

## THE TASK AHEAD FOR THE THEOLOGIAN IN A NEW DECADE

The task which today confronts those Catholics who are vitally interested in the science of theology is both formidable and stimulating. I refer not so much to the challenge which arises from the hostility of those elements in a materialistic and secularistic culture that doubt or deny or scoff at God, and hence have nothing but scorn for a science whose total object is God and creatures in their relationship to God.<sup>1</sup> Rather am I concerned with the challenge that theology itself—in the midst of a milieu which the remarkable advance of knowledge is changing with almost incredible rapidity—presents to the theologian in diverse and manifold forms, as a living science, in this year of Our Lord 1960.

The observations in this address, which I am highly privileged to deliver as your president, are in no way intended to be comprehensive or exhaustive. Surely they make no pretense to solve any profound theological problem. I will consider them to be in some small degree successful, if they contribute something toward bringing into focus the nature and the imperiousness of the challenge.

Time and again within the past few years our attention has been called to the need of fostering and furthering a greater interest in and love for things intellectual. And rightly so. But may I suggest here that there is no less need of what may be called a personal predisposition or orientation on the part of scholars, without which there can be no true scholarship in any field, theology included: a predisposition or orientation deriving from and indeed constituted by the possession of varied intellectual characteristics, but especially of maturity of approach, impartiality of attitude, and respect for truth. The scientific character of theology itself, the intellectual integrity required of those who pursue its study, and the absolute demands which truth is always entitled to impose, have a rightful claim that such characteristics be in evidence. And so, the genuine scholar in the domain of theology, endowed with these qualities, will

<sup>1</sup> Cf. St. Thomas, *S. T.*, I, 1, 7.

never, for example, cast aside, as being reactionary, the great theological heritage and traditions of the past, nor yet falter in fear at some newly proposed but solidly founded theological development of the present. Possessed of broad vision, he will welcome the fruits that blossom forth from sound research, instigated and sustained by native curiosity and natural talent and perhaps imaginative theorizing, but, being a man of careful discernment, he will not belittle his science by accepting as an already established fact what is based only on conjecture and possibility. Not only because of the consideration due to the demands of scholarship, but more especially because of the nobility of his science, he will recognize how despicable it would be to prostitute theology by utilizing it to bolster personal bias. He will have no part with the over-simplification that dubs every theological opinion, no matter how carefully and painstakingly thought out, as merely "rightist" or "leftist"—to be embraced or rejected in accordance with a partisan spirit that lacks not only the openness of mind and the balance of judgment that are requisites of genuine intellectuality, but also the reverence that is owed to the dignity of theology. "Sincere attachment to the Church," Father Henri De Lubac, S.J., has written, "can never be used for the purpose of canonizing our prejudices, or making our partialities part of the absolute of the universal faith."<sup>2</sup> Though imbued with the apostolic zeal to diffuse far and wide the revealed message of God in terms that can be understood and appreciated, the genuine scholar in the domain of theology will protest against any endeavor to evaluate theological opinion or theological truth, either by its ability to be comprehended fully by the man in the street or by its capacity to vie with the attraction of the popular periodical. He will be sensitive to the crying need that he expound the fact of the relevance of his discipline to the staggering problems of this day and hour. Yet he will resist the temptation to become conformed to an existing milieu, as if the function of the theologian were so to shape divine revelation that Catholics may live in peaceful and complacent co-existence in society, rather than become leaven in the mass, motivated by St. Paul's *caritas enim Christi urget nos*.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> H. DeLubac, *The Splendour of the Church*, New York, 1956, 210.

<sup>3</sup> 2 Cor 5, 14.

Of special significance in this connection are the words of warning uttered by our late Holy Father Pope Pius XII on September 14, 1956.

The encyclical *Humani generis* . . . is to a great extent a refutation of a false *Orientation* and *Modernization* of theology, philosophy, and exegesis in line with certain modern currents and scientific tendencies which lack a sufficient basis. It speaks of an unjustified tendency toward erroneous systems of philosophy and of the concessions that some seem to be ready to make . . . in the field of theology and in exegesis. The *new theology* claimed to be fitting in with modern developments and to be making it easier and more natural for a Catholic scientist to be a Catholic. As a matter of fact, it began to introduce arbitrary corrections, suppressions, changes, and reconstructions of all that had gone before, to tone down the rigidity and immutability of metaphysical principles, to make precise dogmatic definitions more flexible, to revise the content and meaning and inner structure of the supernatural, to spiritualize and modernize the theology of the Eucharist, to adopt a new approach to the doctrine of the Redemption, the nature and effects of sin, and not a few other points, so as to bring them into line with modern thought and feelings. The same kind of movement could be observed in the field of exegesis. Many wanted to accept the ideas and conclusions of profane sciences, often without any serious examination or evaluation.

Continuing, our Holy Father insisted that theologians do not teach by divine right, but by the delegation of the Church, and hence must

remain subject to the vigilance and authority of the legitimate Teaching Authority. . . . This does not imply, of course, that theologians and other learned men should relax their efforts to put on a scientific basis a whole series of questions which acutely affect our lives. The Holy See certainly loves, praises, and promotes the learned studies and lofty speculation of theologians who are penetrating more deeply into revealed truths and who are ever ready to ponder, explain, and support the declarations of the ecclesiastical Teaching Authority with scientific seriousness, in the light of reason as illuminated by faith (*Conc. Vatic. Sess. III, cap. 4*), which means, as Pius IX affirmed, *in sensu Ecclesiae*.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Pius XII, Allocution. *Di gran cuore*, AAS, 48 (1956), 708-710. For English translation, cf. *The Pope Speaks*, III (1956-57), 389-391.

It is true that today one sometimes hears the charge that theology has imposed upon the simplicity of divine revelation a highly complicated apparatus. However, it must be realized, in the words of one of my distinguished predecessors, Father Eugene M. Burke, C.S.P., that: "By the very fact that it is God revealing His own life for our salvation, we know that this truth will have infinite depth and manifold consequences. . . . Yet all too many see no necessity of complex equipment when intelligence illumined by faith seeks to penetrate the life of the very Creator of the universe."<sup>5</sup>

Theology is a living science, "incarnated in time" but "with a value that is eternal."<sup>6</sup> Now, nothing living can be static and motionless. To the extent that we as theologians contribute to the growth and organic development of our science, we give the lie to an erroneous impression that unfortunately is not at all rare in some intellectual circles both within and outside the Church—an impression that we are cooped up within an isolated theological ghetto, which is separated by an iron curtain from the domain of modern ideas and modern problems, an impression that we have stopped the clock of theological history at some point in the past, and that our only concern now is to engage in endless disputes about the meaning and interpretation of the writings of theologians of days gone by, in regard to purely theoretical problems which have no appositeness to modern life.

On the other hand, the real scholar in the field of theology, possessed of the qualities of maturity of approach, impartiality of attitude and respect for truth, while recognizing the need to develop an unbiased understanding of modern thought in its diversified manifestations, will abhor any tendency to conform or to surrender to the Kantian anti-metaphysical and purely volitive (not to men-

<sup>5</sup> Eugene M. Burke, C.S.P., "The Scientific Teaching of Theology in the Seminary," *CTSA Proceedings*, 4 (1949), 130.

<sup>6</sup> ". . . la teologia si incarna nel tempo, e parla di Dio a uomini soggetti al tempo, derivando il suo verbo da parole eterne. Ognora fedele ad esse supera la sfera delle cose che si muovono e si agitano nella grande vicenda della storia, e diviene veramente vitale ed attuale in ogni tempo, libera sempre e vittoriosa come le cose che racchiudono in sè un valore eterno."—R. Spiazzi, O.P., "L'Enciclica *Pascendi Dominici Gregis* di San Pio X e il Problema di una Teologia Vitale," *Divinitas*, II (1958), 50.

tion emotional and sentimental) view of the problems of religion. And the theologian's respect for truth will caution him never to fall victim to what a recent writer incisively described as the sporting interpretation of history, a tendency to consider that the demands of fair play call for a minimizing of truths that are unpalatable to those whose views differ from his own.

Though it is not my purpose to discuss in detailed fashion any specific theological problem, or even to attempt a comprehensive survey of modern theological trends, yet I do wish to allude to several points which, I believe, demand further inquiry, research and reflection on the part of theologians who are characterized by the qualities to which I have been making reference.

### *Faith*

It is elementary to state that theology concerns itself with divine revelation, and that we accept divine revelation by faith.<sup>7</sup> We are all familiar with the biblical description of faith as "the substance of things to be hoped for, the evidence of things that are not seen."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> "Between faith and theology there exists a proportion that is similar to that which is found in the natural order between the understanding of first principles and the science of conclusions. The understanding of first principles is acquired by the light of simple insight; knowledge of conclusions, however, is obtained by the light of the complex process which we call reasoning. As St. Thomas remarks, just as in the natural order the habit of first principles is given to us with our natures, while the habit of conclusions is acquired, 'so, in the case of sacred doctrine, the habit of faith which plays the role of a habit of first principles is not acquired, but the habit which deduces conclusions from these principles and defends them, is acquired.' Nevertheless it must be emphasized that the procedure of theology is neither rationalistic nor even purely rational. It is the procedure of an intellect that is immersed in the light of faith and which seeks to understand the truths of that faith." —C. Journet, *The Wisdom of Faith*, Westminster, 1952, 42-43.

"En vérité, la théologie est une participation à la connaissance de Dieu par lui-même, *quaedam impressio divinae scientiae*. (S. Thomas, *Somme théologique*, Ie, 1, 3, 2). Si donc elle est une science, ce ne sera pas par une évacuation, ou par une réduction de la foi, comme si peu à peu le croyant, à force d'intelligence, évacuait le mystère. Que, dans son appétit, mon intelligence croyante, s'équipe de techniques de pénétration, qu'elle organise ses curiosités, qu'elle développe ce que, par analogie, nous pourrions appeler un esprit scientifique, soit; mais ce ne sera que sous l'efficacité permanente de la lumière infuse de la foi." —M. D. Chenu, O.P., *La Théologie Est-Elle Une Science?* Paris, 1957, 24.

<sup>8</sup> Heb 11, 1.

And we are aware too of St. Thomas' commentary, in which he points out how perfectly this biblical description includes all that is essential to the concept of faith.<sup>9</sup>

But precisely in regard to faith, the theologian of 1960 must be alive to the demands that a regrettable but actually existing situation makes upon him. The situation: millions and millions of presumably sincere non-Catholic Christians who are not joined to the Church by the triple bond of membership.<sup>10</sup> The demands: a very careful, painstaking and scholarly study of the implications inherent in an adequate appreciation of the nature of faith and of the ramifications flowing therefrom—a study directed toward the goal of bringing these believers into the unity of the one true Church founded by our Divine Lord.

