

## A Theory of History.

### §1. Definition, Material and Formal Objects.

A theory of history is an explanatory account of those general forms of the movement of human history within which particular events take place.

It is concerned then not with the actors of the stage of time or how they play their parts but with that larger mould of time that sets the stage and calls the **tune**. More specifically it is concerned with the shifting of the stage and the change of tune, with the laws that govern the ~~form~~ direction and content of historic movement through the past, in the present, and into the future.

Thus, theory of history differs from history as the universal, man, differs from its particular individuations, men. Not indeed that it is a study of the universal as such, the pure abstraction: its interest is, so to speak, the historic universal, human nature considered neither abstractly nor concretely, not apart from its individuations nor yet in its individuations but in the laws of its expansion through successive generations of new individuations.

There is another difference between theory of history and history. History is an empirical science and proceeds to theory, if at all, only from the facts. Theory of history, on the other hand, is an a priori construction; it deduces the forms of historical movement from the inherent laws of human nature; and it is an explanatory account of these laws in their origin, their efficacy, their combinations, their effects.

### §2. Procedure.

A theory of history is necessarily a structure of many pieces: to orientate the reader from the start we offer an analogy of the procedure we shall follow in selecting our pieces and working them into an unity.

To understand the firing of a long-range gun, one would first distinguish the explanation of the initial and final explosions from the trajectory that joins them.

To understand the trajectory, there would first be called into consideration Newton's first law of motion, to the effect that a ~~body~~ mass continues to move in a straight line with a constant velocity as long as other forces do not come into play.

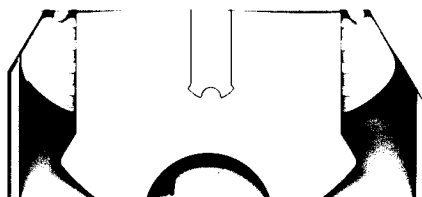
The next step in the understanding of the trajectory would be to take into account the law of gravity; this gives the first approximation of the trajectory and bends Newton's straight line into a parabola.

The third step would be the more difficult calculation in which air resistance, wind, the movement of the earth are taken into account.

Of quite different character, on the other hand, is the explanation of the explosions, a matter of understanding the expansive nature of gas and its utilisation to propel the projectile and ultimately disintegrate it.

Up to a certain point, this analogy holds with regard to the theory of history. For we distinguish the form from the content of historical movement. We arrive at an understanding of the form by laying down a general law and then correcting it in successive approximations. Having determined form, we turn to content which is derived from other aspects of human nature. So much then for the parallel, which lies in the method of treatment. Where the parallel breaks down is that, while explosion and trajectory are two different things with the understanding of one in no way dependent upon the understanding of the other, the form and the content of history are in reality one same thing, ~~interdependent~~ and have as it were to be understood simultaneously to be understood at all. To revert to the example of the gun, we would have a more accurate analogy of our problem if the gun were loaded with a blank and the question were to determine the path of the exploding gas.

To offset this difficulty of the complexity of the matter, all that can be done is to supply the reader immediately with a synopsis of the argument, illustrate occasionally the exposition of the form of history by anticipating points from the exposition of the content, and suggest that to read the first part both before and after the second, though painfully tedious, might be helpful.



### §3. Scheme of Exposition.

- A. The Form of Historical Movement.
  - a) The General Law, the Natural Dialectic.
  - b) The First Correction, the Dialectic of Sin.
  - c) The Second Correction, the Supernatural Dialectic.
- B. The Content of Historical Movement.
  - a) The Significance of Human History.
  - b) Ancient History.
    - 1) Natural Dialectic, Achievement of Near East.
    - 2) Dialectic of Sin, Paganism.
    - 3) Supernatural Dialectic, Israel.
  - c) Modern History.
    - 1) Natural Dialectic, Achievement of Science.
    - 2) Dialectic of Sin, Protestantism, Liberalism, Communism.
    - 3) Supernatural Dialectic, Catholic Action.

### §4. [A, a] The Natural Dialectic.

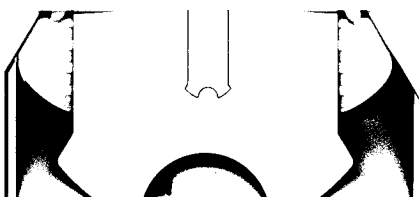
The general law of the form of historical movement, the first and most remote approximation, is that this form ~~manifests~~ is determined by the laws governing the development of human thought.

To establish this law we have to show, first that human action is governed by thought, second that this thought tends to be uniform among contemporaries, third what is the law of the historical development of thought.

