

A CRITICAL SURVEY OF MODERN CONCEPTIONS OF DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT

THE complex and thorny question of development of Christian Doctrine has lost nothing of its actuality during recent years. Extensive writings, most occasional and at times personal in tone, have treated one or another phase of this perplexing problem. Father P. J. Donnelly, S.J., has provided an excellent background in his summaries and comments which appeared three years ago.¹

Frank strictures by such Dominicans as Fathers Garrigou-La-grange, Labourdette and Nichols have jarred the equilibrium of such Jesuits as Fathers Danielou, de Lubac, Brouillard and Le Blond with accusations of relativism and modernism. To their writings and others is fastened the tag of a "new theology," always evolving, condemned by Pope Pius XII in a talk reported by *Osservatore Romano*, September 19, 1946. Such a theology unduly deprecates the power of the mind to attain unchanging truth, overvalues the witness of the Christian experience, underrates the sufficiency of Scholastic Theology and defends a critical view of dogmatic formulas and notions seemingly not compatible with the immutability of dogma. These strong charges have been questioned by the accused and their defenders in explanations and clarifications of their thought. But the exchange of ideas continues unabated amid undercurrents of grave concern and strong conviction. The question is clearly actual.

PRELIMINARY CONSIDERATIONS

Our survey will sample some modern conceptions touching doctrinal developments which have appeared since nineteen hundred and thirty-seven. For this is the period of those writings which occasioned the opinion first, and later the conviction, among certain theologians that a studied attempt was underway to elaborate a new and dangerous theology.

¹ "On the Development of Dogma and the Supernatural" in *Theological Studies*, Vol. VIII (1947) 470-491, 668-669.

The problem of development stems from two basic facts. Stability of doctrine is an essential characteristic of the faith, since Christian revelation ceased with the death of the last Apostle. Yet the Living Magisterium has integrated in its faith doctrines which, before they were defined, had apparently been unknown, or in some cases even denied.

How are these facts, the first of which is a definitive teaching of the Church, to be reconciled? They appear as antinomies demanding a careful explanation. The methods generally used to demonstrate the link between developments and the original deposit of revelation may be termed the historical, the dialectical or logical, and the theological. Although these suggested solutions usually overlap a brief consideration of each will clarify their value.

The Historical Method. This method is illustrated in three theories.

1. The Apostles had explicit knowledge of all the dogmas, although they handed down to their successors only certain principles. This theory appears unlikely and offers no real solution to the problem.

2. Because of the discipline of the secret, there is an insufficiency of historical documentation for the early period of the Church. This explanation is obviously unsatisfactory since variations continued after this period.

3. There are three stages in the maturing of dogmas. In the beginning the Church was in peaceful possession of her doctrines. Then scientific doubts arose and a teaching was questioned. Finally the Living Magisterium, appealing to Sacred Scripture and to Tradition, definitively affirmed that the particular truth had always been in its possession and is revealed. The inadequacy of this analysis appears in the light of two considerations: first, such a theory implies some degree of explicit knowledge in the first stage, otherwise what could be the object of doubts and questions; second, the fact is that the evidence of history shows that the Church as a body—the Church Teaching as well as the Church Taught—has been affected by real development, and not merely theologians or a part of the faithful. Certain developments in Ecclesiology and Mariology are, at least, difficult to fit into this explanation.

The Logical or Dialectical Method. This theory is generally explained as follows:

Progress or development, affects the Church as a unit, with varying influences from the teaching authority, the doctors, the saints, the theologians, and the faithful. But the doctrines which have reached a term of development were contained in the original revealed principles in such a way, that a profound analysis of these principles together with vigorous syllogistic reasoning and deduction make explicit what is implicit in them. Whereas the influence of Christian piety, of the Christian experience, of Christian intuition, however great, is not essential. Were this theory the correct one, the solution of the problem of development would be in sight, but it fails to square with the fact that not all developments of doctrine are simply analytical. Witness the Assumption of Our Lady.