Theologically we know that it is possible for those separated from the Church to have the virtue of faith and to make an act of faith. May I submit that especially now, when we are looking forward with expectant hope to a new ecumenical council, it is essential that we devote profound theological reflection to such questions as these, proposed by the distinguished English theologian, Father Charles Davis, in a thought-provoking paper read at Hawkesyard Priory about a year and a half ago: "Faith is in truth one and indivisible; how can it be possessed by those who differ from us in creed? Has not the Church an indispensable role to play in faith? What is meant by conversion? Does not the convert receive the gift of faith? Can a false Church be said to mediate genuine Christian faith to its members?"<sup>11</sup>

While one may not stand in entire agreement with all the statements contained in Father Davis' paper, every theologian can subscribe to his view, in regard to non-Catholic Christian communions, that: "We cannot dismiss in a single judgement their life and activity. . . . All that they have of Christian value and truth must be

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *S. T.*, II-II, 4, 1.

<sup>10</sup> "In Ecclesiae autem membris reapse ii soli annumerandi sunt, qui regenerationis lavacrum receperunt veramque fidem profitentur, neque a Corporis compage semet ipsos misere separarunt, vel ob gravissima admissa a legitima auctoritate seiuncti sunt."—Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis*, AAS, 35 (1943), 202.

<sup>11</sup> C. Davis, "Faith and Dissident Christians," *The Clergy Review*, 44 (1959), 201-220.

counted among the possessions of the Catholic Church, despite the anomalous condition of its existence."<sup>12</sup> "What must characterize ecumenical activity is the recognition of Christian faith and life in those to whom it is directed. An objective assessment of the task it faces must include an acknowledgement of the Christian elements present in the dissident communities. That determines its immediate aim, which must be to foster and to encourage all that is true and valuable in the separated Churches and to assist in eliminating the errors."<sup>13</sup>

These problems in regard to faith constitute the core of the question of the *vestigia ecclesiae*,<sup>14</sup> a term generally used to denote those elements of the true religion which are still to be found in non-Catholic bodies. Here is a field for theological investigation and study, the importance of which, especially in relation to present-day ecumenism, cannot be overemphasized. It is true, as Father Edward Hanahoe, S.A., has pointed out in his recent stimulating essay on this subject,<sup>15</sup> that the possession of the *vestigia ecclesiae* is insufficient of itself to constitute the body in which they are found, as a church in its own right,<sup>16</sup> or to make an adherent of such a body a member of the one Church of Christ, nor is such possession of itself a token of security for those who remain outside the Church. Yet

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 215.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 219. For a survey of theological contributions to the understanding of the act of faith in this century, Aubert's monumental work is indispensable. Cf. R. Aubert, *Le Problème de L'Acte de Foi*, Louvain, 1945, 223-643.

<sup>14</sup> This concept is being discussed with increasing frequency by Catholic and non-Catholic authors. Cf., e.g., C. Boyer, S.J., "Vestigia Ecclesiae: Elements of the Church," *Unitas*, VIII (1956), 67-70. The statement of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches, issued in 1950, speaks of elements of the true Church as being found in churches other than those which are members of the World Council. Cf. "The Church, the Churches and the World Council of Churches," *Ecumenical Review*, III (1950-1951), 51.

<sup>15</sup> E. F. Hanahoe, S.A., "Vestigia Ecclesiae: Their Meaning and Value," in E. F. Hanahoe, S.A. and T. F. Cranny, S.A., editors, *One Fold*, Garrison, New York, 1959, 272-383. Fr. Hanahoe cautions (p. 273): "As with other expressions that are loosely defined and vaguely grasped, many erroneous conclusions may be drawn. There is a great need for a more careful and precise determination as to the nature and value of this concept."

<sup>16</sup> Indeed "In the final analysis, the determination of the fact and of the quality of the supernatural *vestigia* turns on the individual member [of a non-Catholic denomination]."—*Ibid.*, 306.

one must not lose sight of the fact that the material heretic can have a habit of faith, and can make an act of divine faith in regard to those truths that have been presented to him for belief.<sup>17</sup> Provided that he have elicited explicit faith in those truths that must be thus believed, perfect charity will effect his justification, carrying with it, at least implicitly, the *votum* of membership in the Church. And so, "these *vestigia* may be the occasions of actual and sanctifying grace . . . Their worth, meaning and efficacy are derived from Christ through His one and only Church."<sup>18</sup>

#### *Our Separated Brethren*

As the theologian looks forward to the ecumenical council with the prayerful hope that flowing from it will be a reinvigorated impetus toward the return to the fold of Christ by those now outside, his attitude toward his separated brethren will be one, not of contention or polemicism, but rather of Christ-like charity and kindness. Misunderstanding is always regrettable; needless misunderstanding is tragic. Nothing is to be gained by a carping, critical approach which questions the personal sincerity of our non-Catholic brethren, or which seeks to assign to non-Catholics of today the

<sup>17</sup> "Dum pro fide divina et cathol. est necessaria propositio veritatis ex parte Ecclesiae, nulla propositio datur ex parte Ecclesiae pro fide simpliciter divina, neque titulo obiecti formalis partialis, neque titulo praeviae conditionis requisitae. . . . Multi sunt christiani in bona fide apud Protestantas, qui, dum versantur extra veram Ecclesiam, non agnoscunt valorem infallibilem nostri magisterii, et tamen, admittentes summam auctoritatem Christi et Scripturae, possunt et debent facere verum actum fidei et possunt salvari." "Fides divina, ut patet, essentialiter non differt a fide divina et catholica, sed solum, ut ita dicam, extrinsece; quatenus scilicet una proponitur a Deo, alia a Deo et ab Ecclesia: quae tamen Ecclesia nihil facit nisi nobis transmittere testimonium Dei."—S. Cartechini, S.J., *De Valore Notarum Theologiarum et de Criteriis ad Eas Dignoscendas*, Romae, 1951, 51, 55. Cf. also H. Lennerz, S.J., *De Virtutibus Theologicis*, Romae, 1938, n. 295. If it be objected that the motives of credibility in such a case are objectively insufficient, it may be pointed out that "respective certitude" suffices for the establishing of the fact of revelation. "Sufficere autem certitudinem respectivam apparet. Etenim talis certitudo requiritur ut sequens actus fidei sit rationabilis, firmus, irrevocabilis. Quia vero certitudo respectiva procedit e motivo obiective convincente, sufficit ut actus fidei sit rationabilis; quia excludit hic et nunc dubium prudens, sufficit ut fides sit firma; quia excludit dubium futurum, sufficit ut fides sit irrevocabilis."—S. Tromp, S.J., *De Revelatione Christiana*, Romae, 1937, 88-89.

<sup>18</sup> Hanahoe, *op. cit.*, 340.



blame for mistakes and errors of past centuries. Never must the Catholic theologian be guilty of the crime of failing to distinguish between an erroneous tenet on the one hand, and those who subscribe to it on the other. The renowned Swiss theologian, Monsignor Charles Journet, has aptly remarked: "It has become more urgent than ever before to make a constant and careful distinction between the sin of heresy and the patrimony of heresy."<sup>19</sup>

But the cause of charity would ill be served by a disregard of truth. Indeed there can be no ultimate solution of the problems that separate Catholic from non-Catholic, apart from that respect for truth, maturity of approach and impartiality of attitude to which reference has several times been made in this address. Because, in the words of Cardinal Lercaro: "It is indeed certain that the Catholic Church, conscious of its being the unique lawful representative of the truth, has no alternative but to be intolerant from a dogmatic point of view . . .,"<sup>20</sup> for a Catholic theologian to countenance even the insinuation of the possibility of compromise in matters of doctrine would be fatal to the cause of genuine Christian unity and false to the confidence placed in him by non-Catholics sincerely searching for the truth.

Anyone who is tempted to minimize differences in the matter of belief in God's revelation might well meditate upon the forceful utterance of the brilliant Protestant theologian, Oscar Cullmann: "We promote mutual and improved understanding, only if we do not pass over in silence that which separates us."<sup>21</sup>

In a recent volume another celebrated Protestant theologian, Dr. E. L. Mascall, has expressed himself in the same vein. The problem of Christian unity, he says, is basically a theological problem, and cannot therefore be solved merely by good will, by cooperation, or by more or less makeshift adjustments in Church organization and practice between different Christian groups. Nor is there anything to be gained from pretending that fundamental theological

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, 146.

<sup>20</sup> Giacomo Cardinal Lercaro, "Tolérance et Intolérance Religieuse," *La Documentation Catholique*, 56, No. 1299 (March 15, 1959), 340. Italian text published by *Sacra Doctrina*, 1958, 10.

<sup>21</sup> O. Cullmann, *Peter, Disciple, Apostle, Martyr: A Historical and Theological Study*, Philadelphia, 1952, 11.

differences are of meagre importance, constituting little or no obstacle to the union of different Christian traditions.<sup>22</sup>

On many occasions the Catholic position in reference to our separated brethren has been set forth by the Holy See. Pope Pius XI, for example, in his encyclical *Mortalium animos* after warning that "when there is question of fostering unity among Christians, it is easy for many to be misled by the apparent excellence of the object to be achieved," insisted that "no religion can be true, save that which rests upon the revelation of God." Catholics must assuredly manifest love and charity toward their separated brethren, he declared. However, "there is but one way in which the unity of Christians may be fostered, and that is by furthering the return to the one true Church of Christ of those who are separated from it; for from that one true Church they have in the past fallen away."<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Cf. E. L. Mascall, *The Recovery of Unity: A Theological Approach*, London, 1958.