First, then, action is governed by thought. This is manifest in so far as it means that a man cannot do what as a matter of fact he cannot think of doing; thus, an Eskimo cannot think of watering his camel because he has not one, nor of living on dates because date-palms do not grow in his part of the world and he is unaware of their existence in other parts. However, it is our intention in asserting that action is governed by thought to lay down a principle not of absolute but of approximate truth. It is absolutely true that a man cannot do what he cannot think of doing; it is only approximately true that there is always something a man knows he ought to be doing and that man always does what he ought to do; yet that approximate truth is the ~~xxxx~~ first general law of history. It draws through time an ideal ~~line~~ line, like Newton's constant velocity in a straight line; it has to be corrected by a law of gravitation; but the necessity of such correction does not invalidate the utility of a first approximation. On the other hand, the first part of our assertion, there is always something a man knows he ought to be doing, is almost accurately true. There are perplexities of the conscience but the general obligations of life are plain and they take up all our time. A man has to earn his living and the way he ought to do that is the best way he can; he has domestic and civic and national and religious obligations, and these impose themselves; and such on the whole is the whole of human life.

Our second point was the tendency of human thought to be uniform among contemporaries. The proof of this is as follows. Men necessarily think in the same way if they have the same data before them in the same setting; for the act of understanding is determined by the phantasm; and the phantasm is determined by external experience. This is an absolute truth and it yields an uniformity of thought not among all contemporaries but only among those whose experience coincides, among people of the same calling and the same district. Thus, the tendency to uniformity has to come from another factor, and this is the natural spread of ideas. An idea is never personal property: it will spontaneously propagate if its economic advantage is manifest; it will be deliberately propagated if it is to the advantage of parents or the state or religion; and if it is not propagated, then the theorist of history can disregard it.

Our third point was the law of the development of human thought, and here we have again to lay down a general law and then give a correction.



The general law is that the intellect proceeds from the more general to the more particular. Understanding is at first of general principles and general applications, then of less general principles and more detailed applications, till finally the discriminations and discernment of intellect equal the complexity of a mass of concrete detail. A young man wishing to be an engineer has to begin with geometry and algebra and the calculus; has to potter in laboratories and hear lectures ~~xxxx~~ on atoms and draw pictures of tilted tetrahedrons as seen from different planes; only when he has been grounded in endless general principles, will he be pronounced fit to erect ~~xxxxxxxhatixax~~ an hotel or lay a drain. Rightly, because to understand the particular, man must first understand the general.

Now it is easy to see the correction needed to make this general law of the understanding an historical law of the understanding. When the prospective young engineer is learning factors and quadratic equations and that there is a logarithm to the square root of minus one, he is inclined to ask himself what this has to do with hotels and drains and ~~xxxxxxx~~ the design of a faster aeroplane. Let us transpose this inclination from the tedium of study to the difficulty of discovery; think of a Greek who heard of Icarus and wished to build an aeroplane that was no myth; could he have thought of the necessity of first ~~xxxxxxx~~ discovering higher mathematics and advanced physics?

It is true then that the understanding proceeds from the general to the particular; but it is also true that the understanding does not arrive at once at the right most general conceptions from which ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ a complete understanding of the particular is possible. What happens is first the discovery of a general idea of little generality which works itself out in applications as far as it will go. The limitations of this first idea become manifest in practice and lead to the discovery of a complementary opposed principle, an antithesis, which in turn is applied and extended; finally from the simultaneous limitations of both ideas the intellect is led to discover a higher synthesis. Hence, some definitions.

A radical is in favour of the antithetical idea.

A conservative is afraid of the new higher synthesis.

A liberal wishes the new higher synthesis.

A compromise is an agreement to let thesis and antithesis both stand; it is imposed by the lack of the higher synthesis.

We turn to outlining the natural dialectic.

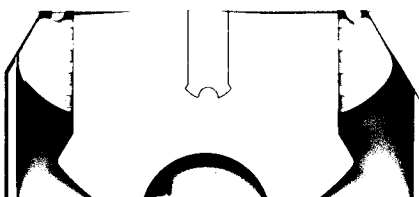
The data of experience determine thought; thought, in this first approximation, determines action; action creates the customs and institutions and objective social forms that constitute the data of experience, the routine of life.

If no new thought emerges in this circle, there is no history; for history is the history of change.

If new thought emerges, then it is some general idea that gradually discovers and applies its implications. This is the simple movement from the general idea to the particular acts of understanding dependent upon it. We term it an expansion.

