and most cherished object of the Catholic commentator to interpret those passages which have received an authentic interpretation from the sacred writers themselves . . . or from the Church whether by her solemn or ordinary magisterium. It is the office of the commentator to interpret these passages in that identical sense and to prove by all the resources of science that sound hermeneutical laws admit of no other interpretation" (*ibid.*, n. 73). Typical of such passages would be: Matt. 28:19 (DB 798); John 10:30 (DB 51); John 1:1 (DB 248, 442); John 15:26; 16:14 (DB 83); John 3:5 (DB 858); John 20:23 (DB 894, 902, 913); Luke 22:19-20 (DB 874, 949); James 5:14 (DB 926). A long list is possible and by way of handy reference one might consult the Scripture index in the *Enchiridion Symbolorum*. On these the work of the commentator

<sup>22</sup> Cavallera, *op. cit.*, n. 80.

consists "in setting forth these texts more clearly to the flock, more skillfully to scholars and in defending them more powerfully from hostile attack."<sup>23</sup>

There are, obviously, a large number of scriptural passages which have not been authentically interpreted. In the case of these the interpreter is bound "by the analogy of faith and Catholic doctrine as authoritatively proposed should be held as the supreme law." In other words, in approaching such passages, what the Church teaches on a particular doctrine should be used to come not only to a safe but a fuller understanding of the text. So for example the Catholic teaching on the power to grant indulgences is given aid and light in the full interpretation of Matthew 16:19. Or the dogma that the Son of God is begotten by the Father and subsists in two natures lends a fuller understanding to John 14:28. A large number of other cases might be advanced but these will suffice to illustrate how even when specific interpretation by the magisterium is lacking, Catholic teaching is still a positive source of light, guidance and protection in the work of Catholic interpretation and exegesis.

Does all this mean that there is no real place in theology for the scientific and critical study of Scripture? Not at all. Rather it is to be encouraged and above all utilized. For in these texts (particularly those as yet uninterpreted authentically) it is necessary to make full use of the resources of science in order that their full and exact meaning may be arrived at. The Catholic scholar aided by the infallible teaching of the Church is able to use these resources more effectively and knowing what is not true is able to avoid error in applying these techniques. As a result "such labors may in the benignant providence of God prepare and bring to maturity the judgment of the Church." The very nature of his task is holy and therefore his technique must be exercised on the level of excellence. No other service befits his work. At the same time he cannot forget that his skill and scholarship are to be directed in terms of the teaching mission of the Church. Here it is well to keep in mind the warning by Leo XIII: "the sense of Holy Scripture can nowhere be found incorrupt outside the Church and cannot be expected to be

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 73.

found in writers who being without the true faith only know the work of Holy Scripture and not its path."<sup>24</sup>

This then represents the true approach to Scripture both in itself and from the point of view of scientific theology. It is not an independent nor self-sufficient norm of belief but part of the *Traditio*. At the same time a theology teacher who ignores or minimizes the critical and scientific work done in this field by Catholics is derelict in his duty. He is not called on to introduce a course of hermaneutics into his teaching but he is required to be willing and eager to incorporate the results of this scholarship into his teaching. In all honesty, too, we should admit that this is not always the case. A recent writer in the *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (April, 1949) has pointed out examples of uncritical and unjustifiable usages in commonly received theological manuals and he establishes his strictures with a great deal of justice. While we are not supposed to be scriptural savants we are not thereby excused from making use of such work. The failure to do so is a failure not only in the order of scientific theology but in the order of Christian intelligence as well.

At the same time attention should be called to the fact that there has not been too much organized effort to make available for theological usage the critico-dogmatic studies of Catholic scholarship. Once you have mentioned Cueppens' *Theologia Biblica* (4 volumes) and Prat's *Theology of St. Paul* (2 volumes) you are commonly thrown back on scattered articles and hard to obtain particular studies and various encyclopedia and dictionary articles. Much can be done in this field but until it is done what sources are available must be fully taken into account in our teaching.<sup>25</sup>

*Patristic Writings*. In many ways this is one of the most notable

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, n. 77.

<sup>25</sup> For the difficulties facing the Scripture teacher in this matter cf. H. Cazelles, "La place de la theologie dans l'enseingment de l'Ecriture sainte" in *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, 70 (1948), p. 1009 seq.; for a more positive study see the article of L. Burke, "Holy Scripture as a Locus Theologicus" in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, XI (1949), 351-369; also M. Sales, "Principia tradita a Divo Thoma pro Sacrorum Scriptuarum interpretatione" in *Xenia Thomistica*, II (1925), pp. 19-34; also for a treatment of the general use of Scripture by the priest, G. Yelle, *Ecriture Sainte et Vie Intellectuelle du Pretre*.

weaknesses in the scientific teaching of theology as presented in the manuals. Too often, it consists in setting down a few quotations picked almost at random and prefacing them with the word *pro-batur*. First of all, in the strict sense, we are not demonstrating the article of faith by such quotations. While it might be argued that they have probative value polemically or apologetically, that is not the purpose for their introduction here. And even for such an argument a far better or more exact employment would be required. Strictly speaking these patristic sources are advanced by positive theology in order to bring out the evidence of the ancient Christian teaching. The certitude of the article of faith does not rest on this but on its proposition by the Church. What we turn to the Fathers for is first to determine *censensus* and thus to develop our understanding of the article under consideration. So in introducing patristic texts our effort should look rather to a cross section either chronologically, or geographically or by reason of the importance of the Fathers who taught on this particular point. Thus we are led to a better understanding of the teaching of the Church and then to what God has revealed. By the historical techniques we are seeking to learn not the thought as such of Augustine or Leo or Athanasius but what they taught as evidence of what the Church taught at a given moment and in definite historical circumstances. We are not concerned with setting up a history of dogma but with employing the results of such work to arrive at evidence of the teaching of the Church.<sup>26</sup>