<sup>23</sup> Pius XI, *Mortalium animos*, AAS, 20 (1928), 6, 8, 14. Cf. also the Instruction of the Holy Office, issued on December 20, 1949: ". . . invigilabunt [Episcopi] ne, falso praetextu potius esse attendenda ea quibus coniungimur, quam ea quibus seiungimur, periculosus indifferentismus foveatur . . . Cavendum est enim ne spiritu, qui *irenicus* hodie dicitur, doctrina catholica—sive de dogmate sive de veritatibus cum dogmate connexis agatur—studio comparativo et desiderio vano assimilationis cuiusdam progressivae variarum professionum fidei ita conformetur vel quodammodo accommodetur doctrinis dissidentium, ut puritas doctrinae catholicae detrimentum patiatur vel eius sensus genuinus et certus obscuretur. Arcebunt quoque periculosum illum loquendi modum, quo falsae opiniones gignantur ac fallaces spes, quae nunquam impleri possunt; ex. gr. dicendo quae de dissidentium ad Ecclesiam reditu, de Ecclesiae constitutione, de Corpore Christi Mystico in Litteris Encyclicis Romanorum Pontificum traduntur non ita aestimari debere, quippe quia non omnia sint fide tenenda vel, quod peius est, in rebus dogmaticis ne Catholicam quidem Ecclesiam iam habere plenitudinem Christi, sed ab aliis eandem perfici posse."—Instruction, *De motione oecumenica*, AAS, 42 (1950), 143-144.

Fr. Charles Boyer, S.J., has written: "Real and active as may be the effort toward unity from the outside, it is within the Roman Church that we find the deepest and most zealous concern for the return to her of those who have broken away. Would she be a true mother if she forgot those who were once her sons? Even in official documents whose style is usually rather austere, we are aware that her heart beats with regret, love and hope whenever there is mention of the separations" (pp. 51-52). "The Church enjoins her priests and theologians to present on all occasions with competence, charity and the greatest possible clarity, the proofs that she was founded and is preserved on the rock by Christ's own divine will. She also exhorts that light be thrown on incomprehension, that confusion be prevented, and prejudice cleared away, as

There is much food for thought in the provocative article from the pen of Father August Brunner, S.J., published nine years ago in *Stimmen der Zeit*, in which he finds in the biblical notion of the jealous God who alone can save men, the meaning and the explanation of the doctrinal intolerance of the Church, an intolerance, however, not of pride but of love.<sup>24</sup>

### The Church

It seems to be no exaggeration to say that any return to Christ's Church by our separated brethren will be dependent upon an understanding and an appreciation of the nature, function and necessity

these all prevent many souls of good will from seeing her true countenance and recognizing her as their Mother. Unless interfaith conferences, discussions and meetings serve this end, what reason can there be for organizing or even attending them? Do our separated brothers expect anything from us except a clearer light on our Catholic faith?" (pp. 64-65). "Both Catholics and non-Catholics know that the Church of Rome can renounce nothing that constitutes dogma or morals, and that consequently the only means of including it in the reunion of Christians is to accept the faith of the Church of Rome in its entirety. It follows from this that Catholics must maintain—and non-Catholics must understand that Catholics maintain—that the real and concrete goal of movements toward union is the acceptance of the Catholic faith by all Christians" (p. 116). C. Boyer, S.J., *One Shepherd: the Problem of Christian Reunion*, New York, 1952.

<sup>24</sup> "It is striking . . . that in modern times man proudly presents this indifference [toward the diversity of religious cults] as progressive, so that he looks with scorn on the Church with its jealous God. Dogmatic tolerance is esteemed as a mark of good training, and it tends to be confused with practical tolerance. . . . Christian intolerance is justified by the intolerance of the true God. Consequently it must be an intolerance of love, unable to look on silently while others miss salvation, but likewise, in accord with the nobility of true love, respecting the freedom of others. . . . While never compromising the truth for human reasons, he [the Christian] will keep in mind the ancient teaching of the Church that God does not refuse His grace to the well-intentioned who do what they can." A. Brunner, S.J., "The Jealous God," *Theology Digest*, I (1953), 148-150. The article originally appeared in *Stimmen der Zeit*, 148 (Sept. 1951), 401-410, under the title "Der eifersüchtige Gott."

It follows that the existence of religious error is not to be considered an ideal situation. "The division of the commonwealth into a plethora of sects is a pathological condition of society . . . . Religious pluralism . . . cannot be the answer to Christ's will to 'one fold and one shepherd.'" L. C. McHugh, S.J., "Our Post-Protestant Pluralism: Working Definitions," *America*, CII, No. 28 (March 5, 1960), 675.

of the Church.<sup>25</sup> Incidentally, by way of a momentary digression, may I suggest that, in present circumstances at least, the hope that universal acceptance of the natural law would constitute a common bond or a bridge seems unrealistic. The fact is that there are few points which so divide us as those pertaining to precepts of the natural law—the current divergence of opinion on the intrinsic sinfulness of contraception being a case in point. Indeed the prominent Protestant theologian, Reinhold Niebuhr, has warned: “There is something ironic in the fact that the concept of Natural Law is regarded by Catholics as a meeting ground for Catholics and non-Catholics and for Christians and non-Christians; whereas, as a

<sup>25</sup> On the importance of ecclesiology in our times, cf. G. Vodopivec, “Nuove Tendenze in Ecclesiologia,” *Divinitas*, I (1957), 581-587. This article is a critique of Jáki, O.S.B., *Les tendances nouvelles de l'ecclésiologie*, Rome, 1957.

In his superb study of St. Augustine's theology of the Church, Fr. Grabowski points out: “If there has ever been a time in the history of the divided Christian Churches when they have come to an earnest decision to explore every avenue that could lead to a union of all, that time is with us right now. The willingness on the part of the heads of the separated churches, the serious efforts of prominent leaders, the widespread interest among all denominations, and a sincere conviction in the feasibility of their aims, create an atmosphere as would not have been deemed possible some fifty years ago. . . . The prevailing will to bring unity into the Christian fold is highly commendable. But, according to the present scope, if Christianity is successful in achieving some kind of an association of churches, it will not be fundamentally more than the unity of name which they now possess. For even if it should be possible to establish a unity of government, this will not reestablish that unity for which Christ prayed before He departed from this world. All efforts to effect unity, after so many centuries of division, will be made according to man-made blueprints and in the spirit of mutual compromise. In the light of Sacred Scripture, the Church of Christ, truly one and truly universal, cannot be assumed to be defectible and cannot be made subject to compromise. True, in the Sacred Books, the Church is presented in its planned form and incipient stages of organization, but in early tradition it is seen in its full operation. Tradition recognizes only one universal Church and disavows churches not living in communion with it. . . . The essence of Christianity is not this doctrine or that, not such rites and observances, not certain sacraments and the power of jurisdiction, but it is the Church, and there is no Church without authority, none without the whole assembly of doctrines, none without a moral code, none without the life of grace, none without Christ and the sacraments, none without unity, apostolicity, catholicity.”—S. J. Grabowski, *The Church: an Introduction to the Theology of St. Augustine*, St. Louis, 1957, xiii-xv.

matter of fact, it is really a source of tension between the Catholics and non-Catholics."<sup>26</sup>

The theologian in our day must concern himself with the theology of the Church. Father Paul Broutin, S.J., in his book *Mysterium Ecclesiae* has not hesitated to state that the Church is the *mystère total et mystère central*.<sup>27</sup>

One of my distinguished predecessors as president of this Society, Monsignor (now Bishop) Fearn, in his presidential address in 1953 offered the opinion that the dominant doctrine of Pope Pius XII, around which cluster all the tenets and precepts which he expounded during his pontificate, is this: "The Church as unifying influence binding man to God and to his fellow-man."<sup>28</sup>

Among many non-Catholic theologians there is a similar absorption with the concept of the Church. Indeed the Orthodox theologian, Alexander Schmemmann, has expressed the view that the Church is "in the very center of the theological preoccupations of our time."<sup>28a</sup> And the Lutheran Bishop Otto Dibelius has called this century the "century of the Church."<sup>29</sup>

The experience of the World Council of Churches, formed at Amsterdam in 1948, serves to underscore the existence, not only of a growing recognition of the need for unity, but also of a realization that progress toward the goal is conditioned upon an understanding of the nature and function of the Church—whether unity be a mere abstraction, an ideal not yet attained toward which the various

<sup>26</sup> R. Niebuhr, "A Protestant Looks at Catholics," *Commonweal*, 58, No. 5 (May 8, 1953), 119. Cf. also E. D. Benard, "Reinhold Niebuhr and the Catholic Church," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 111 (1944), 321-329; 401-418; 112 (1945), 81-94.

<sup>27</sup> P. Broutin, S.J., *Mysterium Ecclesiae*, Paris, 1947, xi. Fr. DeLubac has written that "it seems as if, as far as the development of doctrine is concerned, the twentieth century is destined to be 'the century of the Church.'"—*Op. cit.*, 11.

<sup>28</sup> J. M. A. Fearn, "Presidential Address," *CTSA Proceedings* 8 (1953), 178.

<sup>28a</sup> A. Schmemmann, "An Orthodox Theologian Views Reunion," *The Catholic World*, 190, No. 1138 (Jan. 1960), 223.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in B. von Schenk, "A Lutheran Looks at the Eumenical Problem," *ibid.*, 211. Cf. also M. Goguel, J. Berton, M. Boegner, G. Bouttier, A. Jundt, G. Marchal, M. Leenhardt et R. Will, *Le Problème de l'Église*, Paris, 1947.

denominations are striving, whether the Church be a merely invisible reality, or a concrete, actually existing society whose founding goes back to a definite historical time.<sup>30</sup>

The Catholic theologian should not allow himself to believe that the concept of a purely invisible Church is merely an historical antiquity typical of sixteenth-century Protestant thinking.<sup>31</sup> It is still a current view in the twentieth century. Witness the complaint of a well-known contemporary Protestant theologian, H. Richard Niebuhr, who, in an article written not long ago, protested against the tendency of the followers of Karl Barth and some other leading Protestants to substitute "for the religion-centered faith of the 19th century a church-centered faith, as though the historical and visible church were the representative of God on earth . . ."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>30</sup> "Nul n'ignore, en effet, que, depuis la Conférence d'Amsterdam (1948), le débat dogmatique le plus important au sein du Mouvement oecuménique est celui-ci: l'Église est-elle de forme protestante ou de forme 'catholique'?" —M. Villain, S.M., et J. De Baciocchi, S.M., *La Vocation de l'Église*, Paris, 1954, 116. Cf. E. Duff, S.J., "The World Council of Churches," *Catholic Mind*, 58 (1960), 137-142.

Reference may be made to the statement of the Central Committee of the World Council of Churches: ". . . membership in the World Council does not imply acceptance or rejection of the doctrine that the unity of the Church consists in the unity of the invisible Church. Thus the statement in the Encyclical *Mystici Corporis* concerning what it considers the error of a spiritualized conception of unity does not apply to the World Council. The World Council does not 'imagine a Church which one cannot see or touch, which would be only spiritual, in which numerous Christian bodies, though divided in matters of faith, would nevertheless be united through an invisible link.' It does, however, include Churches which believe that the Church is essentially invisible as well as those which hold that visible unity is essential."—"The Church, The Churches and the World Council of Churches," *Ecumenical Review*, 3 (1950-1951), 49.

