

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT PROBLEMS

### FUNDAMENTAL AND DOGMA

- [1] *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? This would supplement the 1955 paper and discussion on the concept of biblical theology.
- [2] *Doctrinal Development: A Basic Theory*. Should we teach anything about doctrinal development? If so, what? Cf., e.g., Newman's theory 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? Highly recommended by the Committee as a full-scale paper.
- [3] *The Treatment of Miracles in Fundamental Theology*. In line with recent research, should the emphasis be placed on the miracle as a religious sign, with consequent de-emphasis of the concept of miracle as an exception to the laws of nature? Should miracles be seen primarily as proofs or as acts of revelation? Cf. Taymans, Dhanis, de Bovis, Liégé, etc.
- [4] *The Formation of the Gospels in the Light of the Synoptic Problem*. The last few years have seen renewed activity in the field of Synoptic Source-Criticism. Vaganay's hypothesis is a direct, sustained attack on the radical form of the Two-Source theory. Cf. also the work of Léon-Dufour, Cerfaux, Levie, Schmid, Dodd, and Dahl. Important for the course in apologetics.
- [5] *Demythologizing and Basic Christian Dogmas*. The fact is, demythologizing is a constant concern outside the Catholic Church. The paper envisaged here would show its implications for basic doctrines like the Incarnation, resurrection, redemption, end of the world. Cf. V. O'Keefe in *Theological Studies* 16 (1955) 77-85; also the review of Marlé, *ibid.*, 17 (1956) 420-25.
- [6] *The Concept of Biblical Inspiration*. Would appraise the significant work done on this problem in contemporary research (cf., e.g., Benoit in the revised edition of *Initiation biblique*, and recently in *Revue biblique*), and answer the question: is the traditional approach to biblical inspiration in need of revision?

- [7] *The Infallibility of the Church*. The negative emphasis vs. the positive (guidance, providence). The distinction and the relationship between infallibility and doctrinal providence.
- [8] *Theological Notes: A System*. A follow-up on the 1954 paper. Would suggest a uniform system of theological qualifications (*cen-surae*), give illustrations of each, and perhaps indicate the relationship of such qualifications to the problem of doctrinal development.
- [9] *One or Two Acts of Existence in Christ?* For example, is the distinction between *esse primario* and *esse secundario* metaphysically valid? What of de la Taille's created actuation by Uncreated Act? Position of St. Thomas.
- [10] *Theology of Devotion to the Sacred Heart*. The actuality of the problem has been heightened by the recent Encyclical. What were the assured positions before the Encyclical, what were the debatable and debated issues? What clarifications have been achieved in the light of the Encyclical? Perhaps a good example of development of doctrine.
- [11] *The Seminary Course in Mariology*. Its content and divisions; the essential theses; the doctrinal notes or qualifications; what can be taught (e.g., on Coredeemption) to seminarians, as distinct from a mere listing of opinions?
- [12] *Theology of the Sacramental Character*. Suggested approaches: clarification of the concept; diverse theologies, e.g., Aquinas vs. Scheeben; exposition of the notion of configuration; etc.
- [13] *The Effect of Confirmation*. Cf. the recent literature (Greenstock, Bouyer, Anciaux, Martimort, de Vooght, Thornton, Lampe, etc.) exploring confirmation from various angles. The present paper would concentrate on the proposed effects of the sacrament: soldiers in the cause of Christ? participation in the priesthood of Christ? share in His prophetic mission? new likeness to Christ? destiny to social apostolate? etc. Historical development is fascinating.
- [14] *The Nature and Theological Status of the Gifts of the Holy Ghost*. The existence of the Gifts; where they are; their nature and proper operation. The approach would be not simply dogmatic but ascetical as well, revealing the significance of the Gifts for Christian living, for the life of grace.
- [15] *The Treatise De Novissimis and Contemporary Science*. Should the treatise be rewritten or reworked in the light of new discoveries in the physical sciences (biology, physics, cosmology); e.g., the question of the qualities of the transfigured body?

- [16] *Sin as an Offense against God.* How reconcile with the complaint of *Humani generis*, "Some are subverting the true concept of sin as *offensa Dei*," and with the constant teaching of the Church, the opinion of some contemporary theologians that sin cannot properly be said to offend God, since we cannot add to, or subtract from, His intrinsic glory and happiness? Cf. St. Thomas: "Non enim Deus a nobis offenditur, nisi ex eo quod contra nostrum bonum agimus."