Once again it must be repeated that this evidence is sought not through the medium of historical technique alone but viewed in a properly theological *lumen* and under the guidance of the magisterium. As Cavallera points out dogma is not heterogenous but homogenous. Revelation is infallible both in its origin and development. In each case it is a divine work and results from the indefectible assistance and intervention of the Holy Spirit.<sup>27</sup> Hence in searching the writings of the Fathers we rest on what is clearly defined and taught by the Church and thus are able to pass secure

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Congar, *op. cit.*, 469.

<sup>27</sup> Cavallera, "La Theologie Positive" in *Bulletin de litterature ecclesiastique*, 26 (1925), p. 27.

judgment on our historical findings. In this way the theologian is able to discover traces, implications and corrections in the earlier teaching which the historian *qua* historian cannot legitimately do solely on the basis of historical technique. It can be said that this brings to bear on the material a prejudgment and I think we can grant that such is the case. However, this does not prove the work defective scientifically. "Every historian has his prejudgments. However, he synthesizes his material, and that work is orientated by his principles. Thanks be to God it does not embarrass us to show that ours are better and in certain cases the only reasonable ones."<sup>28</sup>

We must not forget though, that while by reason of this superior light the theologian can pass judgment on the historical evidence, yet the scientific character of that judgment rests on the honesty, accuracy and completeness of his historical knowledge. It is the historical method, as Father Simonin points out, that establishes an objective bond between the theological judgment and the content of the deposit of revelation.<sup>29</sup> Such an objective bond is not constituted by feeling, or spirituality or wishful thinking that if the Fathers do not say it they should have. The texts cannot be twisted to suit the need nor can such an action be deemed a fitting service of either God or theology. Hence it is necessary to have the maximum resources by which *ratio illustrata fide* can come into objective contact with the evidence. Such things as collections, critical editions, authenticated documents and historical studies are required if the work of positive theology is to be scientific and not subjective or merely devotional. The theological judgment is not soundly exercised without an equally sound patrology.

By way of application of these general principles to the actual teaching of theology we may take the *Enchiridion Patristicum*. Our first step would be to use these texts accurately and in terms of their specific historical background. The next step is to apply the

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>29</sup> "Note sur l'argument de tradition e la theologie" in *Angelicum* (1938), pp. 409-418; "Implicite' et 'Explicite' dans le development du dogme" in *Angelicum*, 14 (1947), pp. 126-145.

rules for determining moral unanimity by consent.<sup>30</sup> In brief these rules would be moral unanimity throughout East and West in every age, or in one particular age. But it can be a case of only a few or even one Father teaching this doctrine. In such instances it must be judged whether or not they were the leaders of a struggle against a particular heresy and if that leadership is recognized and approved by the Church. If this be so then their teaching will suffice for evidence of consent. So for example Athanasius, Hilary, Gregory Nazienzen against Arianism; Cyril of Alexandria and Leo the Great against Nestorianism and Monophysitism; Augustine and Prosper and Fulgentius against Pelagianism and Semi-Pelagianism. Consent may also be evidenced from the use of other Fathers in the East or West by one particular Father, such as Augustine<sup>31</sup> or Leo<sup>32</sup> or Cyril.<sup>33</sup> Sometimes it may be evidenced by the particular approbation accorded to a Father by the *Ecclesia Docens* as in the case of the Anathemas of Cyril of Alexandria against the Nestorians<sup>34</sup> or certain teachings of Augustine on the doctrine of grace.<sup>35</sup> These rules are all part of the means by which the theologian integrates the teaching of the Fathers into his work. Consequently in the scientific teaching of theology in the seminary this means a real part of the work, i.e., to choose texts carefully in the full light of their historical and doctrinal background and then collate them in terms of this consent. Thus is he able to present a full picture of the teaching of the Church and the sources of the teaching.

In concluding this part of our treatment we can sum up the work of positive theology in the words of Father Congar:

“The relation of positive theology to the work of theology presupposes and utilizes the history of Christian doctrine. The order of procedure is this: (1) the reconstruction of the Christian past as honestly as possible, thanks to all the resources of history: this is the history of Christian doctrine. (2) The act of faith

<sup>30</sup> Franzelin and De San, *op. cit.*

<sup>31</sup> *Contra Julianum*, I, 7, 31 (PL 44, 661).

<sup>32</sup> *Adversus Nestorium*, 4, 2 (PG 76, 176); *In Psalmos Explanatio*, 42, 13 (PG 69, 1068).

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Epist. 165, 10 (PL 54, 1171-90).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. DB 113 seq.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. DB 128; 200b.

and the *auditus fidei* in dependence on the preaching of the Church which remains homogenous through all generations. (3) The investigation in scientific form of this *auditus fidei* and thus knowledge of the deposit contained and present in this preaching is enriched by a knowledge of the different states, forms, and expressions of the belief and doctrine of the Church both in its first establishment and through the course of its development. This is the work of positive theology carried out under the direction of faith and utilizing the results of the history of doctrine."<sup>36</sup>

Thus is set up in scientific form those principles or articles of faith which speculative theology will endeavor to penetrate.