<sup>31</sup> "Protestantism rejected the whole of the Church's mediation: *magisterium*, priesthood, sacraments, the authority of tradition and the role of the teaching Church in the rule of faith, prelatical authority, the episcopal dignity, the pope's primacy. Of the institution, not one stone was left standing. Instead, there was offered the notion of the Church as holy assembly of the faithful, wherein, moreover, the ecclesial reality was split into two parts, whose organic unity was ignored: on one side, a communion of saints (the true faithful, the predestined), which was the real Church but was invisible; on the other, an organization that was visible but wholly human, and that was not truly the Church."—Y. M. J. Congar, O.P., *Lay People in the Church*, Westminster, 1957, 38.

<sup>32</sup> H. R. Niebuhr, "Reformation: Continuing Imperative," *The Christian*

Speaking of the views of those who hold that the Church of Christ is exclusively invisible, as opposed to the concept of a Church with visible, temporal, hierarchic elements, Father DeLubac has ventured the opinion that such views are "still to be found underlying, to a greater or lesser extent, certain types of 'oecumenical' thought outside Catholicism."<sup>33</sup>

The contemporary Catholic theologian must be prepared to study carefully and to evaluate impartially controversies within our own ranks relative to the theology of the Church and to contribute, each his share, to a deeper understanding of the nature, function, necessity and membership of the Church.

For instance, with regard to the nature of the Church, which—

*Century*, 77, No. 9 (Mar. 2, 1960), 250. Such also is the teaching of W. A. Brown in his *Toward a United Church*, New York, 1946. He states (p. 194): ". . . the company of the redeemed, often unrecognized but always present, is the true Church of Christ, that soul of the Church recognized by Catholic theology [sic], that Church invisible to which devout Protestants in time of discouragement turn for hope." On the other hand, H. Burn-Murdoch has written: ". . . the one-ness of the Church must be a humanly perceptible oneness, not only in the time present, but also in its continuous and unbroken life in the world: we must be perceptibly one with the Church of Pentecost in order that we may also be one with our scattered brethren throughout the world today; unity must, as it were, be vertical in order that it may be lateral."—*Church, Continuity and Unity*, Cambridge, 1945, p. ix. In general, it would seem to be true to say that the idea that Christ's Church is merely invisible is, to some extent, losing ground among Protestants. "There is less willingness [today] to salve the Christian conscience about the divided state of the Church merely by talking about the 'Church Invisible.' More and more Christian thinkers deny that there is any authority in the early tradition of the Church for such an idea."—"Reunion and the Ecumenical Movement," A. S. Nash, editor, *Protestant Thought in the Twentieth Century*, New York, 1951, 267.

Fr. Leeming points out that among the *general principles* "commonly regarded as basic" to the ecumenical movement is this: "The unity of the Church must be both internal and external, that is, it must be manifest and visible, as well as interior and invisible." "There is very wide agreement that the manifestation of the Church's unity ought to be such as to enable non-Christians to recognize the one Church of Christ and not to be hopelessly confused about it. . . . In spite of differing views about doctrinal, sacramental and ministerial forms, the presupposition of the World Council of Churches is that the visible manifestation of allegiance to Christ ought to be far greater than it actually is at present."—B. Leeming, S.J., "Ecumenical Conclusions," *The Heythrop Journal*, I (1960), 20.

<sup>33</sup> *Op. cit.*, 55.

to use Bossuet's magnificent description—"is Jesus Christ prolonged in space and time and communicated to men."<sup>34</sup> Now while it is undoubtedly true that in the past few centuries very great, and perhaps even undue emphasis was placed upon the external or juridical aspects of the Church, nevertheless would it not be regrettable if today the Catholic theologian were so to insist upon the internal elements of the Church, as almost to disregard its external aspects? In stressing the inner life of the Church, must not the theologian guard against minimizing the importance of its divinely designed structure?

Or again, with regard to membership in the Church. What is to be said of Father DeLubac's statement commenting on the teaching of Pope Pius XII in the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* that the Pope did not mean that dissident Christians may not be truly incorporated in the Church, for there are degrees of incorporation in the Church?<sup>35</sup> What is to be said of the distinction, made in a recent article by Father Colman E. O'Neill, O.P., as regards membership in the Church, between the Church as a *res* and the Church as a *sacramentum*?<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in J. C. Gruden, *The Mystical Christ*, St. Louis, 1938, 2.

<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.*, 77, note 3. Somewhat similar is the statement of Frs. Villain and De Baciocchi: "Si le Corps du Christ se réalise visiblement dans la communauté catholique romaine, il n'empêche que tous les baptisés lui demeurent attachés comme membres—à des degrés divers, il va sans dire, selon les *vestigia Ecclesiae* que possèdent leurs dénominations respectives: membres invisibles, mais réels."—*Op. cit.*, p. 257.

On the other hand, Fr. Zapelena has written: "a) Quaerenti quatenus sint actualia et realia mystici corporis membra, respondendum est cum Pio XII: 'In Ecclesiae autem membris reapere ii soli annuerandi sunt, qui regenerationis lavacrum receperunt, veramque fidem profiterentur, neque a Corporis compage semetipsos misere separarunt, vel ob gravissima admissa a legitima auctoritate seclusi sunt.' b) Quaerenti quatenus sint reales mystici corporis dimensiones in stadio terrestri, respondendum est cum Tromp: 'Viatoribus corpus mysticum Christi est Ecclesia Catholica Romana.' Corpus ergo mysticum et Ecclesia Romana sunt *perfecte coextensa*. c) Quaerenti num hae dimensiones mystici corporis *terrestres* augeantur et dilatentur magis novis dimensionibus Corporis Christi *Caelestis*, respondendum videtur, hoc problema nondum esse sufficienter examinatum et clarificatum."—T. Zapelena, S.J., "De Actuali Statu Ecclesiologyae," *Problemi Scelti di Teologia Contemporanea*, Romae, 1954, 164.

<sup>36</sup> "The distinction between *res* and *sacramentum* is the key to the problem of membership of the Church as St. Thomas treats of it." "The Roman Cath-



*The Magisterium*

The theologian must never fail to emphasize that our certitude as Catholics, in matters of revealed truth, arises from the fact of the magisterium of the Church,<sup>37</sup> that the reason why we accept a

olic Church, as a fully-constituted human society, can define certain juridical conditions which must be fulfilled before a person will be *recognized* as one of its members. The juridically recognized list of membership thus drawn up does not wholly correspond to the ontological membership that is based on union of one kind or another with Christ. Such an anomaly does not occur in purely human societies. It happens in the Church because beyond the framers of the Code of Canon Law there is a higher Legislator who recognizes His own even when their fellow-men cannot or publicly may not. Thus, many of those not juridically acknowledged by the hierarchy of the Church may, in fact, be members of the Church. They are *real* members—really united to Christ and thus to the Church; but their membership is *imperfect* in that it is not fully actuated sacramentally. This secondary perfection they possess, not actually, but *voto*. It is because the documents of the Church choose to consider in their definitions only this secondary—sacramental and juridical—perfection as the determinant of recognized membership that they can say that those who do not fulfil the four conditions are not really—in *re*, in act—members of the Church, but are joined to it or directed towards it only in intention, *voto*. This does not contradict what we have said; it represents the point of view of the canonist. The speculative theologian and the preacher will, we believe, find more inspiration in that other phrase of *Mystici corporis* where it is said that the Roman Catholic Church and the Mystical Body of Christ are one and the same. As regards terminology to be used in stating the ontological position of the baptized or good-living non-Catholic in relation to the Church, we prefer to say that he possesses a real but imperfect membership. Membership, consequently, is to be said to be patient of several grades or degrees. It is sometimes said that such non-Catholics are members of the Church *voto*. This is permissible if it is understood that 'Church' here means Church-sacramentum and that it is possible to have such a *votum* only when one is already a member of the *res* of the Church by charity. When, however, as unfortunately often happens, 'Church' is taken as wholly convertible with the Mystical Body the statement makes nonsense."—C. E. O'Neill, O.P., "Members of the Church," *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 92 (1959), pp. 315, 320. Cf. A. Chavasse, "Ordonnés au Corps Mystique . . .," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 70 (1948), 690-702; F. X. Lawler, S.J., "Occult Heresy and Membership in the Church," *Theological Studies*, 10 (1949), 541-554; A. Liégé, O.P., "L'Appartenance à l'Église et l'Encyclique *Mystici Corporis Christi*," *Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques*, 32 (1948), 351-358; V. Morel, O.F.M. Cap., "Le Corps Mystique du Christ et l'Église Catholique Romaine," *Nouvelle Revue Théologique*, 70 (1948), 703-726; S. Tromp, S.J., "Annotations," *Periodica de Re Morali, Canonica, Liturgica*, 32 (1943), 377-401.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. *Conc. Vatic.* sess. III, cap. 3 (*DB*, 1792). Cf. also the words of Pope Leo XIII: ". . . instituit Iesus Christus in Ecclesia vivum, authenticum, idemque perenne magisterium, quod suapte potestate auxit, spiritu veritatis in-

truth and believe it by faith on the authority of God revealing is that it has been proposed to us by the Church as revealed. In other words, the proximate rule of faith is the living magisterium of the Church. What the Church teaches as revealed cannot be changed, although, as is obvious, the human language by which that truth is conveyed, is not immutable.<sup>38</sup> Indeed, as Father Bernard Cooke, S.J., pointed out in a paper delivered a year ago, one of the gravest challenges confronting the theologian is how to "find symbols, words and ideas that will be meaningful to the technologically, scientifically-oriented modern mind, and at the same time not betray the truths of revelation that transcend the mentality of any people or any period in history."<sup>39</sup>

It is true that the theologian will and must proceed beyond this proximate rule of faith, in his desire to have some measure of *scientia* about a revealed truth, as well as *fides*—seeking, in the words of Pope Pius XII, "to investigate this deposit thoroughly and to study and explain the nature and connection of the individual

struxit, miraculis confirmavit: eiusque praecepta doctrinae aequae accipi ac sua voluit gravissimeque imperavit. Quoties igitur huius verbo magisterii edicitur, traditae divinitus doctrinae complexu hoc contineri vel illud, id quisque debet certo credere, verum esse."—Leo XIII, Encyclical Letter, *Satis cognitum*, A.S.S., 28 (1895-1896), 721.

