

## REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT PROBLEMS

### FUNDAMENTAL AND DOGMA

- [1] *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 then in *Revue biblique*), and answer the question: Is the traditional approach to biblical inspiration in need of revision? Note: This topic has already been chosen by the Board of Directors, at the 1957 Convention, as the principal paper for 1958, and Father David Stanley, S.J., of the Jesuit Seminary, Toronto, has accepted the invitation to present it.
- [2] *History and Historical Method: Its Place and Function in Fundamental Theology*. Involves a number of problems: What is history? What certitude can be derived from history? The "relative" aspects of history (e.g., one man gets surety sooner or more easily than another). The competent use of history in the teaching of theology: evidence, evaluation, certitude reached. The added dimension of the *person* evaluating the evidence. Cf. Butterfield; also Newman's *Grammar of Assent*.
- [3] *The Historicity of the Gospels and the Seminary Course*. Primarily a pedagogical problem: how to treat the historicity of the Gospels within the framework (time, purpose, etc.) of the seminary course in fundamental theology? how much of the problem? where? how related to the course?
- [4] *Evaluation of the Current Criticism of the Traditional Seminary Course in Apologetics*. Should present-day seminary apologetics be ostensive rather than defensive? Is there good reason for postponing the strictly apologetical part of fundamental theology to the close of fourth year? Should the theology of the Mystical Body be introduced as the central section of ecclesiology?
- [5] *The Infallibility of the Church: Some Problems of Current Concern*. Distinction and relationship between infallibility and doctrinal providence; the negative emphasis vs. the positive. Specific applications: the secondary objects of infallibility; canonizations; private revelations.

- [6] *Theological Notes: A System*. A follow-up on the 1954 paper. Would suggest a uniform system of theological qualifications (*centurae*), give illustrations of each, and perhaps indicate the relationship of such qualifications to the problem of doctrinal development.
- [7] *The Image of God in Man*. Historical (cf. recent patristic work on Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Irenaeus, Athanasius, Gregory of Nyssa, Cyril of Alexandria) and/or systematic. Possibility of the image-idea as a basic framework for various aspects of theology. Image as conformity vs. image as representation, etc.
- [8] *Catholic Concept of the Natural and the Supernatural*. A presentation of the problem, with Catholic doctrine exemplified by the errors of Baius, Quesnel, etc. Recent developments in our understanding of the supernatural.
- [9] *Analysis of the Act of Faith*. (1) Report on the immense developments in the past twenty-five years. (2) An analysis in the light of modern theories. Note the recent emphasis on St. Thomas in this matter.
- [10] *The Sacramental "Character" in Baptism and Confirmation*. The effects of baptism and confirmation from the viewpoint of the character imprinted by each. Would call for a brief history of these two sacraments from the aspect of the character; a presentation of pertinent patristic affirmations; a summary of recent literature.
- [11] *The Sacramental Grace of Penance*. Similar in scope to Father Egan's presentation (1956) of the sacramental grace of matrimony. Specific effects of penance; nature of the sacramental grace involved, with special emphasis on the curative effects of the sacrament with reference to habitual disorders in the faculties.
- [12] *A Biblical Theology Course in Mariology*. What would be the method, the order? What would be basic? What parts should be emphasized? One advantage of such a course would be a rounded presentation of biblical Mariology instead of the isolated-texts approach that is so common.
- [13] *The Salvation of Unbelievers*. What is required in the way of explicit faith? Is it an acceptable theory that service of humanity implies belief in God, however badly conceived or even explicitly denied? Cf. Lombardi.
- [14] *Church History in the Seminary*. Its function: sheer history? or an aid to theology, an "auxiliary" discipline? The problem of selection within the restricted time-schedule allotted the subject in the seminary.