By way of explanation let me make it clear that this extensive treatment of positive theology is not intended to imply that positive theology is the only important aspect of the scientific teaching of theology. It is emphasized in this paper simply because my own experience in teaching and my discussion with other teachers have both indicated that it represents the more difficult and pressing problem by way of organization and integration. Furthermore (as I hope the footnotes make clear) it is not my intention to produce an original work but only to synthesize and make available for discussions and development the research and study done on the subject. It moreover is not intended to be, nor is it exhaustive.

## PART II

### SPECULATIVE THEOLOGY

There has always been a tendency to view speculative theology with some suspicion. Sometimes this suspicion culminates in a violent condemnation of it by a man like Peter Damien. At other times it has had a dubious eye cast upon it in the name of spirituality and devotion as for example by the author of *The Following of Christ*. No one, of course, denies that this speculative inquiry can be and has been carried to excess at times to the detriment not only of faith but of reason. But if excess or abuse are reasons for dis-

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, 469-70.

carding it, by the same token any error would force us to abandon the natural and God-given desire of the mind for understanding. It is in the light of the history of such tendencies and suspicions that the cry for a return to the uncomplicated contemplation of the Fathers and Scripture leave me somewhat cold and fearful. Such a suggestion bears too much kinship to the contention of the reformers of the sixteenth century who challenged not only the utility but the legitimacy of rational inquiry into revelation. It should not be forgotten that one of the basic causes of the revolt was an intense anti-scholasticism.<sup>37</sup> In the words of Luther: "Thomas wrote many heresies and it is he who established the reign of Aristotle, that destroyer of holy doctrine"; or again, "only without Aristotle can we become theologians."

The truly Catholic approach on the other hand recognizes the validity of the *fides quaerens intellectum*. It is also aware that this speculative effort is a real and cherished part of the Catholic inheritance. As Father Congar points out, scholastic theology is a true possession of the Church.<sup>38</sup> He quotes Newman's remark on this point: "What the Church once had she never has lost. She has never wept over, or been angry, with time gone and over. Instead of passing from one stage of life to another she has carried her youth and middle age along with her on to her latest time. She has not changed possessions but accumulated them, and has brought out from her treasure house, according to the occasion, things old and new."<sup>39</sup>

The problem, therefore, of the excesses of speculation is not to be solved by ignoring speculation, or by by-passing it or condemning it *in toto*. Such a state of mind is simply a solution of despair and unworthy of a Christian. It seems to me, too, that it is an implicit criticism of God Who has endowed the mind of man with its laws of intelligibility and order. For as one writer has pointed out this attitude is essentially a denial of the very constitution of the intellect whereby it has a capacity and seeks for wisdom. To remove speculative effort from theology is to reduce man from *homo sapiens*

<sup>37</sup> Cf. L. Christiani, "Reforme" in *DThC*, 13, 2028-2030.

<sup>38</sup> Quoted by Father Donnelly, S.J., in *Theological Studies*, VIII (1947), p. 698.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

to an exclusively *homo faber*.<sup>40</sup> Centuries ago St. Thomas in replying to the question whether divine truths ought to be treated by the method of inquiry stated:

"I answer that it must be said that since the perfection of man consists in his union with God, it is right that man by all the means in his power and insofar as he is able mount up to and strive to attain divine truths so that his intellect may take delight in contemplation and his reason in the investigation of the things of God."<sup>41</sup>

St. Thomas, however, does warn us that it is possible to err on this point. First by presuming to enter upon this investigation as though one could attain perfect comprehension. Secondly, by allowing reason to take precedence over faith in matters of faith, to the point where one would be willing to believe only what he could know by reason. Thirdly, by undertaking an inquiry into divine things which are beyond his particular and individual capacity.<sup>42</sup>

The real control of this possibility of excess and error lies, it seems to me, in a close integration of the positive and speculative functions of theology. For through positive theology one comes to a Catholic and scientific awareness that speculative theology begins with and is ordered by the *auditus fidei*. It means, too, that if the positive theology is truly theological then the very character of this presentation through the medium of the ecclesiastical magisterium offers a true control, guidance and direction to speculative theology. In the words of Father Gardeil: "A scholastic theology that would not begin with a positive theology is sightless. A positive theology without a scholastic theology to bind its elements together, bring it into communication with the world of rational ideas and defend it would be a paralyzed theology."<sup>43</sup>

While the preceding treatment has been based on the very constitution of the human mind and on the nature of theology itself we

<sup>40</sup> Gagnebert, "Nature de la Theologie Speculative" in *Revue Thomiste*, 44 (1938), p. 671.

<sup>41</sup> Comment. in Trinit., q. II, art. 1.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>43</sup> La Donne Revelee et la Theologie, p. 191.

should not forget that its essential legitimacy has been testified to by the Vatican Council:

When it seeks piously, carefully and soberly, reason illuminated by faith attains *some understanding* of the mysteries (given by God) and this *most fruitful understanding* it attains both from the analogy of those things it knows naturally, and from the connection of the mysteries amongst themselves and with the ultimate end of man. (DB 1796.)