<sup>38</sup> "Revelation is a message from God to man, and to teach individual men it must be formulated in human language. It is the divine fact or truth which is revealed, not the proposition which expresses it. The divine truth is immutable, inexhaustible. The instrument which we use to state it, human language, is finite, imperfect, changing. No formula fashioned by man can exhaust or perfectly convey divine truth. Christ appointed the teaching authority of the Church to be the guardian and interpreter of revealed truth, and this teaching authority, in the infallible exercise of its commission, interprets and formulates the truths entrusted to it. Those revealed truths which the Church proposes to us as such for our belief are dogmas. The choice of terms and concepts and the construction of the logical proposition to convey the revealed truth are conditioned by a number of factors including the language, culture and philosophical development of the time . . . it is the function of theology to penetrate more and more deeply into the mysteries of revelation and so endeavour to gain a more profound understanding of them."—P. J. Hamell, "Humanis Generis: Its Significance and Teaching," *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 75 (1951), 290.

<sup>39</sup> B. Cooke, S.J., "New Perspectives in Dogmatic Theology," *Theology Digest*, VIII (1960), 71.

truths according to the norms of sacred doctrines."<sup>40</sup> But in his scrutiny of such factors as the writings of the Fathers and ecclesiastical authors, the monuments of art and archaeology, for example, the theologian must recognize these as being the evidences of tradition, witnesses to the fact that in times past this or that particular truth under study was contained in the magisterium of the Church.<sup>41</sup>

Reference may here be made to the very clear statement of this doctrine as found in the Apostolic Constitution of Pope Pius XII, *Munificentissimus Deus*.<sup>42</sup>

Over and over again the Sovereign Pontiff returned to this theme. For example: ". . . in matters of faith and morals the immediate and universal standard of truth for every theologian is . . . the Church's sacred teaching authority."<sup>43</sup>

Again, on still another occasion: "In the teaching of philosophy and theology . . . all the prescriptions laid down by the sacred

<sup>40</sup> ". . . theologis autem grande incumbit munus, idem depositum . . . penitus investigandi, singularumque veritatum naturam, nexum, ad sacrae doctrinae normas, perscrutandi atque explicandi."—Pius XII, *Inter complures*, AAS, 46 (1954), 678.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. L. Bender, O.P., *De Matrimonio Commentarius*, Torino, 1958, nn. 16-18.

<sup>42</sup> Referring to "the outstanding agreement of Catholic prelates and the faithful" in affirming that the bodily assumption of the Mother of God into heaven could be defined as a dogma of faith, the Sovereign Pontiff went on to say: ". . . cum concordem Nobis praebeat ordinarii Ecclesiae Magisterii doctrinam concordemque christiani populi fidem—quam idem Magisterium sustinet ac dirigit—idcirco per semetipsam ac ratione omnino certa ab omnibusque erroribus immuni manifestat eiusmodi privilegium veritatem esse a Deo revelatam in eoque contentam divino deposito, quod Christus tradidit Sponsae suae fideliter custodiendum et infallibiliter declarandum. . . . Itaque ex ordinarii Ecclesiae Magisterii universali consensu certum ac firmum sumitur argumentum, quo comprobatur corpoream Beatae Mariae Virginis in Caelum Assumptionem . . . veritatem esse a Deo revelatam, ideoque ab omnibus Ecclesiae filiis firmiter fideliterque credendam. Nam, ut idem Concilium Vaticanum asseverat: 'Fide divina et catholica ea omnia credenda sunt, quae in verbo Dei scripto vel tradito continentur, et ab Ecclesia sive sollemni iudicio, sive ordinario et universali Magisterio tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponuntur.'"—Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution, *Munificentissimus Deus*, AAS, 42 (1950), 756-757.

<sup>43</sup> ". . . 'in rebus fidei et morum cuilibet theologo proxima et universalis veritatis norma' statuitur, sacrum nempe Ecclesiae Magisterium."—Pius XII, *Inter complures*, *loc. cit.*

canons, by our Predecessors and by ourselves must be religiously observed, particularly those that concern the constant duty of professing and instilling in the minds and hearts of the students the reverence and complete fidelity which are due to the ecclesiastical magisterium. . . ."<sup>44</sup>

If it be protested that there is little or no need in our day for such emphasis on this doctrine, one may refer to the address of Pope Pius XII delivered on May 31, 1954 to a large gathering of the hierarchy in Rome. Speaking of the magisterium of the Church, he warned:

Not without serious reason, Venerable Brothers, have we wished to recall these things in your presence. For unfortunately it has happened that certain teachers care little for conformity with the living teaching authority of the Church, pay little heed to her commonly received doctrine clearly proposed in various ways; and at the same time they follow their own bent too much, and regard too highly the intellectual temper of more recent writers, and the standards of other branches of learning, which they declare and hold to be the only ones which conform to sound ideas and standards of scholarship.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>44</sup> "In disciplinis autem sive philosophicis sive theologicis . . . tradendis sanctissime ea omnia servantur quae a sacris canonibus et a Nostris Decessoribus aequae ac a Nobis ipsis praescripta sunt, de debita praesertim Magisterio Ecclesiastico reverentia atque omnimoda fidelitate semper et ubique profitenda et discipulorum mentibus animisque instillanda . . ." Pius XII, Apostolic Constitution, *Sedes sapientiae*, AAS, 48 (1956), 362.

<sup>45</sup> "Non absque gravi ratione haec coram vobis, Venerabiles Fratres, monere volumus. Etenim infeliciter accidit, quod quidam docentes parum quaerunt coniunctionem cum vivo Ecclesiae Magisterio, parumque mentem animumque convertunt ad communem eius doctrinam hoc vel illo modo clare propositam; simul autem nimium dant proprio ingenio, mentis habitui recentiorum, aliarum disciplinarum normis, quas unicas dicunt et habent tamquam veris doctrinae rationibus et praeceptis consentaneas." Pius XII, Allocution, *Si diligis*, AAS, 46 (1954), 315. For English translation, cf. *The Pope Speaks*, I (1954), 155-156.

In a recent article Fr. S. Tromp, S.J., deplors what he terms a growing tendency to strip theology of every magisterial decision of the Church and of every true theological evolution, and then to build from Scripture alone. We can never sufficiently insist, he says, on the fact that God did not give Scripture and Tradition to the Church in order that by their use the decisions of the magisterium should be subjected to criticism and called into question; rather, He gave them to the Church in order that the magisterium might guard, explain and expound them." Cf. S. Tromp, S.J., "Pius PP. XII et Theologia Fundamentals," *Divinitas*, 3 (1959), 635-653.

And so too in the exegesis of Scripture. Rather than subscribe to the view, which appears to be somewhat wanting in theological exactness, that Catholic and Protestant scriptural scholars must come together in a spirit of good will to work out a common biblical theology, the Catholic theologian must insist, in the words of Father Gustave Weigel, S.J.: "We cannot understand Christian dogma by the Bible, but rather we must understand the Bible by the dogma."<sup>46</sup> The Catholic theologian must insist that a "coldly scientific—in the sense of rationalistic—objectivity is quite incapable of even perceiving, let alone exploiting, the religious values of Scripture. There must first be the commitment, the recognition by faith of the divine origin and authority of the book; then the believer can properly and profitably apply all the most conscientious techniques of the subordinate sciences, without in the least infringing their due autonomy or being disloyal to the scientific ideal."<sup>47</sup> These last, the words of the prominent Scripture scholar, Father R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., in an address before this Society in 1955.

### *Biblical Theology*

Problems connected with biblical theology present a challenge to

<sup>46</sup> G. Weigel, S.J., "Protestant Theological Positions Today," *Theological Studies*, 11 (1950), 565. Fr. E. Burke, C.S.P. has made the following trenchant observations: "The place of Sacred Scripture in the scientific teaching of theology has been the occasion of much heated discussion. The extensive work of Catholic scriptural scholarship and the failure of many theological writers to make use of this work has given rise to a number of acrimonious statements by both sides . . . it must be remembered that it is to the Church that the whole of revelation has been committed for indefectible transmission and authentic declaration. Thus while Sacred Scripture is a very special and distinctive part of this deposit, being itself the work of divine inspiration, yet it too is committed to the Church. And like the whole of revelation it is not only a matter of the material word of the Scriptures but the true and Catholic understanding of the realities contained in [them]. Sacred Scripture is not the divinely constituted teacher of revelation but only a source of that teaching. It is only the authentic magisterium which does not err in judging the true sense of Scripture and explaining it (Franzelin, p. 183). This is the teaching of the Council of Trent whose teaching has been reaffirmed by the Vatican Council. . . ." Eugene M. Burke, C.S.P., *art. cit.*, *CTSA Proceedings*, 4 (1949), 148-149.

<sup>47</sup> R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., "The Concept of Biblical Theology," *CTSA Proceedings*, 10 (1955), 57-58.

the theologian of our day.<sup>48</sup> Indeed there remain to be solved many difficulties concerning the very concept of biblical theology.<sup>49</sup> The genuine scholar, marked with those characteristics to which reference has several times been made in this address, can have no sympathy with a point of view that condemns without qualification every advance in scriptural studies—and in our times these advances have been extremely significant<sup>50</sup>—whether pertaining to textual criticism or to exegesis.<sup>51</sup> But he has a right to expect, on the other hand, that new theories as to the meaning and interpretation of the inspired word are clearly understood to be but theories. The hypothesis of this or that biblical scholar, possible or probable though it may

<sup>48</sup> "In view of the tremendous possibilities opened up by the modern renovation, almost transformation of biblical studies, it does seem that one hope of a revitalized theology lies here."—R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., *ibid.*, 53.

As to the relationship of theology to Scripture, it is interesting to note that at times St. Thomas uses the terms "theology," "sacred doctrine" and "Sacred Scripture" interchangeably, signifying one and the same sacred science. Cf. F. P. Muniz, O.P., *The Work of Theology*, Washington, 1953, 13 sqq. G. F. VanAckeren, S.J., has written a penetrating study of the nature of *sacra doctrina* according to the mind of St. Thomas, reviewing the interpretations of Cajetan, Sylvius, Billuart, John of St. Thomas, Sertillanges, Congar, Garrigou-Lagrange and other theologians: *Sacra Doctrina: the Subject of the First Question of the "Summa Theologica" of Saint Thomas Aquinas*, Rome, 1952.

