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Wednesday, August 11, part 2

DOCTRINES

Our sixth functional specialty is doctrines. I shall speak of the varieties of doctrines, their functions, their variations, of the differentiation of consciousness, the ongoing discovery of mind with consequent ongoing contexts, of the development, permanence, and historicity of dogma, of cultural pluralism and the unity of faith, of the autonomy of the functional specialty named doctrines. Most of this you will find in the small book, the lecture, *Doctrinal Pluralism*.

[Varieties]

A first step is to distinguish primary sources, church doctrines, theological doctrines, and the methodological doctrine that arises from the application of a method that contains a functional specialty named doctrines. Common to all is that they are taught. They differ because the teachers differ in authority.

In primary sources one has to distinguish between the doctrine of the original message, for example, 1 Cor. 15.3 ff. and Gal. 1.6 ff., and doctrines about doctrine. When St Paul narrates in 1 Cor. 15 that Christ rose from the dead, that he appeared first to Peter and then to others, and so on, he is conveying the original message. But in Hebrews the (1.1, 2) that God has spoken to us of old through the Prophets and most recently in his Son, one has a doctrine about doctrines, it is a divine revelation. Again, the church

decree in which the decision of Christians coincides with the decision of the Holy Ghost (Acts 15.28), it is a doctrine of the Holy Ghost. Then in the Fathers Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen, the genuine doctrine as opposed to heresy is the doctrine taught by the Apostles to the churches they founded, and handed on from the apostles, the apostolic traditions. Finally, once the canon, once the New Testament was composed and a canon, what books pertained to the New Testament was determined, one had a more accessible criterion than this business of going back, tracing the traditions back to the earliest, the churches founded by the apostles.

So in the New Testament itself there are doctrines and doctrines about doctrines, and finally there is the setting up of scripture.

Church doctrines are what is confessed by the members of the church, the members of the church receiving the message. In the New Testament there is Neufeld, an American, has a book on *Earliest Christian Confessions*: that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, that he is the Son of God, that he is Lord, were the confessions of the earliest Church, they were the formulas in which Christians expressed their faith. That way in which the Christians assimilate the original preaching is something distinct from the original preaching. And it is that, the development of doctrine is this development of confessions in the church, accepted by all. These church doctrines are not simply reaffirmations of the original message. It would be all very well if one could follow the advice of Pope Stephen, namely, ‘... nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est ...’ (DS 110), nothing new except what has been handed down. But new questions do arise, and they have to be handled, or one is failing to hand the tradition on. What are the new questions and how they arise we will consider in the section on the variations of doctrines and the differentiations of consciousness; they give some answer. But as one

peruses Denzinger's *Enchiridion Symbolorum* one finds that the church is talking in each age on the questions that arose in that time and for the people living at that time.

Besides church doctrines there are theological doctrines. Etymologically theology is a discourse about God. In a Christian context it is a person's reflections on revelation given in and by Christ Jesus. In the patristic period there were reflections on doctrine that were theological but they were always on specific topics: on christology, on Pelagianism, on re-baptism, and so on. You get an attempt to consider the whole of the faith in such a work as John Damascene's *De fide orthodoxa*, which comes about the end of the Patristic Period. In the medieval period, theology became methodical, collaborative, and ongoing. There was research and classification of the fruits of research in books of *Sentences*, of which Peter Lombard is just one example. There was interpretation in commentaries on the Old and New Testaments and on eminent writers. And a systematic assimilation of all this collecting and classifying and commentary writing was attempted, first of all, in commentaries on the books of *Sentences*. The start seems to have been from Abelard's *Sic et non*. In *Sic et non* Abelard took 158 propositions and both proved them and disproved them by quoting scripture, the Fathers, and giving reasons. Abelard's *Sic* became the *Sed contra est* in the *quaestio*; his *non* became the *Videtur quod non*, the quotes that proceeded a *quaestio*; the principles of solution came in the *corpus articuli*, and applications of the principles of solution to each of the texts in the *ad primum, ad secundum, ad tertium*, and so on.