## MORAL AND ASCETICAL

- [17] *Methodology of Moral Theology.* The emphasis would be on establishing, or clarifying, what should be the scientific methodology of moral (and perhaps ethics as well). Would naturally include the problem: is moral, as at present presented, a scientific discipline?
- [18] *The Virtue of Prudence in the Course of Moral Theology.* What role does prudence play in the various approaches to moral, in the different presentations? For example, it plays a prominent role in the strictly Thomistic approach; in many manuals it is seemingly slighted. Cf. John R. Connery, "Prudence and Morality," *Theological Studies* 13 (1952) 564: "A glance through modern manuals . . . leaves the impression that it has little moral significance. If it is treated at all, it is dealt with only in passing, or at most as a kind of isolated virtue."
- [19] *Evaluative Cognition.* The validity of the principle: it is not enough for freedom and imputability that there be a merely conceptual cognition; in addition there is required the ability to weigh and evaluate the substantial elements of the proposed action (evaluative cognition). Its implications for moral (theology of sin), for canon law (validity of marriage consent of a person without evaluative cognition of marriage), for civil law (cf. McNaughton Rule: ability to tell right from wrong suffices for the crime of a supposedly insane person to be justly imputed to him; the Rule is hotly disputed in legal circles at present).
- [20] *Re-examination of the Principles of the Indirect Voluntary and the Double Effect.* What is desirable is an acceptable formulation which would take into consideration the development of the principles (cf. J. T. Mangan, in *Theological Studies* [1949] 41-61), a clear statement of their scope, and their concrete pertinence for problems usually treated under mutilation; cf. grafts, organic transplantation, etc.
- [21] *Situation Ethics: Influence on Contemporary Catholicism.* Situation ethics has been condemned; but there is evidence of an unhealthy influence of this so-called "new morality" on Catholic thought which has escaped formal condemnation; e.g., there are reflections of it in

Catholic literature, in a false approach to the norm of morality, etc. Cf. recent articles of Kenneth Moore, O.Carm., in *American Ecclesiastical Review*.

- [22] *The Concept of Servile Work*. Is it necessary to revise the traditional conception of servile work in the light of contemporary social conditions? If so, what would an acceptable reconstruction be? Recommended for panel discussion.
- [23] *Principles for Judging the Morality of Right-to-Work Laws Enacted Recently in Some States*. (1) The facts: the concrete laws enacted in the States under discussion. (2) The principles of morality involved; e.g., are there circumstances in which such laws can be condemned? How much of the answer depends on facts and circumstances which may vary from State to State? Whose authority should be preferred: experts in labor relations, or theologians? Highly recommended for paper or panel discussion.
- [24] *Censorship*. What are the principles, moral and legal, that govern censorship in the realm of literature and art? Application to current issues; cf., e.g., recent controversy (*Books on Trial, Harper's, America*) on NODL.
- [25] *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. Cf. unilateral action of England and France in Egypt-Israel situation. Responsibility of wealthy countries to the less favored.
- [26] *Moral Aspects of the Movement toward Racial Integration*. Implications for housing, education, restaurants, public utilities, places of amusement, etc. Moral obligations induced by the Supreme Court decisions. Distinction between obligations from justice, charity, prudence, etc. Special implications for Catholics? Is compulsory segregation by reason of race alone always wrong?
- [27] *Tranquilizing Drugs*. First, the facts: their widespread use to induce euphoria; as substitute for custodial care; the uncertainty as to their ultimate effect; etc. Second, the moral judgments. Recommended for moral seminar; suggested that a physician be invited to present the facts, and a moralist to offer the moral judgments arising out of the facts presented.
- [28] *The Obligation of Following a Religious Vocation*. Is the usual formulation of the problem and its solution (precept or counsel?) a false or at least inadequate formulation? Is there an area of morality here which has not been touched? Involves survey of patristic, Scholastic, and post-Tridentine literature.

- [29] *College Religion and Vocations*. What is, or should be, the relationship between the college course in religion (or theology) and the cultivation of vocations to the priesthood, religious life, sisterhood? Recommended by the Committee as a seminar, especially for those interested primarily in college religion.

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SUGGESTED PROGRAM

I. PAPERS:	(1) Doctrinal Development	[ 2]
	(2) Sacramental Character	[12]
	(3) Right-to-Work Laws	[23]
II. SEMINARS:	(4) College Religion and Vocations	[29]
	(5) Tranquilizing Drugs	[27]
	(6) Devotion to Sacred Heart	[10]
	(7) Treatment of Miracles	[ 3]
III. PANEL:	(8) Right-to-Work Laws	[23]
	or	
	(9) Concept of Servile Work	[22]
	or	
	(10) Indirect Voluntary, Double Effect	[20]

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