<sup>49</sup> Cf. A. Bea, S.J., "Biblical Studies Today," *Theology Digest*, 3 (1955), 51-54. This article appeared originally in *Stimmen der Zeit*, 153 (1953:2), 91-104, under the title "Der Heutige Stand der Bibelwissenschaft." Cf. also J. L. McKenzie, S.J., "A Chapter in the History of Spiritual Exegesis: DeLubac's *Histoire et Esprit*," *Theological Studies*, 12 (1951), 381; Eric E. May, O.F.M. Cap., "The Problems of a Biblical Mariology," *Marian Studies*, 11 (1960), 21-24.

<sup>50</sup> "La scienza biblica, sorretta e guidata dal Magistero della Chiesa, ha fatto, in questi ultimi quasi sessanta anni, un progresso notevole il quale ha impressionato e impressiona ancora tanto i biblisti cattolici, che anche molti non cattolici, sia a causa dei principi così chiaramente esposti sia per ragioni dei risultati raggiunti. Questo progresso gioverà certo in prima linea la teologia cattolica stessa, la quale approfitterà della conoscenza più ampia e più profonda dei sacri Libri, per esporre, spiegare e provare sempre più accuratamente i dogmi della nostra fede e le leggi della nostra morale."—A. Bea, S.J., "La Scienza Biblica Cattolica da Leone XIII a Pio XII," *Divinitas*, 3 (1959), 632-633.

<sup>51</sup> ". . . qui quidem ab illo haud satis prudenti studio abhorreere debent, quo quidquid novum est, ob hoc ipsum censetur esse impugandum, aut in suspitionem adducendum."—Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Divino Aflante Spiritu*, AAS, 35 (1943), 319.

be, while not yet established as a fact, must not supplant, merely because it is new, what has been traditionally accepted and taught by biblical scholars and theologians.<sup>52</sup> The need to combine truly scientific scholarship that distinguishes facts from hypotheses, with complete submission to the deposit of faith and the magisterium of the Church was one of the main themes of the magnificent address of Pope John XXIII, delivered in February of this year, on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the Pontifical Biblical Institute.<sup>53</sup>

Mature and balanced judgment, together with a scrupulous regard for the norms of true scholarship may result at times in interpretations that somewhat disturb the timid. Yet these must realize that the true meaning of the inspired writer will not weaken faith but will strengthen it. As Father Eugène Joly has expressed the thought:

Eventually the work of criticism sifts the faith itself from all foreign elements, and above all it enables us to appreciate the admirable divine pedagogy which can use all human initiatives and enlist them in the service of the Lord's Epiphany. . . . We can await further results not only calmly but exultantly, knowing that in the end our faith can only be the gainer, whatever difficulties we may have for the moment in adapting our minds to new views.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>52</sup> "In exegetica expositione, magister ne unquam obliviscatur *Ecclesiae* a Deo traditam esse Sacram Scripturam non solum custodiendam, sed etiam interpretandam, eamque non aliter esse explicandam nisi eiusdem *Ecclesiae* nomine et mente, quippe quae sit 'columna et firmamentum veritatis.' Quare 'sanctum habebit, numquam a communi doctrina ac traditione *Ecclesiae* vel minimum discedere: utique vera scientiae huius incrementa, quaecumque recentiorum sollertia peperit, in rem suam convertet, sed temeraria novatorum commenta negleget' (Pius X)."—*Instructio Comm. Pont. de Re Biblica*, AAS, 42 (1950), 500.

"The Catholic interpreter of the Bible cannot, as has been said of his Protestant colleagues, 'always begin completely anew.' He has to keep in mind the work of his predecessors, especially where there is question of the doctrinal content of the Sacred Books. In this area his predecessors have left him what Pius XII called 'almost inexhaustible riches,' which present day exegesis is still far from having sufficiently explored and utilized."—A. Bea, S.J., *op. cit.*, 54.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. Allocution, *Abbiamo apprezzato*, AAS, 52 (1960), 155-157.

<sup>54</sup> E. Joly, *What Is Faith?*, London, 1958, 119.

Constant cooperation between theologian and biblical scholar cannot but be productive of highly desirable results. For the theologian it will mean, for example, a continuous re-assessment of the use of scriptural texts in the explanation of doctrine.<sup>55</sup> For the biblical scholar it will result in a more profound understanding of the teaching of the Church and of the inter-relation of the dogmas proposed for our belief, and thus as he addresses himself to the task of searching for the meaning of the inspired word he will have an authoritative guide to direct him and to guard him against erroneous deviations.

### *Scripture and Tradition*

There remains as a challenge to the theologian the question to which attention was called in the scholarly presidential address delivered before this Society two years ago by Father John F. X. Sweeney, S.J.<sup>56</sup> What is the exact relationship between Scripture and Tradition as the sources of revelation? What indeed is the precise nature of Tradition? May Tradition be identified with the living magisterium as such? Is the basis for the distinction between Scripture and Tradition not a division of revealed truths, but rather a difference in the manner in which the truths are transmitted and proposed? Can it be held that Tradition includes Scripture? What is to be said of the opinion of those theologians who consider the Bible to contain the plenitude of Christian revelation? Is the answer to the question of the relationship between Scripture and Tradition, and indeed also the answer to the question of the very nature of Tradition—are such answers to be found in the explanation of Father J. R. Geiselman, S.J.: "The word of God may be found in its totality in the living Tradition of the Church, and in its totality in Sacred Scripture. All of the revealed word of God is to be found in Sacred Scripture as interpreted by living Tradition."<sup>57</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Cf. E. F. Siegman, C.P.P.S., "The Use of Sacred Scripture in Textbooks of Dogmatic Theology," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 11 (1949), 151-164; R. A. F. MacKenzie, S.J., *art. cit.*, 61-62; R. V. Schoder, S.J., "The Rebirth of Scriptural Theology," *The American Ecclesiastical Review*, 117 (1947), 98.

<sup>56</sup> J. F. X. Sweeney, S.J., "The Challenge to Theology," *CTSA Proceedings*, 13 (1958), 178-191.

<sup>57</sup> J. R. Geiselman, S.J., "Scripture and Tradition in Catholic Theology,"



*Moral Theology*

Those theologians whose interest centers primarily about moral theology are surely not immune from the obligation of meeting the manifold challenges of the coming decade. It goes without saying, of course, that although one speaks of various parts of theology, theology actually "is one science with absolute, indivisible unity, from the fact that its formal *ratio sub qua* is indivisible and always the same throughout all its parts."<sup>58</sup>

It is not my purpose here to discuss any specific, concrete problems of morality that confront the theologian of our day—problems which are almost innumerable, and many of them frightening in their gravity: problems, for example, of the morality of nuclear warfare, of foreign policy, of the relation between Church and state, problems involving morality in relation to alleged overpopulation and immigration, the racial question, social justice, problems of morality in the fields of law, economics, medicine, etc. Rather is it my intent to call attention to certain broader considerations in the area of moral theology, in so far as they constitute a challenge to the theologian.

*Moral Theology as Theology*

There is first the challenge to maintain moral theology as theology.<sup>59</sup> Although historically moral theology was born as an integral

*Theology Digest*, 6 (1958), 73-78. The article originally appeared in *Una Sancta*, II (1956), 131-150, under the title "Das Missverständnis über das Verhältnis von Schrift und Tradition und seine Überwindung in der katholischen Theologie." Cf. also W. J. Burghardt, S.J., "The Catholic Concept of Tradition in the Light of Modern Theological Thought," *CTSA Proceedings*, 6 (1951), 42-75; H. Lennerz, S.J., "Scriptura sola," *Gregorianum*, 40 (1959), 38-53 and "Sine scripto traditiones," *ibid.*, 624-635; M. Bévenot, "Tradition, Church and Dogma," *The Heythrop Journal*, 1 (1960), 34-47; L. Billot, S.J., *De Immutabilitate Traditionis contra Modernam Haeresim Evolutionismi*, Rome, 1929, 11-45; J. Filograssi, S.J., "Traditio divino-apostolica et Assumptio B.V.M.," *Gregorianum*, 30 (1949), 443-489; G. Söhngen, "Tradition and Apostolic Preaching," *Theology Digest*, 1 (1953), 88-91. The last-named originally appeared in *Episcopos: Studien über das Bischofsamt*, Regensburg, 1949, 89-109.

<sup>58</sup> Muniz, *op. cit.*, 6.

<sup>59</sup> Cf. W. Conway, "The Science of Moral Theology: New Trends," *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, 22 (1955), 154-158; E. Lio, O.F.M., "Natura del Magistero Morale di Pio XII," *Divinitas*, 3 (1959), 732-735.

part of theology, nevertheless it is a source of concern that today there exists a danger of making moral theology merely an expanded ethics. It is a commonplace, of course, to recognize that there is an essential difference between moral theology and ethics, *ratione amplitudinis objecti, ratione medii cognitionis et ratione finis*.<sup>60</sup> Yet the fact remains that far too frequently, even in our textbooks, the truths of moral theology are set forth as if they constituted a purely natural system of ethics, and not rarely the guidance suggested for use by the confessor and the spiritual director in their work of counselling souls is based upon the theories and perspectives of the empirical sciences alone.

Moreover, the essential importance of the magisterium of the Church in the solution of problems in moral theology cannot be overemphasized. Whatever may be said of the pragmatic value of treating of moral problems from the point of view of ethics in dealing with those not of his religion, the theologian must never lose sight of the fact that his science is based upon faith, and that its primary source is divine revelation as proposed and expounded by the magisterium of the Church.

Nor may the theologian disregard the fact of the competence of the magisterium over matters of the natural law. Indeed it may be said that *in praxi* the guidance of the Church is oftentimes indispensable for the solution of moral problems involving the natural law; for the basic character and universality of the natural law do not of themselves necessarily make the natural law in all its ramifications easily knowable.<sup>61</sup> The doctrine of the Church in this regard, as expressed by Pope Pius XII, is unequivocal:

The power of the Church is not bound by the limits of *matters strictly religious*, as they say, but the whole matter of the natural

<sup>60</sup> Cf. D. M. Prümmer, O.P., *Manuale Theologiae Moralis*, Barcelona, 1945-1946, I, n. 4. Cf. also D. von Hildebrand, *True Morality and Its Counterparts*, New York, 1955, 157-158.