That technique of the *quaestio* which developed out of Abelard's *Sic et non* – Abelard's *Sic et non*, of course, developed from the canonists; Gracian's great work was *Concordia Discordantium Canonum*, the decrees

of various councils, provincial and general, contradicted one another. And how do you put them together? Well, that was Gracian's effort in canon law; and the same method was used by Abelard, except that he did not go on to the reconciliation.

The application of the technique of the *quaestio* first was to books of Sentences; and as the commentaries on books of Sentences became more and more unwieldy, the development of theology itself more or less made the books of Sentences less relevant. If you read Thomas's commentary on Peter Lombard you find that there has been a hundred years development in between the two. And Thomas isn't talking very much about the topics that Lombard was talking about. That led to the writing of *Summae, quaestiones disputatae*, on specific topics, *de veritate*, *de potentia*, and *Summae* attempted to cover the whole of theology. Now this multiplication of questions in the attempt to reconcile what seemed to be incompatible in the sources set up a new problem: how do you make all these solutions coherent? It was there that they had recourse to a fundamental systematic work such as you find in the Aristotelian corpus.

So the development of medieval theology is something like the anticipations of modern science in the medieval period. It was a real scientific effort, it consisted in a method, it was an ongoing collaborating process. Later on, when they started writing commentaries – commentaries were written on Peter Lombard up to the seventeenth century, but there was another movement set up in which they were writing commentaries on Thomas's *Summa*, and that was a systematic work, and commentaries on the *Summa* were cut off from the sources and you get an inbred theology, a theology that has painted itself into a corner in that fashion. That has been broken by the development of new historical and exegetical methods.

Now the thirteenth century ended in a methodological impasse; it was the Augustinian-Aristotelian conflict with the Dominicans on one side and the Franciscans on the other; and it remained permanent, two schools opposed to one another, an unresolved conflict and a permanent difference in schools as you have an unresolved conflict at the Reformation and different churches and confessions, and similarly further subdivisions among Catholics and among Protestants. Those are the fundamental conflicts that have to be met and they have to be met radically. In other words, one has to not try and dodge the critical problem, one has to move right in on it and from a solution work out a method. One has to know what one is doing when one is knowing, why is doing that knowing, and what does one know when one does it. And, again, what is one doing when one is doing theology, why is doing that doing theology, and what does one know when one does it?

Methodology, then, reflects on theology and theologians just as theology reflects on revelation and church doctrines. Because theology reflects on revelation and church doctrines, the methodologist has to speak of revelation and church doctrines but he doesn't have to determine their contents; he leaves that determination to the theologians.

A final variation in the meaning of the word 'doctrine' is when one sets up a methodological entity and functional specialties and one of them named doctrines; doctrines as generated within that methodological specialty are theological doctrines but with a methodological basis.

So much, then, for varieties of doctrines. There is the original message, doctrines about the original message in scripture, the church decisions, as in (Acts 15.28), there are the appeals to tradition for the doctrines taught by the apostles to the churches they founded, the ongoing

developments of tradition, theological doctrines, and methodologically formed, guided theological doctrines.

[Functions]

Next, functions of doctrines. We have distinguished four functions of meaning: communicative, effective, constitutive, and cognitive. In the chapter on religion we spoke of the inner grace and the outer word from Christ.

Because of its source the word is doctrine. Because the source is one, the doctrine will be common doctrine. And the common doctrine will fulfill the communicative, effective, constitutive, and cognitive functions proper to meaning, for it is a meaning.

It is effective, it counsels and it dissuades. It is cognitive, it tells whence, and whither and how. It is constitutive of the community; a doctrine is a set of meanings and values commonly accepted. And it is communicative from Christ to the apostles and to their successors and so on down the ages. So the doctrines have the four functions of meaning.

Further, there is a normative function of doctrines. The three conversions may be lacking, and the lack of conversion can be conscious, and then it tends to a loss of faith. But it may not be apprehended. Persons can be sociologically Catholics or Protestants; their language is the language of the group, but it becomes devaluated in their usage; it has to refer to realities that are not the reality proper to the group. And there can arise a gradual watering down of the doctrines because of the lack of authenticity of people in the group.

