

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT PROBLEMS

FUNDAMENTAL AND DOGMA

- [1] *The Thesis Form as an Instrument of Theological Instruction.* Much to be desired is an acceptable definition of "thesis form," and then discussion of its origin, its necessity, its value, and the possibilities of modifying it, complementing it, or even supplanting it. Strongly recommended by the Committee for seminar or panel discussion.
- [2] *The Concept of Positive Theology.* Basically, what is positive theology? What does "theology" mean in this context? What is the relationship between positive and systematic theology? What is the methodology of positive theology? How establish it as a genuine science? Highly recommended by the Committee as a paper to supplement the 1955 discussion on concept of biblical theology.
- [3] *The General Unity of Theology.* How is the general unity of theology preserved in view of the diversity, in matter and method, of the special theological disciplines (apologetics, dogma, moral, positive theology, conciliar theology, credal theology, etc.)? Cf. recent thesis of Brother Luke, F.S.C., at Catholic U.; also Muñez, *De diversis muneribus sacrae theologiae*.
- [4] *Sacramentals.* Poverty of literature on sacramentals suggests that it might be worth while to explain the nature of sacramentals; their origin historically; their value; how they operate; their use and abuse; the theological treatment of the problem in the course of the centuries.
- [5] *Theology OF the Laity.* Notion of layman; relation of theology OF laity to ecclesiology; priesthood of laity; laity and teaching authority; laity and governing authority; laity and the apostolate; "spirituality" of the laity. Relation of the above to the theology of history, of work, of terrestrial realities. Strongly urged by the Committee as a seminar, but with the stress on the dogmatic bases. Cf. Congar, *Jalons . . .* (Paris, 1953); Philips, *Le rôle du laïcat* (Paris, 1954). Cf. addresses of Pius XII to all classes of people, all avocations.
- [6] *The Mystical Body and the Communion of Saints in Heaven.* Is there a Mystical Body in heaven? If so, what is its nature, what are its requirements? Those who are not in the Mystical Body on earth, are they in it in heaven? Cf. Pius XII, *Mystici corporis*; Tromp, *Corpus Christi . . .*

- [7] *Theology of the Reserved Blessed Sacrament*. Cf. article in *Worship* 29 (Dec., 1954) 26-34: "The whole symbolism [of tabernacle-Communion] leads [the] minds [of the laity] away from this fact [that they are sharing in the Sacrifice of the altar]." "Altar-Communion . . . is the *authentic* form of Communion and needs no justifying. It is tabernacle-Communion which needs justifying as lawful. . . ." Problem: Is reservation of many hosts genuine devotional development (analogous to doctrinal development re the Eucharist) or degeneration? What is the relationship between the reserved Blessed Sacrament and the Sacrifice of the Mass?
- [8] *The Concept of Mystical Personality*. The problem revolves around the doctrine of the Mystical Body. It is made even more actual by the use made of the concept in *Mystici corporis* as descriptive of Christ's relationship to His Church. Involves study of the background of the concept, its origin; also penetration of the concept of personality.
- [9] *The Eucharist in Relation to the Threefold Power of the Church*. Is it defensible, is it meaningful, to see in the Eucharist (a) the "sum" and, in a sense, the source of all the Church's doctrinal teaching; (b) the apex of her power to sanctify; and (c) to say that ecclesiastical discipline is ultimately ordered toward fitness to participate in the Eucharist?
- [10] *Doctrinal Development: A Basic Framework*. A follow-up on Father John J. Galvin's paper at the 1950 Convention, "A Critical Survey of Modern Conceptions of Doctrinal Development." The difference: here a particular theory would be espoused. Some fundamental questions: Should we teach anything about doctrinal development? If so, what? Cf., e.g., Newman's treatment of the development of an idea in the human mind. Are we in a better position to espouse a theory, must we even change some previously held ideas on development, in consequence of *Humani generis* and the definition of the Assumption?
- [11] *Theological Aspects of Church Art*. Cf. T. R. O'Connor, "The Visual Arts and the Teaching Church," *Theological Studies* 15 (1954) 447 ff. Would study, among other things, the practical obligations of theologians with reference to acceptable Church art. Includes, therefore, dogmatic and moral considerations. Warmly recommended by the Committee for panel discussion by theologian, artist, liturgist.

MORAL AND ASCETICAL

- [12] *Atomic and Hydrogen Warfare*. The moral principles involved, e.g., is this merely an application of the usual principles, or has something different been added? Suggestions: liceity of "preventive warfare"

with such weapons; liceity of threat to use such weapons, even if actual use is not intended; limitations of strategic warfare as distinguished from tactical warfare.

- [13] *Co-operation with Non-Catholics in Ethico-Religious School Programs.* How far can Catholics go in co-operating with public or private schools in projected programs or curricula which involve, e. g., "teaching spiritual values" or "presenting all religions on an objective basis"? Does the teaching of the Catholic religion (e. g., by seminarians) to Catholics in schools under non-Catholic auspices serve as encouragement, an inducement to Catholic parents to send their children to such schools? Could include Newman Club program as a problem in co-operation.
- [14] *The Morality of Art.* Supplement to Father Harold C. Gardiner's paper at the 1954 Convention, "Moral Principles for Discerning the Obscene"—but obviously much broader in scope.
- [15] *World Government and National Sovereignty.* Relationship which should obtain between the two; right of a world government to act in a national territory in the name of the common good; right of an individual country to hold out against world government or against the conception of the common good espoused by a world government in concrete cases. Responsibility of wealthy countries to the less favored.
- [16] *The Concept of Servile Work.* Is it necessary to revise the traditional concept of servile work in the light of contemporary social conditions? If so, what would an acceptable reconstruction be?
- [17] *Suitable Penances for Different Classes of Penitents.* Would involve an investigation of the doctrinal basis of sacramental satisfaction; study of the historical background; survey of current practice. Some further aspects: prudential problems involved; the remedial aspect of penance.
- [18] *Moral Aspects of the Movement toward Racial Integration.* Implications for education, housing, restaurants, public utilities, places of amusement, etc. Moral obligations induced by the Supreme Court decisions. Special implications for Catholics?
- [19] *Social Security, Relief, Old-Age Pensions.* Are these questions of insurance? Or alms? What virtues are involved? Problems of fraud, deceit, restitution, etc.
- [20] *Motives for Mortification.* Suggested approaches: (a) the ascetical theology of St. John of the Cross in this regard; (b) criticism of certain excesses, or at least ambiguities, in recent years in the U. S. A. on "natural" motivation, pleasure, etc.
- [21] *Theological and Psychiatric Aspects of Habitual Sin.* Highly recommended by the Committee for panel discussion: lay psychiatrist and pastoral theologian.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM

- | | | |
|---------------|--|-------|
| (1) PAPERS: | (a) Concept of Positive Theology | [2] |
| | (b) Doctrinal Development: Basic Framework | [10] |
| | (c) Co-operation in School Programs | [13] |
| (2) SEMINARS: | (d) Theology OF the Laity | [5] |
| | (e) Reserved Blessed Sacrament | [7] |
| | (f) Concept of Servile Work | [16] |
| | (g) Suitable Penances | [17] |
| | (h) Thesis Form as Instrument of Instruction | [1] |
| (3) PANEL | (i) Theological Aspects of Church Art | [11] |
| | (j) Habitual Sin | [21] |

WALTER J. BURGHARDT, S.J.

Woodstock College

Woodstock, Md.