The expansion works some transformation of the data through human action, makes more or less evident the insufficiency of its basic idea, suggests a complementary antithetical idea. This antithesis has its expansion, reveals its insufficiency, and so to synthesis. But synthesis will not immediately be of sufficient generality, and so we have the process repeated, till the right most general ideas are discovered and their expansion creates another "wonder of the world."

Naturally enough it is in the field of material development that instances are to be found of the workings of the natural dialectic. ~~xxxxxx~~ In building pyramids and palaces, men do what they ought to; and so the first law of history is not an approximation but almost absolutely true. The first law gives us the achievement of modern science; but we have now to consider a second law that explains why this achievement threatens to be a greater peril than a boon.



§5. [A, b] The Dialectic of Sin.

Sin is not doing what you know you ought to do. Thought dictates to action a course of life. Sin is action outside this ideal course.

This action, just as much as action dictated by thought, has its concrete effects in the external world and makes its contribution to that transformation of the data of experience which are the determinants of subsequent thought.

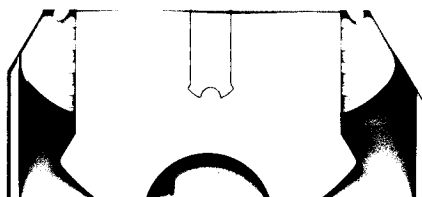
What the dialectic of sin is, is at once a parent. For as sin is wrong action, so it is a wrong transformation of the data of experience. And when the data are wrong, the act of understanding that will arise from the data will also necessarily be wrong.

Sin is a surd in the historical process. The right course of action is the understanding of the humanly unadulterated data. Sin, though it admits some explanation in human passion and frailty, is strictly an unintelligible: for it is going against the understanding, contradicting the intelligible; and what contradicts the intelligible is the unintelligible. Hence sin and its consequents have to be treated as surds in the data of experience; to take them into account is to attempt the impossible, it is to attempt to understand the unintelligible.

But though it is to attempt the impossible, it does not follow that the attempt will not be made or that it will lack all colour and plausibility. On the contrary, it is the truth that lacks plausibility in the face of the accumulated consequents of sin. It is the sins of men that create the divorce between theory and practice. What ought to be done is evident. But let us call it theory. Men act so differently. They lie and rob and even murder. They are haughtily indignant if accused. But must one not adopt their habits, if one is to succeed oneself? Be honest, but be realistic. Be careful, but do not pass up the main chance. Socrates teaching justice to Athens was an idle talker who had to be put out of the way; his insistence that pain was compatible with ~~human~~ human happiness was but an arbitrary paradox to Aristotle. The fact of sin by itself creates moral indifference in private life; ~~and~~ it imposes Realpolitik in international relations; imavidum ferient ruinae was not said of the state.

The spontaneous and immediate effect of accumulated sin in the data of experience is a distrust of the pure reason and abstract principles of conduct. This distrust is at once reasonable and unreasonable: secundum quid it is reasonable, for there is an objective foundation for it; simpliciter it is unreasonable for that objective foundation is illusory, the consequent of sin, a surd to intellect, and so not to be taken into account in the proper operations of intellect. But the dialectic of sin consists not merely in this spontaneous and immediate effect; it is also the systematic corruption of the whole natural dialectic. For as the consequents of sin mingle inextricably with the consequents of right action in the data of experience, so these data suggest to indiscriminating intellects principles which are false yet accepted. Such general ideas have their expansions and call forth more violent antitheses; compromises succeed and then syntheses in which the whole of human life is placed upon a lower level. In modernism for the refined and communism for the downright our age seems to have arrived at the lowest of conceivable levels: the modernist makes of his intellect a toy to live according to his sentimental convictions; the communist denies all except the body and by combining violence with astuteness seeks to make the world conform to his materialistic conception of history.

To contrast the natural dialectic with its corruption in the dialectic of sin, we may say that the natural dialectic is a series of ascending general principles each followed by expansion, antithesis, and a soluble problem, while the corrupted dialectic is a series of descending general principles each followed by an evil expansion, a violent antithesis, a really insoluble problem which none the less will appear to be solved by the negation of some truth and the consequent introduction of a still lower synthesis.



The supernatural is either quoad modum or quoad substantiam: the supernatural is merely quoad modum if it merely transcends the actual potentialities of nature; it is quoad substantiam if it involves the introduction into the historic flux of God precisely as He is in Himself, transcendent and absolute, mystery to the human intellect not because of unintelligibility but because of excess of intelligibility.