This normativeness of doctrines: you have to distinguish its normativeness from a religious viewpoint, from a theological viewpoint. From a religious viewpoint it depends on revelation and the teaching office of the church, but insofar as theology goes beyond that and teaches further questions, its normativeness derives from the fact of the triple conversion. If the conversion is present it is generally normative and if not it should be unauthentic and repulsed.

So much for the functions of doctrines. The doctrines will reveal – to the unconverted, it is an opening for them to discover in themselves their lack of conversion.

[Variations]

The gospel is to be preached to all nations. And it has to be preached to each nation and to each class in each nation in the manner that those people can understand. When one is not using their language one is telling them about something else which if they are unconverted their language does not yet refer to, but the resource of their language have to be developed to communicate to them the message that is to be preached to all. It is not enough simply to impose one's own culture, to try and impose one's own culture on others, or to add a patch to a culture that is quite different. One has to express oneself in the resources of the culture though going beyond what has been achieved in the past.

As I mentioned yesterday, classicism had the effect of obscuring that necessity of speaking to all nations in their proper language. It conceived culture normatively. A normative conception of culture means that there is just one, and you have to move people up to it or if you can't you treat them

as lower-class citizens and add on a few similes or metaphors or something like that to talk to them.

Later we shall speak of the permanence of dogma, but by the permanence of dogma, when we are speaking of it we will not appeal to classicist assumptions; we will give the reasons of a different sort.

We speak of the development of dogma or doctrines in the church, and the question arises: How can such developments be possible? If the doctrine is divinely revealed what is man going to add on to it? How is development possible? One source is precisely the differentiations of consciousness. We can distinguish, first of all, insofar as the doctrine is apprehended within undifferentiated consciousness, commonsense consciousness, still, there are many brands of common sense. There was the common sense of the Jews to whom the Gospel originally was preached, Palestinian Judaism, and there was the common sense of the Greeks to whom it was also preached. And as the studies, Daniélou's studies in particular of Christianity and classical culture and the theology of Judaic Christianity, those different brands, quite different brands of common sense led to quite different expressions of the same original message.

Now, insofar as the doctrines are on that level they will be expressed largely symbolically. They will refer fundamentally to human orientations in life; it will be mainly on the fourth level of consciousness. The differentiation, the Greek differentiation of consciousness that arose in the philosophers, was not something that continued in later centuries. You have a post-systematic culture; it has been influenced by logic and by systematic thinking but this tradition has been passed on by popularizers, by teachers who wanted their pupils to get some glimpse of it, without becoming systematic thinkers themselves. It was this post-systematic thinking that

gives rise to the apparent metaphysics of the Greek councils. They really weren't metaphysical. Fundamentally, like Augustine on what do you mean by person, I mean what there are three of, using logical techniques to solve issues. Consubstantial means exactly what was meant in the Preface on the Trinity: 'Quod enim de tua gloria, revelante te, credimus, hoc de Filio tuo, hoc de Spiritu sancto sine differentia discretionis sentimus.' Whatever is revealed of the Father's glory this we also, without any distinction, believe of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. It is a statement about propositions, namely, what has been revealed about the Father also is true of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. That is not any metaphysics; it is post-systematic, it is the sort of statement that will occur in a post-systematic culture in which it is proper to reflect on propositions. And according to Piaget, a boy of thirteen becomes capable of operating on propositions.

Fully systematic meaning emerges in the Middle Ages in which attempts were made to define terms, fundamental theorems were set up, as the distinction between two orders: the natural and the supernatural. And there was an effort to set up, by partly adopting and partly adapting Aristotle to build a systematic theology.

A further difference arises when the question of method not only is raised, as it was raised in the Aristotelian and Augustinian controversy at the end of the thirteenth century, but when one moves beyond the type of systematic thinking that seems to settle things for all time to the recognition that human development is not just setting up a system, it is setting up a succession of systems, and what is important is the transition from one system to the next, doing that the right way, because that determines what the next system is going to be rather than being locked within a system. That is what we are aiming at. A further necessity for that attention to method is

the critique, the fundamental critique of critical history and hermeneutics that are employed within theology at the present time.