<sup>61</sup> ". . . we may tend at times to overestimate the power of natural reasoning alone to convince people of the malice of what is objectively sinful, and forget that the guidance of the Church is a practical necessity for full awareness of natural law."—J. J. Lynch, S.J., "Notes on Moral Theology," *Theological Studies*, 17 (1956), 172. Cf. S. Bertke, *The Possibility of Invincible Ignorance of the Natural Law*, Washington, 1941.

law, its foundation, its interpretation, its application, so far as their moral aspects extend, are within the Church's power. For the keeping of the Natural Law, by God's appointment, has reference to the road by which man has to approach his supernatural end. But, on this road, the Church is man's guide and guardian in what concerns his supreme end. . . . Therefore, when it is a question of instructions and propositions which the properly constituted shepherds . . . publish on matters within the natural law, the faithful must not invoke that saying (which is wont to be employed with respect to opinions of individuals): *The strength of the authority is no more than the strength of the arguments.* Hence, even though to someone, certain declarations of the Church may not seem proved by the arguments put forward, his obligation to obey still remains.<sup>62</sup>

Because in actual fact men do not live in two worlds—a supernatural world and a natural world—it is the function of the moralist to make clear the role that every aspect of life must play in the fulfillment of God's supernatural plan for the whole human race. Not that there is a specific moral theology, so to speak, for every department of human life. Father Karl Rahner, S.J., has already deplored "a certain predilection for finding theological foundations for all kinds of things—a theology of play and sport, a theology of dress and a thousand other things."<sup>63</sup> But rather, that the moralist must convince contemporary man of the appositeness of revelation to the existential world of 1960 with all its problems and crises—and in this application of supernatural revealed truth aim perhaps at a Christo-centric synthesis of moral theology, for example (as

<sup>62</sup> "Ecclesiae potestas nequaquam 'rerum stricte religiosarum,' uti loqui solent, finibus continetur, sed tota quoque legis naturalis materia, institutio, interpretatio, applicatio, quatenus moralis earum ratio attenditur, in eius sunt potestate. Observatio enim legis naturae ex Dei ordinatione spectat ad viam, qua homo ad finem suum supra naturam tendere debet. Iam vero Ecclesia est hac in via, ad finem quod attinet supra naturam, hominum dux et custos. . . . Quare, cum agitur de praescriptis et sententiis, quas legitimi Pastores . . . in rebus legis naturae edunt, fideles non debent provocare ad effatum (quod in sententiis privatorum adhiberi solet): 'tantum valet auctoritas, quantum valent rationes.' Hinc, etsi cui argumentis allatis ordinatio quaedam Ecclesiae non evinci videtur, tamen, permanet obligatio oboedientiae."—Pius XII, Allocution, *Magnificate Dominum*, AAS, 46 (1954), 671-672. For English translation, cf. *The Pope Speaks*, 1 (1954), 380-381.

<sup>63</sup> K. Rahner, S.J., "Theology of the Parish," in *The Parish: From Theology to Practice*, H. Rahner, S.J., ed., Westminster, 1958, 24.

Father Ceslaus Spicq, O.P., has advocated<sup>64</sup>), or a presentation of the whole of moral theology from the viewpoint of charity (as Father Gérard Gilleman, S.J., has proposed<sup>65</sup>), or from the viewpoint of a dialogue between God and man (as Father Bernard Häring, C.S.S.R., has suggested<sup>66</sup>).

One notes with satisfaction the growing emphasis on biblical considerations in the writings of moral theologians—not, of course, in the sense that one must find positive justification in Scripture for every moral duty imposed upon man. But the tendency is developing to present the great biblical themes as a basis for motivation in daily conduct.<sup>67</sup> More and more widely there is being recognized that “to divorce precepts from the religious truths which give them meaning is not merely to render our moral science incomplete—it is also to run the risk of falsifying it . . . .”<sup>68</sup>

Moralists are called upon today, perhaps as never before, to defend the very existence of an objective distinction between right and wrong, and to defend the very existence of subjective responsibility and subjective guilt.<sup>69</sup> Time and again Pope Pius XII pointed to this fact of the denial of such an objective distinction as a matter of gravest concern. (Parenthetically it may be observed that with

<sup>64</sup> Cf. C. Spicq, O.P., *Vie Morale et Trinité Sainte*, Paris, 1957, especially ch. 3.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. G. Gilleman, S.J., *The Primacy of Charity in Moral Theology*, Westminster, 1959.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. B. Häring, C.S.S.R., *La Loi du Christ*, Tournai, 1955-1959. The work was originally published in German under the title *Das Gesetz Christi*, Freiburg, 1954.

<sup>67</sup> Cf., e.g., J. Stelzenberger, *Moraltheologie*, Paderborn, 1953 with its insistence upon the idea of the Kingdom of God as the dominant theme.

<sup>68</sup> K. Walsh, “Sacred Scripture and Moral Teaching,” *The Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 90 (1958), 270. R. Guindon, O.M.I., points out that St. Thomas’ treatment of Moral Theology is based upon the teachings of the Gospel and developed within the framework of the beatitudes and the virtues. Cf. “Le caractère évangélique de la morale de saint Thomas d’Aquin,” *Revue de l’Université d’Ottawa*, 25 (1955), 145\*-167\*.

<sup>69</sup> E. Gilson has remarked: “The very idea that there is an objective distinction between good and evil, and that man, by consulting his reason, can tell with certitude what is right and what is wrong, is today publicly discussed, subjected to a sharp critique, and as often as not, rejected as wholly deprived of rational justification.”—*The Breakdown of Morals and Christian Education*, Toronto, 1952, p. 4.

regard to the precise signification of the "intrinsically evil" there is much room for research and study.)

As to subjective culpability, not at all uncommon is the view expressed recently by a prominent psychiatrist, that: "No human being should be blamed for anything he does." "The concept of sin is the direct and indirect cause of virtually all neurotic disturbances."<sup>70</sup> The theologian does not deny, of course, that responsibility is frequently impaired to a greater or lesser degree by certain subjective states.<sup>71</sup> One cannot disregard, for example, the relationship between unconscious motivation and moral responsibility, or the influence of such factors as alcoholism<sup>72</sup> and the sex drive<sup>73</sup> as far as guilt is concerned. Great strides have been made in recent years

<sup>70</sup> Dr. A. Ellis, before the 67th annual convention of the American Psychological Association. Quoted in editorial, "Sin and Psychology," *America*, 101, No. 24 (Sept. 12, 1959), 687.

<sup>71</sup> Cf., e.g., J. S. Duhamel, S.J., and J. Hayden, O.S.B., "Theological and Psychiatric Aspects of Habitual Sin," *CTSA Proceedings*, 11 (1956), 130-163.

<sup>72</sup> "The average alcoholic is sick in body, mind and soul, and usually cannot stop drinking without outside help. *His responsibility for his drinking is generally diminished to a considerable extent, and sometimes eliminated, but each alcoholic, each drinking episode, and even each act of drinking must be judged separately.*"—J. C. Ford, S.J., *Depth Psychology, Morality and Alcoholism*, Weston, 1951, 76.

<sup>73</sup> "There seems to be an especially prevalent tendency today to find excuses from formal mortal sin, particularly in sexual matters, and very particularly with reference to conjugal onanism and adolescent masturbation. Within certain limits this tendency could be both consoling and reasonable. Any priest who has spent long hours in the confessional knows of the difficulties and the weaknesses that often manifest greatly diminished culpability. But it is certainly transgressing the bounds of the reasonable to argue from these frequent difficulties and weaknesses to a general thesis of impossibility. This is contrary to the teaching of the Church, as Pius XII insisted with reference to onanism, in his allocution on conjugal morality, and as he reiterated, this time with reference to adolescents, in his discourse on forming the Christian conscience." G. Kelly, S.J., "Notes on Moral Theology, 1952," *Theological Studies*, 14 (1953), 34. Cf. the statements of Pope Pius XII on these points in *AAS*, 44 (1952), 270-278; 45 (1953), 278-286.

M. Oraison, in his *Vie chrétienne et problèmes de la sexualité*, Paris, 1952, seemed to maintain that everyone is a victim of sexual pathology, that sexual passion so dominates the individual consciously or unconsciously, that generally in practice it must be presumed that grave formal guilt in regard to sexual sins is extremely rare. The book was condemned by the Holy Office on March 18, 1953, and the condemnation was publicly announced on January 3, 1955. Cf. *AAS*, 47 (1955), 46.

in these areas of moral theology. To continue investigation along these lines, in an endeavor to clarify problems of subjective responsibility, is one of the pressing challenges to the theologian of today.<sup>74</sup>

The concept of "collective guilt" demands attention and study on the part of moral theologians. The thirteenth annual meeting of the International Catholic Conversations, held at San Sebastian last year, discussed "Collective Sin" as its central theme. One of the speakers, Father Sagües, S.J., in his paper entitled "Collective Sin Is Not a Mere Metaphor," while affirming that there is no collective responsibility different from and independent of individual responsibilities, maintained nevertheless that collective sin is a reality—the sin of Israel in the Old Testament, for example, the idolatry of its people and their defiance of the divine will. He contended that although collective sin "could not be looked for on the strict plane of moral responsibility," it might be sought "on the objective plane of social reality where the results of individual sins manifested themselves. The latter, upon combining among themselves, regrouping and fusing, formed sociological situations which might be described as 'sinful' because evil had incrustated itself and had become, as it were, crystallized."<sup>75</sup>

The director of the Conversations, Don Carlos Santamaria, in pointing out that there were situations in which lying, injustice, hatred, and sin in general could crystallize in a collectivity, insisted that although "we are not directly responsible for the situation which may have been created for us by the action of preceding generations," nevertheless "we should become responsible and commit a sin

<sup>74</sup> Cf. Msgr. Wynen's observations in connection with a matrimonial case before the Rota, in which the validity of consent was attacked on the ground that one party labored under "constitutional immorality" which prevented him from evaluating sufficiently the ethical side of the marriage act. Msgr. Wynen admitted that conceptual cognition does not suffice for freedom and imputability; the capacity to evaluate the substantial elements of the proposed action is likewise necessary. *Sacrae Romanae Rotae Decisiones*, 33, 144-168. For a study of this case, cf. G. M. Fazzari, S.J., *Valutazione etica e consenso matrimoniale*, Napoli, 1951.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. "Theology and Ecclesiastical Sciences," *Spanish Cultural Index* (Cultural Relations Dept., Palacio de Santa Cruz, Madrid), No. 166 (Nov. 1, 1959), 1021-1022.

of omission if we accepted, without opposition or protest, all that can proceed from sin and injustice in a given sociological situation."<sup>76</sup>

### *Moral Theology as a Science*

It stands as a challenge to the theologian of our day to maintain the status of moral theology as a science. Perhaps it is because moral theology is often almost exclusively aimed at the preparation of confessors that all too frequently there result a lack of speculative discussion, a reluctance to deal with principles, and an overweening readiness to consider moral problems almost entirely from a pragmatic viewpoint, with a consequent endeavor to solve them only on the basis of positive law.<sup>77</sup> The moralist must reintegrate moral theology with dogma. He cannot be unmindful of the teaching of the Church regarding the intimate connection between theology and the perennial philosophy.<sup>78</sup> Nor can he overlook the significance of the fact that the so-called "new morality" was condemned mainly because of its denial of universal moral principles.<sup>79</sup>

### *Current Trends*

In recent years extremely laudable work has been initiated along the lines of a basic re-thinking of moral theology, in an effort to offset the almost exclusive orientation of Christian morality toward the confessional. Thus Father Gérard Gillemann, S.J., in his monumental volume has insisted upon the primacy of charity in moral theology and upon the need of "a formulation of Christian morality which will always be kept under the primacy of charity."<sup>80</sup> For Father Fritz Tillman moral theology must be based upon the imitation of

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 1021.