The Theological Method. This theory is, in effect, a combination of useful contributions from historical and logical considerations with the decisive role of the infallible Living Magisterium, guided by the Holy Spirit, in determining what are true developments from the original deposit of revelation. Where the resources of history and dialectics fail, the affirmation of the Church, when given, is clear and final. Thus, human reason, enlightened by faith, accepts reasonably whatever the teaching authority of the Church declares is revealed in the original ideas or principles of the deposit of faith. This method, if all the factors which enter into a particular development are cautiously and effectively evaluated, offers an explanation which neither ignores the supernatural character of the Church and her teaching authority, nor neglects the influence of Christian piety, history and logic in doctrinal progress.

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

Many and varied are the questions involved in the problem of development. We shall indicate only a selection, but their influence among suggested theories will be easily noted.

1. What is integrally meant by revelation? Is its object Christ, or teachings, or both? There is a deposit of revelation. What does "deposit" connote? In the expressions development of dogma and

evolution of dogma, how restricted is the word "dogma"? What effect does the meaning given "dogma" have on the term "development"?

2. How was revelation given by God to man? In the form of principles? Ideas? Propositions? What are the characteristics of these principles, or ideas, or propositions?

3. The Church possesses the deposit of revelation, which by her sacred Teaching Authority she is to preserve without corruption, teach and interpret without error. What is precisely meant by the Church, the Spouse of Christ? How may she be said to have the deposit? What is the function of the Holy Spirit in the care and interpreting of the deposit?

4. What actually develops, progresses, evolves? The deposit itself? Christian Doctrine as a whole, or individual doctrines or dogmas? The Magisterium's understanding? The collective Christian consciousness?

5. What factors play a part in development? Can all of them be accurately determined? What is the nature of their influence? How necessary are they, or any one of them?

6. How are true developments to be distinguished from false? Is the activity of the Holy Spirit merely negative, that is, preserving from error? Is it also positive, that is, guiding to truth? How far can His influence be analyzed by human reason?

7. What meaning have the expressions "explicit" and "implicit," "confused" and "clear" when modifying "manifestation," or when designating the manner a doctrine is contained in the deposit? Is the point of departure for a development "implicit" or "explicit"?

COMMENTS OF R. DRAGUET

Nature of Development. Professor Draguet, of the University of Louvain,² considering the results of historical studies of defined

² "L'Evolution des Dogmes" in *Apologetique*, Paris (1937), 1166-1192. "Essai d'une Theorie de developpement de la doctrine chretienne," in Notes of Lectures on Development of Tradition given at Louvain, 1938-1939. Cf. Remarks of Draguet in Review of L. Charlier, O.P., *Essai sur le probleme theologique*, in *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses*, XVI (1939), 143-145, a work subsequently placed on the Index. Cf. Conferences of Draguet, *Revue Catholique des idees et des faits*, Bruxelles (1936), Jan. 10; Feb. 7 and 14.

doctrines, concludes that doctrinal development is either (1) the making precise of an original idea, the central point of which is clear, the contours or fringes of which were obscure, vague, undetermined, or (2) the concrete application of a theoretical principle which has been admitted from the beginning. The doctrine of the Trinity, may serve as an example. From Apostolic times the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are spoken of as God, either directly or indirectly. But time and thought, reflection and reaction to criticism, clarification and clashing with enemies (within and without the Church) were needed before it became clear that there were three distinct Divine Persons possessing one and the same Divine Nature. In fact, attention and study were given to the Holy Spirit only after the basic Christological problem had been solved.

Manner of Realization. 1. An adequate explanation of the ways by which such a precision, or a concrete application, is reached is not furnished either by logical analysis or by logical exigency alone. From what is obscure, undetermined, analysis by itself will never reach the clear notion, the precision, which is the result of development. Nor can it demonstrate in all instances the *necessary* logical inclusion of that precision in the original idea or principle. Furthermore, logical exigency, when applied to divine realities, is necessarily limited for us to what are arguments of fitness; whether or no it conforms to God's Will is known only through His revelation, which is the point at issue. No satisfactory theory, therefore, is possible which does not take account of the supernatural order.