As there is a post-systematic culture so there is a post-scientific culture. The science is not known by everyone; everyone may know a little bit about it but the whole culture, the whole civilization, is being transformed by the influence of sciences. And there is a post-scholarly literature, popular histories and so on. And, finally, the exploration of interiority to base the method.

That was on the differentiation of consciousness as grounding the shifts in doctrines. You have, first of all, doctrines simply in a commonsense framework and different brands of common sense and apparent diversities in the expression. Secondly, the introduction of post-systematic techniques as in the Greek Councils. Then the attempt for full system as in the medieval period. The influence of that on subsequent councils; for example, the Council of Trent depends enormously on Scholastic development of theology, theology influencing church doctrines. And, finally, the emergence of modern philosophy, modern scholarship, modern science, and the exigences of that divergence being met by method.

Now there is not only this development. There is this development as an ongoing process, with an ongoing context. The differentiation of human consciousness leads to successive stages in cultural development. The earlier stage cannot foresee the later. And in the later, one has to be accustomed to historical work, genuine historical work, be right in it and see the differences if one is going to have any accurate apprehension of the earlier stages.

To set up the series of developments we will consider (1) the reinterpretation of symbolic apprehension, (2) philosophic purification of biblical anthropomorphism, (3) occasional use of systematic meaning, (4)

systematic theological doctrines, (5) church doctrine dependent on systematic theological doctrine, and then our present efforts.

The reinterpretation of symbolic apprehension. Symbolic apprehension of man and his world is expressed in myth, saga, legend, magic, cosmogony, apocalypse, typology. The sources of this mode of expression are the fact that pre-philosophic and pre-scientific thought cannot evolve and express verbal, notional, and real distinctions. Nor can it distinguish between the legitimate and illegitimate uses of constitutive and effective functions of meaning. Symbolic constructions are not untrue; the later notion of truth has not yet been developed. The Hebrew notion of truth as fidelity, the Greek notion of truth as *alētheia*, what is unconcealed. And what was unconcealed for the Greeks were the Homeric heroes, and they were very conspicuous. They are the necessary tools for man constituting himself in his world.

The symbolic apprehension can be developed by reinterpretation. The same materials can be taken over by people who disagree with what is being expressed, the human attitudes being expressed in certain myths, by modifying the myths, by giving new answers to the old questions through additions, eliminations, rearrangements. The Old Testament used neighboring peoples' traditions, but in the story of Creation and the Last Day omitted a primeval battle of the gods, the divine begetting of kings, the divine begetting of peoples; there is no cult of the stars or of sexuality, there is no sacralization of nature. The ways in which the world and man were conceived by neighboring peoples were retained, but they were purified, and the revelation consisted precisely in that purification. That is a development within the level of the symbolic apprehension of reality. On the topic, Kurt Frör, *Biblische Hermeneutik*.

Secondly, the philosophic purification of anthropomorphisms; it is another mode of development. Xenophanes remarked that men made their gods in their own image. Very literally, the gods of the Tracians had fair hair and blue eyes; the gods of the Ethiopians had snub noses and thick lips; and he went on to say that if oxen and horses and lions could carve and paint the way men do, the gods of the oxen would be oxen and the gods of the horses would be horses and the gods of the lions would be lions. Clement of Alexandria applied this to the anthropomorphisms of the bible. More than once he said, even though it is written in scripture do not think for a moment that the Father of all stands up and sits down, gets angry and repents, has a right hand and a left, and so on. Don't think that for a moment. So you are moving away, you are interpreting scripture not literally but symbolically.

The occasional use of systematic meanings, as in the Greek Councils: I have already illustrated it from the meaning of consubstantial; it is the same predicates. Later the Christological doctrine was expressed in what was called the *communicatio idiomatum*; again, it was a question of what predicates you give to the Son. There is an incipient metaphysical context when seventy-five years after Chalcedon it was discovered that if there is one person and two natures, one of the natures must be personless, a big discovery that it hadn't been thought of by the Fathers of Chalcedon, a movement towards metaphysical thinking.