It is of interest to note here that in the scheme for the dogmatic constitution *De Fide* drawn up for the Vatican Council this statement is found:

“(Entirely different to the rationalistic errors) is the service of the mysteries which develops from principles that are revealed and believed by faith. Far be it that this understanding (*intelligentia*) be excluded; for by it the great part of sacred theology is constituted. Faith (without doubt), supposed, it is inquired how the truths are proposed in revelation which is positive theology, thence, this having been assumed some analogical understanding (*intelligentia*) as to what they are in themselves is deduced by rational truths and principles and this is speculative theology.<sup>44</sup>

In the light of all this we may now consider the manner in which speculative theology enters into the scientific teaching of theology. As we have seen it possesses its first principles in a scientific manner by means of positive theology. Then it takes up its own work which is to investigate *per lucente fide* that body of revealed truths and “by way of rational deduction set forth all the virtualities, consequences, and relations together with the relations of these truths either amongst themselves or with rational truths; in short, all its aptitudes for a systematization of the whole” (cf. Gardeil, *op. cit.*, 190-191). Technically this would be expressed as the *divinitus revelabile* or in the more widely used phrase “virtual revelation.” This process can be divided into three major steps: 1. Exposition. 2. Deductive theological demonstration. 3. Theological systems.

<sup>44</sup> Mansi, t. 50, p. 84.

(1) Exposition. Under this heading I would put (a) the organization of these truths, (b) analogy, (c) the *argumenta ex convenientia*. In some ways this term *exposition* is not too felicitous but it serves to distinguish this work from demonstration properly speaking. It might, it seems to me, be very well replaced by the more ancient usage of *sacra doctrina* which John of St. Thomas defines as "some probative knowledge—drawn from divine revelation even by way of probability." *Cursus Theologicus*, I, p. 443.

(a) The organization of the revealed mysteries. As the Vatican Council points out, reason (*illustrata fide*) can come to a most fruitful understanding by way of the connections among the mysteries themselves and with the last end of man. It needs no development here to demonstrate this. Our experience both as teachers and students suffices to prove how much light and understanding a well organized and carefully related class can give. What is of importance is to realize that the principle of such organization in the *revelatus* has always been a primary concern of speculative theology and the systematization of St. Thomas results from many efforts that preceded him: The *De Sacramentis* by Hugh of St. Victor; the Augustinian *signa et res* and *frui et uti* crystallized into the Sentences; the first and highly complex *Summa* of Albertus Magnus. The problem was always one of directing that organization either to the subject matter itself or of including its place in the individual Christian life. The basis of our modern approach and I think the only one capable of keeping theology as an objectively scientific work is that of St. Thomas. He centers his organization in terms of God or *sub ratione Dei vel quia sunt ipse Deus vel quia habent ordinem ad Deum ut principium et finem* (I, q. 1 and 7) or again, "Omnia alia quae determinatur in sacra doctrina comprehenduntur sub Deo; non ut partes vel species vel accidentia sed ut ordinata aequaliter ad ipsum" (*ibid.*, ad 2). On this basis does St. Thomas institute the classic order and hierarchy of revealed truth. The scientific and didactic effectiveness of this for seminary teaching seems to me unquestionable.

Here, however, it should be noted that there is some dispute on this point. Modernly there have been efforts to center it around the *Totus Christus*; or to make it structurally thematic (in terms of

preaching); or to set up its orientation in terms of personal spiritual life and contemplation (on the part of the theologian) this would be the so-called "charismatic" procedure. To take these up in detail would represent a paper itself, but I would like to make a couple of passing remarks on the subject. All of them seem to me to stress the affective union with God as a means of penetrating the object of faith. That this is a valid and fruitful method I would not and may not deny but it is not a theological method. For theology is concerned with a science of faith. It recognizes that dogma is essentially an intellectual thing and therefore its processes and its organization will be primarily determined by principles of intelligibility which is certainly in this case *Deus sub ratione deitatis*. The end result of an homiletic or charismatic organization would be to confuse the objective nature of theology with the subjective and moral dispositions of the theologian. And while it has many things to criticize about a lifeless theology, to reform the theologian by changing the inner structure of theology does not seem to me to answer the problem they set up.

(b) Analogy.<sup>45</sup> In its widest sense analogy refers to a common character found in two realities which sets up relations of similitude. This is divided into four general classifications in terms of the area of knowledge in which they are found, viz.: Common, empirical, mathematical and philosophical. They are not, however, four heterogeneous classifications but four manifestations of a certain way of thinking. As a matter of fact, this analogical process is inherent in our faculty of knowing, i.e., the principles of identity and contradiction. Without them we must forego all possibility of intelligibility or destroy all possibility of order and distinction (cf. Gardiel: "La structure analogique de l'intellect" in *Revue Thomiste* [1927]).

All these are possible uses of analogy in theology playing their part as expository or polemical devices to bring out the meaning of the revealed deposit. With one exception they are extrinsic to the deposit of revelation and their role is relatively independent of their extrinsic content. The famous example is of course the analogy of the "Trinities" so exploited by Hugh of St. Victor and Ramon Lull.

<sup>45</sup> In treating this point I am primarily dependent on Penido, *Le Rolé de l'Analogie en Theologie Dogmatique* (Bibliothèque Thomiste, 15, 1931).

St. Thomas uses these consistently but in a much more sober and exacting fashion. They essentially rest on the fact that God created the world and therefore since *omne agens agit sibi simile* the created world is necessarily an analogue of God.