2. Professor Draguet suggests this explanation. The "Christian Sense"—difficult to define—enables the faithful (in the wide meaning of that term) to judge supernaturally the deposit of faith, owing to the influence of the Holy Spirit, Who guides both individuals and the Christian Community, the Church, unto truth. Since the connection between the results of development and the divinely given principles, or ideas, is in the supernatural order, the devotion of Christians plays a part, at least to the extent of helping them perceive, and pass judgment on, what is fitting. But this influence of the "Christian Sense" does not of itself bring certitude. The *fact* of universal persuasion in the Church of a development

(the result) must be combined with the *principle* of infallibility of the Living Magisterium. This principle is decisive.

Since the Teaching Authority of the Church cannot err in a definitive decision declaring that a development (doctrine) is a part of the original deposit of revelation, it follows that the Holy Spirit must guide the Church through an indefinite number of ways until the Magisterium is persuaded infallibly that the development is but the precision of what was vague in the original idea or the determination of what was undetermined in the original principle. Until such an infallible persuasion is reached the Teaching Authority may at some stage in the development make a prudential decision or take a prudential position.

Some of the human means which are part of God's plan for leading the Magisterium to a position, or a decision, are popular devotion, appearance of a heresy, new problems, work of theologians, influence of a certain theological school, and the like. However weak these factors may appear, they are influential. But the action of the Holy Spirit is the decisive factor.

Development and Revelation. 1. The doctrine that is the term of development must have been manifested in some way by the time the deposit of revelation was closed. Yet this could not have been in clear, proper terms. For example, in the dogma of the Immaculate Conception, and that of the Assumption, it obviously was not the case. Further, the Living Magisterium in the texts of definitions uses *declarare*, *exponere*, and similar expressions.

2. It is insufficient to consider written or oral traditions alone in the study of revelation. The context has to be known and evaluated. Christian revelation is of necessity presented in a *Christian context*. The manifestation of Christ, the Incarnate God is fundamental. Ideas, therefore, and principles must be fitted into that context. For example, Mary as the Mother of Christ, the Redeemer; Peter as the source of unity of Christ's Church on earth.

3. Our knowledge of psychology of the varying capacity of those to whom revelation was given and of the limitations of human reason, makes evident that, humanly speaking, confusion, vagueness, lack of precision is natural in many cases. The Church is made up of fallible men and uses fallible means as a society on earth.

Even the influence of the Holy Spirit does not destroy the human character of the Church's members, but rather uses it and perfects it in ways not always susceptible of analysis even in retrospect.

4. Both supernatural action and human action must be given due weight. The intervention of the Holy Spirit is required (a) to guide and direct the Church to clear ideas and precisions, and (b) to make the Living Teaching Authority aware that the term of development in a particular case has been realized.

5. Although it is certain that the Apostles knew all the central points, all the principles, there is no evidence that they had knowledge of the precisions or concrete applications which would be the object of a development.³

COMMENTS OF H. SIMONIN, O.P.

Father Simonin's study⁴ of the familiar terms "explicit" and "implicit" contain some penetrating ideas concerning doctrinal developments.

1. A simple appeal to processes by which the human mind establishes a conclusion from rational principles will never provide adequate knowledge of the problem of the progress of dogma, since the latter is a very special phenomenon. Human reason is not the norm of adhering to faith, nor of its progress.

2. The direct passage from ancient formulas to new definitions, which explain those formulas, is difficult and uncertain in its result, since they are concerned with a mystery. Because of the limits of human reasoning, the Magisterium must intervene for a development strictly dogmatic.