- [15] *Jansenism and Its Implications*. (1) What was it? A presentation of the past. (2) What is it? To what extent has it infiltrated the Church and the Catholic since its condemnation? What are the genuine manifestations of Jansenism today?
- [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." Also: satisfaction as counterpart to sin; exact nature and effects of satisfaction; ways of atoning for temporal punishment due to sin.
- [17] *Theology of Vocal Prayer*. Suggested as possible elective seminar: (a) nature, i.e., distinction from devotion and meditation; (b) efficacy with God; (c) effects on the one who prays. Values of private vs. public vocal prayer.
- [18] *St. John of the Cross and Detachment from Creatures*. John speaks, in certain places, of ridding oneself of all affections and attachments for creatures, and says that affections for God and affections for creatures are contraries. How show to laymen that what John means is what we would call "inordinate" attachments and affections for creatures?
- [19] *Moral Aspects of Racial Segregation in Education and Housing*. Would deal (1) in general, with basic questions: (a) Is there an inequality inherent in racial segregation? (b) Is compulsory segregation by reason of race alone always wrong? (2) Recommended specific applications: education and housing. The Committee urges this restriction of the topic in order to avoid a too generalized discussion which would fail to come to grips with individual problems.
- [20] *Censorship in Literature and Art*. Strongly recommended in the form of a discussion. Chairman (e.g., Father Harold Gardiner, S.J.) to direct the discussion. A theologian to present and discuss and apply the theological norms pertinent to these issues. A professional layman (e.g., Walter Kerr) to look at the problems from the viewpoint of literature and art. Brief presentation by each man, then live dialogue. It is recommended that the three participants get together beforehand to agree on the limits of the discussion.

- [21] *World Government and National Sovereignty*. Obligation to work toward establishment of a world government. Relationship which should obtain between world government and national sovereignty; 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. Moral responsibility of wealthier nations to underprivileged nations, for fairer distribution of earth's resources. Cf. Barbara Ward, in *Interracial Review*, June, 1955.
- [22] *Contraceptive Pills*. Moral aspects of the use of drugs which affect fertility. Cf. *Time*, Oct. 21, 1957, p. 70: "After decades of research to find a contraceptive pill, doctors have now been swamped with synthetic steroid hormones that work both ways: they will either prevent conception or encourage it, depending on how they are given." See *ibid.* the description of delalutin, norlutin, progesterone, enovid. What is needed is (a) the medical data and (b) moral principles regulating the use of such products, e.g., to reduce sexual desire, or as help for the homosexual, etc. Cf. F. J. Connell, in *AER*, July, 1957, pp. 50-51.
- [23] *Atomic and Hydrogen Warfare*. Morality of starting atomic warfare, if last resort in self-defense. Difference in use of smaller atom bombs against concentration of enemy troops, etc., and use of hydrogen bombs. On what targets could H-bombs be used? What kind, if any, of "massive retaliation" would be lawful with such weapons? Could there be sufficient reason to permit complete destruction of large populated cities? Can intercontinental ballistic missiles with atomic power be used legitimately? Problem of radioactive dust from H-bombs. Morality of bomb tests; responsibility to world in regard to radioactive dust from tests.
- [24] *Excusing Causes under the New Fasting Regulations in the United States*. Stress on application to different classes: priests, religious, laity, seminarians, professors, lay students, pastors, housewives, etc.
- [25] *Survey of Contemporary Protestant Moral and Ethical Concepts*. A presentation which would parallel the work of Father Weigel on Protestant positions corresponding to our dogmatic theology.
- [26] *The Moral Obligation of Paying Just Taxes*. Do any tax laws bind by penal law only? Any difference between direct and indirect taxes in this regard? Does the fact that the state requires an oath indicate that the state does not regard the laws as purely penal? Any obligation to pay unpaid taxes of previous years, if taxes bind in legal justice? Cf. CU dissertation of Father Crowe, C.S.S.R.

- [27] *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).

## SUGGESTED PROGRAM

I. PAPERS:	(1) Biblical Inspiration	[ 1 ]
	(2) Segregation in Education and Housing	[19]
	(3) Sacramental Grace of Penance	[11]
II SEMINARS:	(4) Contraceptive Pills	[22]
	(5) Church History in the Seminary	[14]
	(6) Theology of Vocal Prayer	[17]
	(7) Analysis of the Act of Faith	[ 9 ]
III. PANEL:	(8) Censorship in Literature and Art	[20]

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