<sup>77</sup> "Theology . . . is both speculative and practical. To wish to make it only practical or even primarily practical would be to misunderstand it and to mutilate it."—Journet, *op. cit.*, p. 76. Cf. P. Delhaye, "Dogme et Morale: Autonomie et Assistance Mutuelle," *Problemi Scelti di Teologia Contemporanea*, Romae, 1954, 27-39.

<sup>78</sup> Cf., e.g., Pius XII, Encyclical Letter, *Humani generis*, AAS, 42 (1950), 571-575.

<sup>79</sup> Cf., e.g., Pius XII, *De conscientia christiana*, AAS, 44 (1952), 270-278; Allocution, *Soyez les bienvenus*, *ibid.*, 413-419; Instruction of the Holy Office, *Contra doctrinam moralem*, *ibid.*, 48 (1956), 144-145.

<sup>80</sup> *Op. cit.*, xxxvii.

Christ who is the perfect exemplar of all virtue.<sup>81</sup> For Father Emile Mersch, S.J., the whole of Christian moral conduct must be constructed within the framework of the doctrine of the Mystical Body.<sup>82</sup> For Father Bernard Häring, C.S.S.R., Christian morality involves a personal relationship with the living God, a dialogue that consists in the appeal of Christ and the response of the individual soul, acceptance constituting conversion, and refusal constituting sin.<sup>83</sup> Father Gustave Ermecke has proposed a methodology of teaching moral theology revolving about three key ideas: the new life in Christ; the new love—supernatural charity as vitalizing and elevating natural virtues and acts; the new law which Christ brought and is, and which he fulfills.<sup>84</sup>

These are notable advances in moral theology in recent times (impelled, no doubt, in large measure by Father Arthur Vermeersch's emphasis, in his works, on the counsels and on the pursuit of perfection<sup>85</sup>). These advances are answering to a great extent the objections of the contemporary methodology of moral theology—objections proposed by such writers as Father Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., Father Creusen, S.J., Father Spiazzi, O.P., and Father Trémeau, O.P.<sup>86</sup>

If in other parts of this address there has been insistence upon the need for maturity of approach, for impartiality of attitude and for respect for truth, to mark the theologian of our day, surely there

<sup>81</sup> F. Tillman, *Handbuch der Katholischen Sittenlehre*: v. III, *Die Idee der Nachfolge Christi*; IV, *Die Verwirklichung der Nachfolge Christi*, Düsseldorf, 1934-1936.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. É. Mersch, S.J., *Morality and the Mystical Body*, New York, 1939.

<sup>83</sup> *Op. cit.*

<sup>84</sup> Cf. "Catholic Moral Theology Today," *Theology Digest*, 2 (1954), 19-22. This article originally appeared in *Theologie und Glaube*, XLI (1951:2), 127-142, under the title "Die katholische Moralthologie heute."

<sup>85</sup> Cf., e.g., A. Vermeersch, S.J., *Theologiae Moralis Principia, Responsa, Consilia*, Rome, 1933-1937.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., *Beatitude: a Commentary on St. Thomas' Theological Summa*, Ia IIae, qq. 1-54, St. Louis, 1956; G. Creusen, S.J., "Dello spirito e del metodo nell' insegnamento della Teologia Morale," *Questioni Attuali*, Torino, 1948, 5-10; R. Spiazzi, O.P., *art. cit.*, 45-46; M. Trémeau, O.P., *Principes de morale chrétienne*, Paris, 1959. J. Leclercq's volume (*L'Enseignement de la morale chrétienne*, Paris, 1950), which was extremely critical of present-day Moral Theology was ordered withdrawn from circulation by the Holy See. Cf. *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2 Feb. 1956.



is no less necessity for such emphasis in the matters now under consideration. While there is no one who fails to recognize the abuses to which unrestricted casuistry, minimal theology and a theology of sin can lead, nevertheless the truly balanced theologian will realize that for the exercise of moral theology as an art (and it is an art as well as a science) a prudent casuistry is indispensable, and a treatment of sin is unavoidable. The application of norms to concrete cases and the careful delineation of cases through the consideration of varying details and circumstances are essential, if the principles of morality are to permeate such areas as medicine, law, politics, economics, etc. in a realistic world. Concern with sin, with theological species and moral species, with circumstances that alter species, etc. is necessary, because it is the will and command of our Divine Lord that post-baptismal grave sins be confessed in precisely such a way, in order that the sacrament of penance be received. It is true that there is need for a reintegration of moral and spiritual theology,<sup>87</sup> and it is true that moral theology must beware of any tendency to disregard the obligation of the individual to avoid venial sin as well as mortal sin, to practice virtue and to tend to perfection—but the fact remains that there can be no question of spiritual progress or of an increase of grace in the soul, unless first the soul be free of mortal sin and thus possess the infused virtue of supernatural charity. And so, “determining, as casuistry sometimes does, that an action involves no grave guilt, does not mean that it incites someone to commit venial sin, or that it does not consider venial sin to be a fault.” Then too, “one must remember that for some souls, the avoidance of grave guilt in certain circumstances with which casuistry deals, can be an heroic

<sup>87</sup> “De même y a-t-il une *science* de la perfection chrétienne. C’est en cela précisément et proprement que consiste la théologie morale, et non en un recueil de cas de conscience, posés par référence à des préceptes, et résolus selon les degrés de probabilité extrinsèque des autorités alléguées. Légalisme sans ‘raison’ et sans âme, d’où s’évadent promptement les spirituels, et les bons chrétiens tout court.”—Chenu, *op. cit.*, 51-52. “Les subdivisions de la théologie morale semblent avoir pâti plus encore de présupposés maladroits ou discutables, au point que la dénomination même de théologie *morale* s’est affaïssée, comme si, science des devoirs à pratiquer, elle n’était que la médiocre suffisance d’une vie qui, dans sa perfection, relèverait de la théologie *spirituelle*. Le vocabulaire trahit lourdement l’une des faiblesses dont ont souffert et l’enseignement et la qualité de la théologie.” *Ibid.*, 109.

act: in the case of a mother, for example, who does not allow a therapeutic abortion, even though realizing that it is the only means, in this case, of escaping death."<sup>88</sup>

The efforts to reorient moral theology around the supernatural virtue of charity, or to construct a moral theology on the basis of the doctrine of the Mystical Body, or to build it within the framework of an appeal from Christ and a response to Christ, etc.—all such efforts cannot but have desirable effects. But it would be regrettable if, while pursuing such endeavors, the theologian were to minimize the necessity and the nobility of a morality of obligation, or if he were to disregard the fact that justice, for example, does not cease to be a virtue, simply because charity is the queen of the virtues.<sup>89</sup> Indeed there are some theologians, Father Francis Hürth, S.J., for instance, who believe that the virtue of charity as such is not sufficiently determined, in order to act as an exclusive guide for one's entire life, and that to base all moral theology on it might easily lead to abuses. Likewise in regard to the formation of a Christian conscience founded upon a judgment of what Christ would do in a given set of circumstances, Father Hürth, S.J., points out that such a norm could lack adequate specification and ease of application.<sup>90</sup> Other theologians fear that in the current attempts to reorganize moral theology, "St. Thomas's classical fundamental moral has been eliminated. . . . Without the classical fundamental moral theology there would be no certitude, no profundity, no explanation of the ultimate 'why' in the

<sup>88</sup> E. Lio, O.F.M., *art. cit.*, *Divinitas*, 3 (1959), 741. Fr. F. Clark, S.J., has written: "As to the charge of 'moral minimalism,' it is one that the Catholic moralist must in one sense admit, and about which he can offer little satisfaction to his critics. The chief aim of the science of moral theology as it exists in the Church today is the formation and guidance of confessors whom the Church can officially approve for the ministry of the Sacrament of Penance. . . . It belongs to the Church's power of the keys that her ministers should know clearly what human acts separate man from God, should mark out plainly the edge of the abyss beyond which lies death for the soul."—"The Challenge to Moral Theology," *The Clergy Review*, 38 (1953), 222-223.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. P. Hayoit, "La morale de l'obligation est-elle rationaliste?," *Revue diocésaine de Tournai*, 13 (1958), 1-14.

<sup>90</sup> Cf. F. Hürth, S.J., "Hodierna conscientiae problemata metaphysica, psychologica, theologica," *Periodica de Re Morali, Canonica, Liturgica*, 42 (1953), 238-245.

more particularized moral treatises."<sup>91</sup> This last, the view of Father John Cahill, O.P., as expressed in *The Irish Theological Quarterly*.

*Conclusion*

With these reflections on some of the aspects of the formidable and stimulating task presented to the theologian of our day, I bring to a close this presidential address, in which the fact has been stressed that genuine and scientific scholarship in the field of theology demands maturity of approach, impartiality of attitude, and respect for truth. By way of conclusion may I give expression to this prayerful hope. The purpose of theology, as described by William Estius, the renowned theologian of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, is to serve as a medium whereby "man should know God, and having known Him should love Him, and finally should rest in God as in his highest good."<sup>92</sup> As, with God's grace, and in sincere humility, we pursue our labors in the field of theology, looking forward to a new decade, may God be for us, through our study of his revealed word, our illumination, our inspiration, our sanctification, and in the end, our eternal recompense.

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<sup>91</sup> J. Cahill, O.P., "The Sapiential Character of Moral Theology," *The Irish Theological Quarterly*, 27 (1960), 144-145.

<sup>92</sup> G. Estius, *In Quatuor Libros Sententiarum Commentaria*, Paris, 1696, praefatio.