3. The Church in her social existence possesses the revealed deposit given by Christ. This he calls the "implicit" which is maintained in the "Church Taught" by the "Church Teaching." The "implicit" is not contained in the "explicit" as such, in as much as it is in act, but only in the measure it is, from another point of

³ Ideas somewhat similar to Draguet's are expressed in a posthumous article, written before 1914 by P. Rousselot. Cf. "Note sur le Developpement du Dogme," *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, XXXVII (1950), 113-120.

⁴ "Implicitite' et 'explicite' dans le developpement du dogme," *Angelicum*, XIV (1937), 126-145.

view, in potency for new definitions, that is, itself "implicit." The "explicit" is contained in the "implicit," in the definable fringe of the mystery.

4. Although many factors enter into development and many criteria are suggested, only the official declaration of the Church, which has divine assistance, permits us to know with certainty what is definable. This declaration must safeguard in a formula the apparent antinomies of the doctrine of faith.

5. In the absence of an official declaration, recourse must be had to the "Christian Sense," which manifests itself among the great doctors of the faith and in the ordinary teaching of the Church.

COMMENTS OF F. TAYMANS, S.J.

Father Taymans, S.J.⁵ opines that the problem of doctrinal progress may be profitably studied from the point of view of the living unity of the Church and her divine resources of understanding. Definitions by the Magisterium explain notions already in the deposit of revelation. This "making explicit" constitutes an actual progress (1) as regards the truths thus formulated, and (2) as regards the faith of Christians which expresses now in distinct affirmations what before was admittedly only implicit.

The doctrine of the Mystical Body⁶ urges us to find in the Church, as in every person, unity of life, of consciousness, of love. That "conscience" of the Church is the synthesis of the divers "consciences" of the members of the Mystical Body. In it is found the whole mystery of the formation and development of divine revelation. The elements necessary for the perfect understanding of this object of her "conscience" the Church gradually determines by means of reflection.

⁵ "Les Progres du dogme," *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, Tome 71 (1949), 687-700.

⁶ Taymans is greatly influenced by the ideas of E. Mersch explaining (a) the human consciousness of Christ and that of Christians, and (b) the Church's function of teaching in *La Theologie du Corps Mystique*, 2 vols. Louvain, 1944. Cf. posthumous article of Mersch, "Connaissance et conscience," *Nouvelle Revue Theologique*, Tome 72 (1950), 337-356.

Object of Conscience: Christ in the Church. 1. The object of the consciousness of the first believers was Christ in the Church. This is revelation. The early Christians knew they possessed all in Christ. All is given in Christ present as a transcendent reality which the Christian conscience has never fully grasped. They were the guardians of this truth in which they ought to grow.

2. Here is the mystery which requires ever new researches in view of a possession, always more perfect, of the truth. For there is no truth, since in Christ we attain the mystery of God and the mystery of man, that is not attached to Christ as to a center which explains it.

3. Thus the development of dogma results from the discovery of the real relations of truths, which hitherto have been ignored although affirmed implicitly, with the central mystery of Christ in the Church. The Magisterium, when it defines a dogma, brings to light these real bonds.

The Conscious Subject. 1. All Christians, the Church Teaching and the Church Taught, members of the Mystical Body of Christ, who live a personal life of thought and prayer constitute the conscious subject. Christ Himself, the Head, present in each of the faithful by faith and grace, enlightens ever more clearly the whole of His Body.

2. All are united by the Holy Spirit Who harmonizes each conscience with that of Christ. Two simultaneous activities result: Christ enlightens Christians through the Holy Spirit and they are guided by the same Spirit in their search for a better understanding of Christ.

3. To explain Christ, therefore, means to bring to light the real bonds, still hidden between Christ and the realities of which He, by His Incarnation, is the center. This is dogmatic development.

Object of Conscience in the Conscious Subject. 1. The object, Truth itself, is perceived by us less than any other truth. It is susceptible indefinitely of further understanding and so of research.

2. The Church affirms implicitly the real existence of all the conditions of the object proposed explicitly for belief. But this "explicit" is not a concept included in another, nor a concept con-

tained in an image, nor a conclusion enveloped in premises, but an affirmation lived in the midst of all the affirmations.

