

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON CURRENT PROBLEMS

I

ESCHATOLOGY

- [1] *Theology of Death*. Death as much more than biological inevitability, much more than a punishment. A sharing in the death of Christ; culmination of Christian life; existential value. Cf. Rahner, *Zur Theologie des Todes*; Gillemann, in his *Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*; C. Ernst, O.P. (England).
- [2] *Fate of the Dead*. Various live problems include: Christian dependence in this matter on ancient, non-Christian concepts and practices; afterlife purification; divergent views of East and West on purgatory; nature of purgatorial pains; *poena damni* and *poena sensus* terminology; theological problem of unforgiven venial sin; conciliar pronouncements on purgatory and the afterlife.
- [3] *Hell*. Do we have here a stumbling block to reunion? In line with this approach, one might outline the Eastern and Western theologies on hell, show the development of Western thinking thereon. Or analyze hell and its punishment in terms of the whole man: loss of God; loss of sense of direction; possible interpretations of hell-fire in modern psychological terms (cf. Rondet, Gleason, etc.).
- [4] *Communication between This Life and the Next*. Communion of saints. Historical development of notion of suffrages; retroactive effects of suffrages for the dead. Intercessory power of BVM for souls in purgatory. What power has the Church with reference to indulgences for the souls in purgatory? Each of these topics would constitute a paper in its own right.
- [5] *Resurrection*. An enormous topic which might well provide the material for a whole convention. (1) Resurrection of the body of Christ, and our identity with the risen body of Christ; involves the paschal mystery (cf. Feuillet, Cerfaux), Mystical Body, Eucharistic body of Christ, unity of Christians. Cf. the spring, 1960 issue of *Theology Digest*. (2) Resurrection of the flesh: its centrality in early Christian thinking; importance in contemporary theology; problems

like identity of risen body with body that existed on earth.
 (3) Assumption of BVM: example par excellence of Christian reintegration of human person; "body values" illustrated by resurrection of her body.

- [6] *Ascension of Christ: Eschatological and Soteriological*. Less stress on apologetic value. Cf. new perspective on Christ's ascension as the glorification of our Lord, immediate sequel to His resurrection, not merely as last of series of appearances to apostles. Cf. P. Benoit, "The Ascension of Christ," *Theology Digest* 8 (spring, 1960) 105 ff., summary of *Revue biblique* 56 (1949) 161-203. Our involvement in Christ's ascension.
- [7] *Sacraments in an Eschatological Outlook*. The Second Coming as an abiding Christian awareness: "till He come" (show forth the death of the Lord; Eucharist); "to those who love His coming (name for Christians: 2 Tim 4:8); "from thence He shall come to judge the living and the dead." Eternal life begun through the sacraments. A Christian theology of history. Cf. Schmaus and Schillebeeck, etc.
- [8] *Beatific Vision*. Nature of beatific vision; problem of natural and supernatural knowledge; relationship to present life. Special problem of increase and fulfillment after resurrection of body; cf. F. Wetter, reviewed in *TS* 20 (1959) 646-47.

II

INDIVIDUAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- [9] *Catholic Ecumenism and the Theology of Conversion*. What are the principles of ecclesiology on which the Catholic understanding of ecumenism is based? Then a theological evaluation of (1) the role of external grace in the process of conversion, (2) the co-ordination of external grace and natural psychological influences, (3) faith and the preambles, etc. The concept of "mission" as the possible link between Catholic ecumenism and the theology of conversion.
- [10] *Theology and the Evolutionary Progress of Life*. Main questions: (1) Interest today in dynamic quality of life (Teilhard de Chardin). (2) What have the sources of revelation to say on the upward spiral of human life? (3) Does Teilhard's synthesis leave room for the Fall,

Incarnation, Church? (4) How can modern theology utilize the perspectives of dynamic evolution? Allied questions: (1) Can this be integrated with a Christian theology of history in modern terms? (2) Is the world in a state of constant improvement? Is evolution a continuing thing? (3) Modern "dynamism" in contrast to the "static" approach of Scholastic theology.

- [11] *Concept of Revelation in the Bible*. Purpose: to correlate the theological definition of revelation with the concrete historical manner of revelation as described in the Bible, particularly since many recent writers are talking about revelation as "the acts of God." Problems: What is the meaning of "Dixit Dominus ad Moysen"? How does one distinguish between a datum revealed and a datum not revealed? How understand Scripture as the *Verbum Dei* in general, and yet escape the appearance of picking and choosing revealed data? What are the implications of "growth in revelation"? Suggest panel of 3: OT, NT, and fundamental theologian; 20 minutes each in presentation, but actual paper for publication can be longer.
- [12] *Theology of History*. Historical survey of the approaches and solutions offered. Presentation of an acceptable solution. Relation to the so-called philosophy of history; e.g., Sorokin, Toynbee. Relation to Catholic doctrine of predestination. Cf. D. P. Richardson, "The Philosophy of History and the Stability of Civilizations," *Thomist* 20 (1957) 158-90.
- [13] *Image of God in Man*. Survey of doctrine in Scripture, Fathers, (cf. recent works on individual Fathers by Leys, Bernard, Crouzel, Burghardt, Merki, Mayer), St. Thomas and the Scholastics, modern theology. Perhaps offer a synthesis, in view of the prolific research; or suggest image as framework in different theological treatises.
- [14] *History and Historical Method*. 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 place and function of historical method in fundamental theology.
- [15] *Extreme Unction: Sacrament of the Sick or of the Dying?* Cf. recent literature, e.g., P. F. Palmer, "The Purpose of Anointing the Sick: A Reappraisal," *TS* 19 (1958) 309-44; and the Feb., 1960 issue of the Dominican *Quodlibetales*.