The full metaphysical context comes in the Middle Ages, when there is grasped the difference between verbal, notional, and real distinctions. And, further, in real distinctions: major and minor. And then the analogical minor distinction between the person and nature in Christ. So, from the occasional to the systematic context. Systematic theological doctrine is had in a late and fully self-conscious Scholasticism whose fundamental intention

and style was a thorough-going effort to attain a coherent and orderly assimilation of the Christian tradition. It started out from this discovery of apparent incompatible elements in the tradition, different councils, different sources, and so on. This whole technique of the *quaestio* was a seeking of logical coherence, and from logical coherence to something positive, namely, attainment of some sort of understanding.

There are reservations, however, to be made about the medieval achievement. It was a great achievement but it is superceded today, first, because the problem of reconciliation that the medieval theology attempted to find a logical solution for is more a historical problem. Things that they attempted to reconcile we today would deal with in terms of development. Again, Aristotelian science had no anticipation of modern science. Aristotelian science was in terms of necessity. It did not envisage a *Philologie* that reconstructed the constructions of mankind; it did not have that notion of history as a discipline. And there was no notion of the later notion of philosophy, namely, as based on interiority, as critical. And it is along those lines that a contemporary theology has to move.

The development of systematic theology in the Middle Ages influenced all subsequent Church councils, up to Vatican II. Vatican II purported to be a pastoral council, and it avoided dependence on Scholasticism. But other councils like Vienne and the Fifth Lateran and Trent and the First Vatican greatly depended on the systematic theology developed in the Middle Ages.

The legitimacy of this influence of theology on church doctrine is a question not for methodology but for theology.

[Ongoing Contexts]

So one has the ongoing context of doctrines. At Nicea the use of the word ‘consubstantial’ was regarded as something exceptional; using a non-scriptural term in a confession of faith caused an upset that lasted for about fifty years. And according to Athanasius, its great defender, it was by way of an exception; it was the only way one could handle the Arians. On any scriptural statement you would use, they would be able to justify their position on it by one way or another. Consequently, the term had to be used in the confession of faith if Arianism was to be condemned. However, it was a matter not of setting up a precedent but of meeting an emergency.

At Ephesus the question was whether in the Nicene confession of the faith one and the same was both this Lord of Lord, God of God, Light from Light, and true God from true God, consubstantial with the Father, if that was the same as born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, and so on. And the Nestorian position was: the immortal cannot be mortal, the eternal cannot be temporal, and so on. And the answer at Ephesus was ‘one and the same.’ And at Chalcedon: well, how can it be, how can you have the humanity the same as the divinity? And the answer was ‘one person and two natures.’ It was expressed without any technical terms in the first paragraph and, then, in the second paragraph this one person and two natures came in to explain that the divinity was not the same as the humanity even though there was just one person.

Now, that set up a new context, a context that went right beyond Nicea, bringing in the two natures. And they started talking about Christ as God and Christ as man, and what was true of Christ as God and what was

true of Christ as man, and was he free as man? could he sin as man? did he know everything as man? And so on. All these questions arose out of that development. They are not the context of Nicea, but they are an ongoing context that builds up out of Nicea and becomes the context within which Nicea is understood.

The medieval development put Church doctrines within a systematic theological context. Then that systematic theological context began influencing Church doctrines. So you have an ongoing context. It is not always the same context, but the doctrines are more or less influencing that ongoing context.

You have, then, later contexts derived from earlier contexts. Nicea depends upon the theology of the first three centuries. Subsequent developments depend upon Nicea but add new questions and new discussions in the light of Nicea and Chalcedon and so on. So it is not just one static context. There is a historical process, and the context develops over time.

You have derived contexts like the medieval from earlier tradition and thought. The later councils depending upon the medieval, systematic context. And then you have interacting contexts, the interaction of church doctrines and theological doctrines.

Now, this discovery of mind reaches a climax with the modern emergence, with modern science, modern historical methods, and modern philosophy. And the concern of the Church at the present time, particularly it is concerned with – like the old conception in which in the bark of Peter the Pope was captain and the clergy are the crew and the faithful are the cargo is going out. I think that will do for today.