3. The Church—pastors and faithful united to Christ—has the power through the Holy Spirit to bring about the synthesis of supernatural notions, ideas, principles. For all the conditions of this object of consciousness, Truth itself, exist now in the Church in what may be called her unconscious. But the “conscience” of Christians, united to that of Christ by the Holy Spirit, is capable of actualizing the intelligible in potency.

4. It is the task of the entire Church—Church Teaching, Church Taught, piety of the faithful, work of theologians, and controversialists—enlightened by the Holy Spirit to distinguish what is revealed from what is not. For the Holy Spirit provokes research, guides every vital action of the faithful, and forms the *sensus Christi* which judges the conformity or not of a proposed synthesis with the deposit of revelation which the Church possesses.

5. Every formulation of dogma, therefore, expresses a condition, or an aspect, of the life of Christ and of that of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ. Once the personality of the Church is admitted with St. Gregory the Great, the substantial identity of revealed truth is guaranteed. For the Church, a living person, has the power of reflection whereby the affirmations “lived” by her during the centuries may be expressed in explicit terms.

COMMENTS OF E. MERSCH, S.J.

Father Mersch, the well-known theologian of the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ, sketches his ideas concerning development in the posthumous work published by Father J. Levie, S.J., and others.⁷

1. The Church is in a mysterious way He who transmits the truth and who is the resumé of all truth, since there is a mystical union between Christ and His Church. When the Church teaches, Christ speaks by her. He is in the Magisterium to confide to us the ideas for study, to sustain the effort, to correct deviations and

⁷ *La Théologie du Corps Mystique*, 3rd edit. Paris (1949), Vol. I, Ch. II, Ch. XVIII.

to approve the result. Hence the diffusion of true doctrine is the work of the Church, the work of Christ in the Church.

2. Christ taught in images, practical advices, lessons of the moment, parables, and above all by example. He did not reveal explicitly and in clear formulas various doctrines, such as the Incarnation, the Trinity, vicarious satisfaction and the like. He did not explain Christian doctrine as an ensemble of propositions. Rather He taught the sketches, the beginning of formulas, the seeds of future doctrine. He acted as the Son of God, as the One Who would send the Holy Spirit, as the Saviour, as the Founder of the Church, His Mystical Body. It would be the task of the Church to express these things in words, to erect these realities into a body of teachings.

3. Christ aids the Church in this task from within through His Spirit Who recalls to mind what is needful and prevents any additions to what has been possessed from the beginning. All doctrinal progress consists in communicating to the members what pre-exists in the Head. There is growth in understanding. What is better understood is more explicitly possessed. Christ is the "recapitulation" of all Christian doctrine.

COMMENTS OF H. DE LUBAC, S.J.

Father de Lubac⁸ professes no theory of doctrinal development, but is content with certain indications based on the great fact that Jesus is the object of faith.

1. The phenomenon of development is complex. Hence those who would reason, as if the whole problem of dogmatic progress is the problem of theological conclusions logically linked to original revelation, have too narrow a view. The penetration of the Christian reality through human thoughts is done by means of defense, elimination, obstacles, transformation and assimilation. A simple appeal to the process of the human mind will not give an adequate solution.

⁸ "Le Probleme du Developpement du Dogme," *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, XXXV (1948), 130-160. Cf. C. E. Sheedy, "Opinions Concerning Doctrinal Development," *American Ecl. Review*, CXX (1949), 19-32.

2. The Church must interrogate her "conscience." Although she consults the theologians, at the same time she controls and judges them. She is not bound by the reasons they allege, nor does she need a valid proof by way of a theological conclusion, or an irrefutable historical proof. The theologians must work in a Christian climate, considering the suggestions which come from the collective belief and from his own spirit of faith.