- [16] *Relation between Scripture and Tradition*. Unusual amount of research in past ten years; cf. G. Tavard, *Holy Writ and Holy Church*; articles by Congar, Dubarle, Geiselmann, Lennerz, Bevenot, etc.
- [17] *Collegiality of the Episcopacy*. Good background for problems (e.g., universal jurisdiction as a predicate of the episcopate) in J. Hamer, O.P., "Note sur la collégialité épiscopale, *RSPT* 44 (Jan., 1960) 40-50; cf. also Congar and Journet.
- [18] *Theological Qualifications: A System*. A follow-up on the 1954 presentation. Would suggest a uniform system of theological notes, give illustrations of each, perhaps indicate relation of such notes to problem of doctrinal development.
- [19] *Civil Law and Individual Conscience*. Basis for toleration by civil law of teachings and practices resulting from erroneous consciences. Relationship between civil law and the obligation an individual recognizes to follow his conscience, even if erroneous, in order to avoid subjective sin. Is toleration of the propagation of a false religion justified partly because the individual has a moral obligation to follow even an erroneous conscience? Relation between demands of individual conscience and common good. How show that basis of religious toleration is not mere expediency? In what sense is there a right of conscience, and how do limitations concerning this right differ from limitations on other rights? Related question: attitude civil law should take toward conscientious objectors. Under what circumstances can the state penalize one who has performed or refused to perform an act on the grounds of following conscience, e.g., registering for military service? Cf. Pius XII, Cardinal Lercaro, Fr. Connell, etc.
- [20] *Liturgy and Contemplation*. Objective worth of liturgical prayer in relation to contemplation. Cf. recent study of the problem by Maritain.
- [21] *Morality of Atomic and Hydrogen Warfare*. Morality of starting such 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 may 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 de-

struction of large populated cities as indirect effect of directly intended military objective? Can ICBM with atomic bombs be used legitimately? Morality of use of missiles that come out from under polar icecap. Problem of radioactive dust from H-bombs; of bomb tests, in view of radioactive dust. Responsibility to world re radioactive dust from tests.

- [22] *Moral Obligation of Paying Just Taxes.* Do any tax laws in U. S. bind by penal law only? Any difference between direct and indirect taxes in this regard? Income tax and some other taxes? Does the fact that the state requires an oath indicate that the state does not regard the laws as purely penal? Does heavy prison sentence imposed by the state for income-tax violation indicate that it is considered merely penal? Any obligation to pay unpaid taxes of previous years, if taxes bind in legal justice? (Cf. Crowe's C.U. dissertation.) Could absolution be refused to a person who certainly defrauds to a very great extent re his income tax? Morality of advocating complete abolition of federal income-tax law, as some ultraconservative extremists are now doing.
- [23] *Evaluation Cognition.* Validity of the principle that merely conceptual cognition is not enough for freedom and imputability, that there is required also the ability to weigh and evaluate the substantial elements of the proposed action. Implications for moral (theology of sin), for canon law (validity of marriage consent), for civil law (cf. McNaughton Rule).
- [24] *Tranquilizing Drugs.* First, the facts: their widespread use to induce euphoria; as substitute for custodial care; recently in schools; uncertainty as to their ultimate effects; etc. Second, the moral judgments. Perhaps physician and moralist respectively.
- [25] *John of the Cross and Detachment from Creatures.* St. John speaks of ridding oneself of all affections and attachments for creatures; he says that affections for God and affections for creatures are contraries. (Cf. esp. *Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Book 1, chaps. 5-6; also Leonard McCann, C.S.B., *The Doctrine of the Void*.) How show that what St. John means is what we would call "inordinate" attachments and affections for creatures?
- [26] *New U. S. Fasting Regulations: Excusing Causes.* Who can consider themselves excused under the mitigated fasting laws we now have?

Application of new relative fasting regulations to different classes: religious; seminarians; lay students; professors; office workers; housewives; manual laborers.

SUGGESTED PROGRAM

I. PAPERS:	Eschatology (choice)	[1-8]
	Theology and Evolutionary Progress	[10]
	Civil Law and Individual Conscience	[19]
II. SEMINARS:	Image of God in Man	[13]
	Evaluative Cognition	[23]
	Scripture and Tradition	[16]
	John of the Cross and Detachment	[25]
III. PANEL:	Concept of Revelation in the Bible	[11]

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