There is, however, a form of analogy which looks to the scientific formulation of the content of revelation and draws its validity from its intrinsic content. This is the strictly metaphysical analogy (Pinido, p. 26). Like the other forms of analogy it is diverse from the subject of attribution by its very nature (i.e., *formaliter*). At the same time it communicates with the subject of a common concept even as the others. Its distinctive note is proportionality, i.e., this common bond is present in a qualitative and transcendent sense. Hence while this common note is present in each in a different form it is present intrinsically or entitatively. Because of this proper proportionality we can abstract a note that is formally transcendent, e.g., goodness. This intrinsic proportionality differs therefore from a simple mode of attribution or a work of the imagination (which cannot go beyond quantity). It is a mode of being arrived at not imaginatively but by intellectual abstraction and is therefore in the entitative order (*analogia entis*).

It is this form of analogy that enters into the very structure of a scientific formulation and technically precise expression of the content and meaning of revelation. Examples would be the use of *consubstantialis*, *processio*, *generatio*, *relationes subsistentes*, and *Verbum* in the exposition of the Trinity. The tract on the Incarnation offers such uses as *persona*, *natura*, *unio hypostatica*, *operatio*, *voluntas*. De Sacramentis makes use of *causa*, *conversio totius substantiae*, *species*, *trans-substantiatio*. Others might be adduced but these will serve as a cross-section. It should not be forgotten, however, that such uses are validated here not by philosophy but by revelation itself. Their acceptance depends on the ecclesiastical magisterium. Their development requires a careful and precise inquiry into the sources of its official preaching. It is not a process of drawing out a conclusion from revelation but a process of comparison whereby the exact meaning of the *revelatus* is formulated.<sup>46</sup> This

<sup>46</sup> Cf. Fenton, *op. cit.*, pp. 62-64; on the process itself see Penido, *op. cit.*, p. 185 seq.; also Gardeil, *op. cit.*, 133-149.

whole might be summed up by saying that because it is analogical it will not exhaust the reality it seeks to formulate. But because it is proportional in the proper sense, it will express unequivocally something or even a great deal of the reality it seeks to formulate.

(A word might be said here concerning the analogy of improper proportionality, i.e., the use of such terms as *caput*, *agnus Dei*, etc. In such cases of metaphor the proportionality is not entitative but dynamic. It is real but not proper. It is in the order of effects not entity.) The similitude is in the functional order, not the entitative. For it rests on an equivalence of effects or similarity of effects though totally diverse in nature, *operatio*, not *esse*.

The justification of this approach has its roots deep in revelation itself. For God has expressed His revealed truths in words and notions taken from the realm of human knowledge and experience. It is clear from revelation that the God Who created the world and the God of faith are One. It is equally clear that our entrance into the supernatural order is by way of grace and thus by participation—not a newly constituted nature. Nature and grace are related by a real relation of order whereby one fulfills and perfects the other. It finds in this order of existence the foundation for its work.

Here I might say that I am perfectly aware of the controversy over this analogical usage in theology, particularly the emphasis on its inadequacy in terms of historical relativity. Nor do I deny that the opponents of this usage have a number of strong arguments but to take up what is after all a tentative would require a whole discussion in itself, and that is not necessary to our purpose here. On the whole point, though, it might be well to remember the historical research of Gilson into the *philosophia perennis*. He certainly makes clear that the primacy of metaphysics and the primacy of existence are permanent realities in human thought. These are not to be equated with any particular system but represent fundamental affirmations of human thought and in the long run are the judge and executioner of those who would deny them.<sup>47</sup> While it is morally impossible to pass an absolute judgment as to where the systems

<sup>47</sup> Cf. *The Unity of Philosophical Experience*; *Being and Some Philosophers*; *L'Être et l'Essence*.

begin and these fundamental affirmations cease; still in terms of the *sensus communis*, even though *confuse*, valid analogy and formulation is possible and such terms as cause, person, nature are truly representative of it in their primary concept.<sup>48</sup>

ARGUMENTA EX CONVENIENTIA. This particular aspect of the work of speculative theology has a number of difficulties. There is the ever present danger of carrying it to extremes or of looking upon it as an exercise in inventiveness—not an approach to understanding. Too often it is translated by the English “convenience” with all of its connotations. Many a theological student has closed his books at ordination convinced that this argument is simply a handy way of covering up the fact that there are no real arguments. Whatever be the cause there is no doubt that this process has seriously lost face in modern times. It is worthwhile therefore to establish its proper place.

In judging these arguments it should be remembered that while they are not demonstrative it does not follow that they are not arguments. On the natural level their source is what Hugh of St. Victor terms the “*Res probabilia quae sunt secundum rationem.*” By means of these probabilities it is shown that the doctrine not only is not unreasonable but is in harmony with the things that we know naturally. Moreover it is capable of reflecting real light on the doctrine under inquiry. And because it can give such understanding it has a real place in the speculative work of theology. Underlying this conception of the argument is what we have seen in general concerning analogical usage, viz.: grace perfects nature.