3. Revealed truth has an intrinsic supernatural and mysterious character. Hence development of doctrine differs vitally from progress in human sciences and opinions. The guidance of the Holy Spirit remains a mystery. We cannot see all of it; we cannot master it. The more we understand it, the more we realize that it is beyond us and so disconcerts us. In fact, every new light brings a new and more profound obscurity. Antinomies greet us on every side.

4. The laws of human logic, therefore, ought not be applied universally, without precautions and without correctives, to a mystery. Our concepts must be revised and adapted to the revealed truth which is the norm; for example, person and nature. Certain elements in the truth which serves as a principle may escape us. Yet rational organization answers a profound need of our Spirit although this is not primary. Supernatural means and criteria are required.

5. What is immutable? Dogma such as it is known—*this* dogma. Yet there is some progressive knowledge. But the content of revelation in its subsistent integrality is neither exactly, nor sufficiently, designated as a series of declarations. Revelation should not be reduced to a certain number of formulas, absolute, univocal, and proper, serving as first principles or majors. For how can one start from a notion of dogma in as much as defined by the Church, when the problem is to explain and justify the facts which brought about successive definitions?

6. The first Christians had a concrete and living perception of Christ. Many dogmas were latent in this first perception. The separation of aspects is necessary and legitimate. But we are handicapped because we cannot recover completely the one total reality of Christ which provides the basis of our abstractions, and to which

revelation has an intrinsic bond. The global object of revelation, therefore, the whole of dogma, is Jesus Christ, the Redeemer.

7. This treasure has been possessed from the beginning. Obviously there is no increase here. The substance of dogma, then, is less a teaching than a person. This concrete "whole" is proposed not only to our intelligence but also as an appeal to transform our lives. The separation into certain particular truths, however necessary, never exhausts the content of this concrete "whole." Explanations of this Reality, abstractions by which certain particular truths are separated from the global object, are but the "minting" into distinct pieces of a treasure already possessed in its entirety by the Church. This is making "explicit" the "implicit." The Christian intelligence will never be sufficiently explained unless the versatility of the ways of God and the action of the Holy Spirit are properly appreciated.

COMMENTS OF H. BOUILLARD, S.J.

Father Bouillard, S.J.,⁹ has not elaborated a theory of evolution and of permanence in theology, but some of his ideas relating to the problem of development have caused violent repercussions.

1. The history of theology makes clear the permanence of divine truth and, at the same time, what is contingent in the notions and the systems whereby we receive that truth. To maintain in new intellectual contexts the purity of an absolute affirmation, theologians have spontaneously expressed it in new notions. For unchanging affirmations do not subsist independent of contingent concepts. But although concepts may change, the new ones contain the same absolute relations, the same eternal affirmations, since they are equivalent concepts. The notions differ but do not change essentially, since they are analogous expressing the same reality differently.

⁹ *Conversion et Grace*, Aubier (1944), 211-224; "Notions Conciliaires et Analogie de la Verite," *Recherches de Science Religieuse*, XXXV (1948), 251-271. Cf. "L'intention fondamentale de Maurice Blondel et la Theologie," *Recherches*, XXXVI (1949), 321-402; J. de Tonquedec et H. Houillard, "Maurice Blondel et la Theologie," *Recherches*, XXXVIII (1950), 98-112.

2. Councils have not consecrated technical terms precisely as they are bound to a system. They approve them as a stable human notion. To understand their meaning one must give to the terms employed the same meaning as they who are responsible for these terms intend. To explain technical terms requires using other terms which are equivalent. Although the notions are contingent they express absolute truth, for truth resides in the judgment, not in the concept.

3. Other notions may be substituted for conveying divine truth, for greater precision or for emphasizing an aspect hitherto obscure. In the history of ideas there is a development; notions become more precise. But now modes of thought sometimes abandon precious elements of the past. Revelation transcends theology and has its own intelligibility which is independent of systems and even of theological science.

4. In fact, different councils, and sometimes the same council, have expressed an identical truth in different terms. Even though individuals in using other expressions may deceive themselves, the Church, assisted by the Holy Spirit, distinguishes with surety what is equivalent from what is contradictory, what is essential from what is accessory.