“For though the natural light of the human mind is insufficient to reveal those truths revealed by faith, yet it is impossible that those things which God has revealed by faith should be contrary to those things which are evident to us by natural knowledge . . . since both kinds of truth are from God. . . . In imperfect things there is found some intimation of the perfect. Though the image is deficient . . . there are certain similitudes to the truths revealed by faith. They incorporate some similitudes of those

<sup>48</sup> Cf. M. Labourdette et M. J. Nicolas, “L’analogie de la verite et l’unité de la science theologique” in *Revue Thomiste*, 47 (1948), pp. 417-66.

higher truths and some things that are preparatory for them just as nature is the preamble to grace."<sup>49</sup>

The theologian therefore does not or ought not to cast about at random for these arguments since his choice is to be guided by revealed truth. He sees the things of the natural order in the light of revealed truth. Because his understanding of the natural order has been heightened by his knowledge of the supernatural order he is in a position to discover in created reality what St. Thomas called *veras similitudines* or *rationes verisimiles*.<sup>50</sup> It is these he takes and fashions into argumentative form not to demonstrate revealed truth but to furnish reasonable motives for understanding it. These arguments are to be classified as probable and stand also as reasonable motives to recognize its truth. Obviously such arguments will vary in cogency and strength but their validity will be determined by their intrinsic probability. So for example the congruence of the vital processions of the soul in discussing and explaining the Trinitarian processions, or St. Thomas' use of the principle *bonum diffusivum sui* to show the reasonableness of the fact of the Incarnation and Redemption.<sup>51</sup> What is of importance here is that the similitudes are not merely illustrations but the basis of a real though not demonstrative argument. It is in this way that they fulfill their purpose of giving understanding to the faithful and showing the reasonableness of the revealed truth to the hostile and the unbelievers.

This argument is also derived from both the structure and the individual truths of revelation. Taking these as the established facts one can come to an understanding and an argument for the presence of other truths in that revealed economy. Thus with the Immaculate Conception one could bring to bear the truths already known in the economy of Redemption and Grace and the resulting *convenientia* would serve to show not only its reasonableness but would stand as a valid argument for its truth.

In this whole connection I should like to advance a tentative

<sup>49</sup> St. Thomas, *Comment. in Trin.*, q. II, art. 3.

<sup>50</sup> *S. T.*, II-II, q. 1, art. 5; *Con. Gent.*, I, c. 8 and 9.

<sup>51</sup> *S. T.*, III, q. 1, art. 1.

that undoubtedly requires much more inquiry but I think offers a very fruitful source for discussion and development. First of all let me state clearly that I recognize that these individual arguments are simply probable and however numerous they may be in a particular case their mere number does not raise them out of their probable status. But granting this, is it not possible for the principle of sufficient reason to enter in here and give to this convergence an element of certitude so as to make them a true explanation of the fact? Certainly the validity of such an approach is recognized in apologetics<sup>52</sup> and I see no *a priori* reason why it cannot be accepted here. The argument itself is summed up by Father Benard in this way:

"A sufficient number of independent facts each in itself only a probable indication but all converging toward one explanation, one justifying reason, one solution are a legitimate source of certitude. Why? Because there must be a reason for this convergence and the proof thus is based, not on the fact that our multiple indications are only probable but that their convergence toward one solution must have a reason, and that reason can only be the truth of that solution toward which the probabilities point. Thus the probabilities coalesce to form a certain, factual promise of an implicit syllogism, the other premise being the principle of sufficient reason and the conclusion thus being certain."<sup>53</sup>

Let me repeat—I advance this by way of a tentative but I do see where it could be most fruitful in an inquiry into such a doctrine as that of the Assumption.<sup>54</sup>

*Theological Deduction.* This is the second phase of the work of speculative theology and in the common understanding of theology its most proper work.<sup>55</sup> While it is attended modernly, with many

<sup>52</sup> Cf. H. Pinard de la Boullaye, *L'etude comparee des religions*, II, 388-424; A. Gardeil, *La credibilite et l'apologetique*, pp. 161-201; S. Harent, "Foi," in *DThC*, VI, 195-98.

<sup>53</sup> *A Preface to Newman's Theology*, p. 182.

<sup>54</sup> By way of illustration of the method, reference may be made to Father Juniper Carol's article on the definability of the Assumption in *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 118 (1948), pp. 161-177.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. St. John of St. Thomas, *Cursus Theol.*, t. I, p. 443.

discussions both with regard to the type of assent it calls for, its homogeneity with revelation and its place in doctrinal development, its basic validity in speculative theology seems to me unquestionable.

For example if we take the *Enchiridion Symbolorum* we find an extensive list of propositions condemned as erroneous. Technically this means that they are opposed to theologically certain truths and not to formally revealed ones. Logically, in the light of this magisterial action, we can see that in the range of Catholic teaching there is a body of truths set up by theological deduction which limits the element of free discussion in these matters. This body of truths is arrived at not by formal proposition of the *revelatus* but by theological reason, as intimately or necessarily connected with formally revealed truth.

Specifically, too, we have all that we have seen with regard to the *analogia entis*. If this is a justifiable usage when ordered by and subordinated to divine faith then it can be properly used to draw out the virtualities of revelation by a properly discursive process. It is clear then if the mind is to be applied to revelation at all then this discursive process which is its proper medium of arriving at understanding must be employed. By way of authority for such a position we have its continued and effective existence in the Catholic life and its approbation by the theological tradition. Moreover as we saw previously this very deductive method is recognized and approved in the scheme proposed at the Vatican Council. With these general principles in mind we can now take up the theological deductive process itself. And here I simply follow the elucidation of John of St. Thomas.