5. A theology cannot be justified other than by its accord with revelation, Christian experience and rational exigencies.

COMMENTS OF C. BOYER, S.J.

Father Boyer, S.J.,¹⁰ writing in criticism of what he calls the new methodology in theology, expresses his conviction that the logical method of development alone preserves the stability of doctrine.

1. Our means of investigation must be able to perceive the logical bond existing between the progressive precision of development and the indetermination of its beginning. Once the progress of a truth has reached a term, in retrospect, at least, its logical character must be able to be seen. In fact, even before the approbation of the Magisterium, one should be able to trace a doctrine

¹⁰ "Qu'est-ce que La Theologie? Reflexions sur une controverse," *Gregorianum*, XXI (1940), 255-266.

to its sources. That of the Immaculate Conception flows from the Protoevangelium, the greatness of Mary as the Mother of God, and the greatness of Christ.

2. The intervention of the Magisterium is necessary to bring an end to a particular development. But the Church, assisted by the Holy Spirit, places her authority on the side of pure logic. The truth defined today is shown to be implicit in certain topics by theological speculation.

3. If there is no truly rational and logical bond between the revelation which closed with death of the last Apostle and a later belief, then there is not development but creation. Every new knowledge of faith is an explanation of a truth contained in some way formally or virtually in the faith of yesteryear. It must derive an analysis or deduction from the revealed notion given in the beginning.

4. To appeal to "life" and to irrational factors is a concession to certain contemporary philosophers.

5. Strictly speaking, what is revealed does not develop, but only the knowledge of what is revealed.

COMMENTS OF R. GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE, O.P.

Father Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P.,¹¹ deeply concerned with certain trends of contemporary theology, has questioned especially the view of certain theologians concerning the terms employed by the Magisterium and their relation to the immutability of defined truths.

1. General councils have, in fact, consecrated even technical notions. These terms have their roots in absolutely immutable primary concepts, and in the primary principles of natural reason and common sense. To abandon these notions, or to substitute for them others to be equivalent or analogous, would modify the meaning of

¹¹ "Verite et immutabilite du dogme," *Angelicum*, XXIV (1947), 124-139. "Les notions consacrees par les conciles," *ibid.*, 217-230. "Necessite de revenir a la definition traditionnelle de la Verite," *Angelicum*, XXV (1948), 185-198. "L'immutabilite des verites definies et la surnaturel," *ibid.*, 285-298. "L'immutabilite du dogme selon le Concile du Vatican et la relativisme," *Angelicum*, XXVI (1949), 309-322.

their teaching. For concepts truly universal, valid always and everywhere, are required to determine and conserve the exact sense of truths revealed by God.

2. This type of analogy has no real foundation. Notions really analogous are applied, not to the same reality, but to different realities. A distinction is necessary between changing notions and using equivalent words to express the same notions.

3. The notions and judgments that the words of Christ express have not only a "phenomenal" but also an ontological and transcendent value in the order of being. They express with absolute truth the intimate life of God, in spite of the imperfections of analogical knowledge.

4. Our understanding of dogma progresses in extent, in clarity and in certitude. Development is the passage from the implicit, the confused, to the explicit. First there is the confused concept, then the distinct concept, and finally the concept "lived." The concept remains the same; the aspects differ.

5. The Church sees that there is a point of doctrine to examine, searches for what is conformable to the documents and the spirit of orthodox tradition, and in due time gives a definite pronouncement. All dogmas are linked to God as the beginning and the end, and to God Incarnate.

6. There is a danger of relativism and of a denial of the immutability of dogma in the ideas of those who would construct a "new theology."

CONCLUSION

This survey of modern conceptions of doctrinal developments, by no means complete, suggests certain conclusions and invites some questions.

Comments:

1. Recent conceptions of doctrinal developments emphasize the "mysterious" character of revealed truths and the influence of the Holy Spirit in the Church's custodianship and interpretation of them. The problem, generally, is not restricted to logic or dialectics.