According to this commentator the source of theology may be described thus:

We understand by the term theology not only probative doctrine *in commune* (*sacra doctrina*) but properly and strictly a reasoned science about God drawn from those things that are revealed. So it looks to those things which are virtually and mediately revealed, i.e., deduced from the formally revealed.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

Again:

Theology is a scientific or certain knowledge proceeding from what is formally revealed and inferring those things which are termed virtually or mediately revealed in as much as they are deduced from and connected with what is formally revealed.<sup>57</sup>

According to this theologian there is then present in this work a strictly deductive process which actualizes what is present in formal revelation virtually i.e., requires a medium of inference to make it explicit. In the concrete this will mean using as one premise a formally revealed truth and joining to it another premise and inferring in a properly discursive manner a conclusion. This second premise may be either one that is itself formally revealed or drawn from natural truths and principles. In either case it is a theological conclusion distinguished from faith and concerned with the *revelabilia*. In the case of two revealed premises the result is virtual revelation because the connection between them is not known by faith but is drawn out by the rational *discursus*. In the case of the premise being drawn from natural truths the result is also virtual revelation since it is attained as a properly theological conclusion.<sup>58</sup>

This last point requires some exposition since it is the very heart of this process. First of all, such use to be properly theological and therefore to be judged as virtually revealed must fit certain requirements. It is not simply a philosophy of religion nor an end in itself, it is a tool, a means and its instrumentality is ordered and directed by the formally revealed. It is not the principle but the servant of theology as a whole. Behind this conception lies the fact that theology is wisdom and from its knowledge of the highest cause can judge, approve or reprobate what is drawn from the lower order. So approved, the conclusions deduced by means of it are seen in the light of the higher wisdom. John of St. Thomas points out too that such premises are not the principal cause of our assent but a condition required because of the defect and imperfection in our knowing all that is revealed.<sup>59</sup> He sums up his own position in this way.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 481.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 473.

The natural premise can be considered in two ways. In one manner precisely as it proceeds from its proper character to illustrate the conclusion. In the other way some new *ratio* or *illustratio* is superadded to it by reason of its conjunction with the premise of faith since faith can judge truths of the natural order and correct them if they are defective in any way. Consequently if it approves them and assumes them for inference it renders them more perfect in certitude by approving them or not reprobating them. Thus they are subject to and conformable to a higher light. Hence they are elevated by that higher light.<sup>60</sup>

Such premises therefore are only a means made use of by faith. They truly enter into the conclusion but they operate subordinately and ministerially, yet they participate in the light of faith and therefore its certitude. In John of St. Thomas' phrase, this knowledge arrived at by inference is naturally acquired but is *originative* and *virtualiter* from the supernatural principles upon which it is based. Hence it is not contained as such in the light of the natural principles precisely because they are natural but in that they are illustrated and perfected by the light of faith. For faith by reason of its superiority not only perfects the other sciences but also their principles. So for John of St. Thomas theology is rooted in faith or technically in the *habitus principiorum illustrata per fidem*.<sup>61</sup>

By way of warning, all this does not mean that the natural principle is proven by faith or theology but only that it is judged and approved by them. It is thus confirmed in its own certitude through that extrinsic approbation and subordination. It is not a communication of its formal ratio to the natural principle but a participation insofar as it renders the natural principle subject to its rule and reducible to the certitude of faith through approbation and corrections.

The corollary of such a position becomes quite clear. Natural principles cannot be employed at random in the work of speculative theology. The whole positive and expository process is to be used to judge and perfect the principle. What the magisterium proposes; what the sources offer; all that we learn by way of organization,

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 474.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 475.

analogy, and fitness enable us to approve positively the principle or at least show that it is not reprobated. And it is this whole process that guarantees the usage and keeps the illative work of theology from degenerating into a mere philosophizing about revelation. When it is absolutely clear that the conclusion is intrinsically related to the revealed truth and that relation is so recognized by the theologians; then the conclusion is a certain one in the properly theological sense. Lacking this then objectively we can only affix such notes as common, more probable, and probable. The truly certain proposition must be the result of the whole process whereby its objective status in Catholic teaching is scientifically ascertained. This would be exemplified by the difference between the certain teaching that the Son proceeds by way of intellectual generation and common opinion that the Holy Spirit proceeds by way of love.

By way of apology here let me say that I have deliberately omitted all reference to the controversy over the definability of a theological conclusion. First of all as a real and acute controversy it cannot be settled out of hand. Yet to present it in all its ramifications (which an accurate discussion would require) is clearly the subject of a distinct paper.

3. *Theological Systems.* The existence of systems of theological thought is very often a "sting of the flesh" for the teacher of theology. While they stand as proof for the freedom of discussion allowed to theologians yet they often represent for the student a source of arid and boring classes. As a result after four years of theology many a student expresses his deepseated indifference to them all. To understand their place and to appreciate their value in scientific teaching three considerations are necessary: (a) The necessity of such systems in any scientific elaboration. (b) The sources of divergence in such systems. (c) The importance and place of the problems with which these systems deal.