2. The identity of Christ, the global object of revelation, with the Church is underlined by a few theologians. Is such an identification valid? What implications would it have for the problem of development?

3. No complete agreement exists as to how revelation was entrusted to the Church.

4. The importance of the Magisterium is stressed. But the relations between this Teaching Authority and the orders of logic and of experience are not always sufficiently treated nor clearly delineated. Careful study of these relations in the light of the Magisterium's directives should be fruitful.

5. Difference of opinion exists concerning *what* develops. The deposit? Knowledge of the content of the deposit? Dogma? Christian Doctrine? Tradition in the sense of the living teaching of the Church?

6. Much of the obscurity in expressions and acrimony in controversies would be eliminated were there greater uniformity of terminology. A sane and prudent theory of development would mature more quickly were this done.

Questions:

1. What contribution to development does the Teaching Authority of the Church make? Positive theology? Speculative theology? Christian piety? The concrete circumstances of a definition or of a prudential decision by the Magisterium?

2. What meaning should be given to the difficult and vague expression "the Christian Sense"? What is meant by doctrines "lived" before they are explicitly known?

3. How can a truth be said to be "revealed" yet not be "explicit"?

4. Is there a valid use of analogous notions? What meaning or meanings has analogy? To what extent are differences ignored in analogies? Have notions used in definitions any contingent character? If so, how reconcile it with permanency of meaning?

5. Is the so-called "vitalism" a danger for the doctrine of stability? If so, what precautions are necessary? Does it lead neces-

sarily to the "relativism" of the "new theology" which Pope Pius XII characterized as "*semper itura numquam perventura?*"¹²

6. What is the meaning of the Church's conscience or consciousness? Who participates in it? How?

7. What is the real meaning of Tradition? As a source of doctrine?

8. In what sense may Jesus Christ be designated as the "whole" of dogma? Does this concept clarify or confuse the problem of doctrinal development?

Summary of Discussion

FATHER EUGENE BURKE, C.S.P., began the discussion of Father Galvin's paper by commenting briefly on some of the issues raised. He stressed the importance of the theological element in the study of doctrinal development, pointing out that the Magisterium of the Church is the constitutive element, and that there is no development *in facto esse* until it has been established as such by the Magisterium. Naturally, he added, the understanding of the phenomenon of development presupposes a sound historical technique and an appreciation of the dialectical process involved. Father Burke concluded his comments by expressing decided reservations as to the soundness of the "affective and mystical" explanation of doctrinal development currently proposed by certain theologians.

Father Galvin, S.S., thanked Father Burke for his statement and agreed that the affective approach can be misleading. He maintained that it is dangerously vague to state simply that a Christian, living a Christian life, understands doctrine better "*and thus contributes to the development of doctrine.*" Father Galvin also paid tribute to the work of John Henry Cardinal Newman in the development field and stressed the historical and theoretical importance of the broad framework proposed in Newman's pioneering *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

Father Weigel, S.J., called attention to three fundamental problems implicit in any study of development. These problems are, he

¹² Cf. *Osservatore Romano*, Sept. 19, 1946.

said: (1) the epistemological problem of knowledge itself—of true “intellectualism” as compared with a narrow, exclusively dialectical “rationalism”; (2) the problem of theology as a human science which must be distinguished from revelation; and (3) the problem of the role of the theologian in the process of development.

Father Galvin expressed his appreciation of Father Weigel's contribution and pointed out that the problems mentioned have been given a variety of treatments and a variety of answers: distinguished theologians still differ, for example, as to the adequate definition of theology and hence *a fortiori* as to the role of the theologian in development.

Father Schumacher, C.S.C., concluded the discussion by reminding the members of the Society that questions such as that of doctrinal development have a practical importance for the college teacher and convert instructor, who must respond to the plea for clear-cut answers to the difficulties involved. He called upon his hearers to contribute to the formulation of the definite and readily understandable answers needed.

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