(a) The necessity of systems. Essentially the existence of theological systems stems from the very nature of the material with which theology deals. This is the deposit of revealed mysteries which retain an essential obscurity as far as the human mind is concerned, yet at the same time are inexhaustibly fecund. We know, too, that the body of defined truth and certain conclusions is small in com-

parison to the whole content. Moreover even in what has been formulated there are apparent antinomies. Thus there remains a whole area in which the search for understanding may and ought to be carried on. Such work is neither an effort to demonstrate revelation nor a denial of its mysterious character but the continuation of the proper function of theology—"aliquam intelligentiam assequens." A system therefore simply is an extension and a particularization of the process whereby exposition and theologically certain conclusions are arrived at. It has as its starting point the guaranteed analogies and conclusions as well as the whole theological effort. It begins to specify and formulate its rational inquiry in terms of that process. Such specifications and applications however remain in the order of opinion. To forbid such an extension or look upon it as futile is to fail to realize the inadequacy of intelligence to comprehend this object fully and yet its need for such efforts if the whole content is to have an ordered and scientific structure. As long as the primacy of faith is submitted to and its norms are accepted as valid guides such an effort is assuredly Catholic. Any other approach would appear to be an implicit denial of the divine fecundity of revealed doctrine or a rejection of the use of intelligence as a valid tool in attaining understanding. In practice, to restrict the field to certain theological conclusions would render impossible that investigation by which these conclusions themselves are attained. In proof of this one need only read the history of theological effort and see how these conclusions are related in their beginning to the investigations.

Yet such investigations by the very nature of the mind resolve themselves into systematic approaches. The basic principles are set up by theology and its use of the *philosophia perennis*. From this are deduced other principles by which further inquiry is guided. Out of this is formulated the rule and then in turn the reasoning process affirms some central reality that gives to all these applications a unity. It may be Being, existence, essence, or love (*bonum*) but in terms of this principle the whole series of applications and harmonizations will be systematized into a whole. Such a process arises from the very nature of the mind which seeks to unify its work by resolving the elements into an organic whole. The only way to avoid systems in thinking is to arrive at clear-cut certitudes

in the material under inquiry. Since such are not present here, then systems will arise.

(b) The variety of systems. The essential divergency of a system arises from what it considers the ultimate in created reality. As long as this does not contradict or by its very nature deny the certitudes of faith and theology it is admissable. Granted this then the whole analogous process by which a system flows from its first principles will bring into being the systematizations of Thomism, Scotism, Suarezianism, Molinism and Augustianism. This primary distinction will have its source in their primary principles.

Besides what might be termed their transcendent distinction or metaphysical divergence there is always an element of the temporal and the personal that enters in the intellectual *milieu* and the culture of their time will exercise its influence. Even more so, will the polemical and apologetic exigencies specify much of the structure of a system. Every dogma has more than one way in which it may be denied: by excess or by defect. It is part of the human process to concentrate on one or the other. Thus because of particular errors or the conceptions that underlie a series of such errors a particular system will organize and direct itself in terms of that. Sometimes it is possible to see how the system was occasioned by polemical exigencies which in turn condition its approach to its first principles. Perhaps one of the best illustrations of such fundamental divergencies may be seen in the theological controversy over Predestination. Here the magisterial framework is clear and the unresolved material is quite evident; then it is possible to see how the basic divergencies enter in.

(c) The importance of the problems. It is impossible to use any of these systems effectively unless we are aware of the reality of the question they propose to resolve (*sub fide*). Unless this point at issue or "Pure Position" is ascertained there is no reality to the question. Before any systematic applications are made it must be clear to both teacher and students what is the nature of the difficulty and why it is a difficulty. This means a knowledge of the fundamental problems in such concepts as person, nature, freedom, motion, operation. In turn it means an awareness that these are fundamental not only to theology but to human thought itself. Any application

therefore is an honest effort to come to grips with a real and permanent problem.

Such an approach has a number of consequences which mean work for the teacher. Whatever system he adheres to, a syllogistic dismissal of the opposite side is hardly teaching. A procedure of this kind has not realized the problem nor raised it as a real question in the mind of the students. Secondly, there must be established a clear perception of the relations between the particular solution and the first principles of the system you adhere to. It will take more time but by means of its use we achieve a true formation of the students mind, giving him the habit of relating application to principles. It is essential to scientific teaching because only in this way does it become manifest how part is related to part and the part to the whole.

One recommendation ought to be made here. Whatever system we make our aim, let us be honest in presenting the other side. A *parti-pris* summary or a quotation lifted out of a manual does not speak too highly either for our intellectual integrity or the scientific character of our teaching. Neither will mere eclecticism satisfy these demands. A mere parroting of premises is neither scientific or mature but a failure to see the central principles upon which a system has been raised. Only when we are by conviction adherents of a system are we in a position to use it effectively and scientifically.

In concluding this paper let me say that I do so with a real feeling of its inadequacy. It was intended as an over-all survey of the subject and necessarily has the weakness that accompanies such extensiveness. My own efforts at clarity of expression have not always been successful and this contributes to that feeling of inadequacy. Many of the points dealt with need a wide range of detailed application yet I had to be content in large part with stating general principles of procedure with few illustrations. It has also been necessary to either by-pass or simply touch upon problems of controversy that call for extensive discussion. To mention a few: practical details of a harmonious relation between the work of Scripture and theology; the relations between dogmatic definitions and the deposit of revelation; the homogeneity of theology and dogma; the exact place of the theological conclusion in this homogeneity both in itself and in its relation to dogmatic development. All these I felt it

necessary to put aside since it seemed to me that they called for a discussion and study beyond the limits of this paper. Perhaps the most that can be said is that this paper indicates and throws into relief their position in the structure of theology. As such they may very well serve as a source of fruitful discussion in the future meetings of the Society.

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