Thus, the supernatural dialectic is the contrary to the dialectic of sin. ~~Both~~ Both introduce what man cannot understand: but sin introduces what cannot be understood from lack of intelligibility; the supernatural introduces what cannot be understood from excess of intelligibility.

The law of the supernatural dialectic follows from its very nature: it transcends the human intellect and so must be simply conserved and not submitted to the play of thesis, antithesis and higher synthesis which human intellect exerts upon its proper object.

But doing what ought not be done is a human weakness, so that the law of immutability which characterises the supernatural is met by an antithesis in the dialectic of sin. This antithesis is rationalism: the attempt of man to understand what transcends the human intellect, an attempt which aggravates the evil and accelerates the downward course of the dialectic of sin. Without revealed religion to explain, modernism would be evident nonsense; without it to attack, communism would be stripped of its most virulent doctrines.

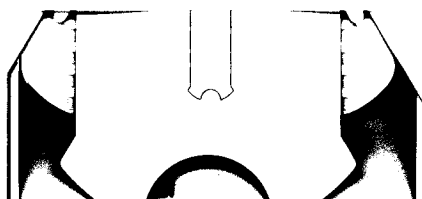
On the other hand, though the supernatural dialectic is exclusively of all evolution of ~~the~~ doctrine, the very presence of its rationalist antithesis is the occasion for a development that lies in the express rejection of rationalist attacks and a consequent increase in the precision as well as an extension of the applications of the original deposit.

To enter into the positive aspects of the supernatural life lies outside the scope of this inquiry; we have only to point out a negative aspect, namely, that the supernatural is the restoration of nature in face of the dialectic of sin.

The dialectic of sin begins in rationalisation of sin, in the view that sin is a fact which has to be taken into account, with its corollary that a sinful course of action in this world of sin is the only practical course of action. This the supernatural meets with a doctrine of the confession of sin: it obliges the sinner to admit he has done wrong, to admit that sin is sin, to be repented in the past and avoided in the future; this is to shift the opposition from the objective to the subjective field, to eliminate the objective antithesis of theory and practice, and substitute for it the recognition of a contradiction within the sinner, the contradiction between his conscience and his acts. It attacks the dialectic of sin at the root.

But the dialectic of sin is also theoretical error. And this the supernatural meets with the doctrine of faith. Sin leads to theoretical error because man would understand what is unintelligible. The doctrine of faith substitutes reason ~~for~~ and will for understanding. You cannot understand how an infinitely good God could have created this world of pain: reason proves it and the will quashes your sentimental difficulties. You cannot understand how Christ could be God and crucified: reason demonstrates the historical and philosophic praeambula; the will orders a supernatural act of faith based upon the unquestionable authority of God. There is no opposition between reason and faith: they are team-mates. The whole opposition lies between the human understanding and faith: and that opposition irreducibly must remain because the data of experience are corrupted with the unintelligibility of sin while the object of faith is God in His transcendence, in the excess of intelligibility that is ~~xxx~~ beyond the grasp of human understanding.

But man is not only reason; he is also passion and that passion is inflamed beyond the restraint of reason in the vast cruelties of injustice and oppression when a man, a class, a nation rises in Achillean wrath to be revenged. The Old Testament tempered passion to justice; the New teaches charity. Love your enemies. Do good to them that hate you.



## §8. [B, a] The Significance of Human History.

We have established three elements for a form of history; they are not yet the form for they have to combine in the content to reveal their nature. We have now to study the content of history and at once approach ~~the~~ its dominating element, the significance of history.

The question is, then, the meaning of these three elements: a natural dialectic representing the natural progress of man; a dialectic of sin breeding corruption; a supernatural dialectic working salvation. We inquire first the end of man, second the rationale of the ~~dialectical~~ existence of the dialectics, third the reason why they are what they are.

First, the end of man. Human nature is an universal: the intelligibility of all men is one intelligibility.

But the universal is individuated by matter, and the one intelligibility ceases to be one thing to become the intelligibility of many particulars. Now when we say that the individuation is by matter, we mean that the individuation does not take place by the addition of an intelligible differentia, a specific difference; were that the case, the universal would cease and we should have a number of particulars each to be understood in its own way. Material individuation is factual, empirical difference. The reason why this man is not that man is the same as the reason why this point of space is not that point: not an intelligible or specific difference but a mere matter of fact that is known as the fact of matter.

Now when an universal is individuated by matter, the finality may and normally does remain in the universal. Any species of animal is an universal individuated by matter: but the finality of any animal is the finality of the species as a whole, the good of the species which determines the natural laws of the species, and the good of man to whom the species is subordinated.

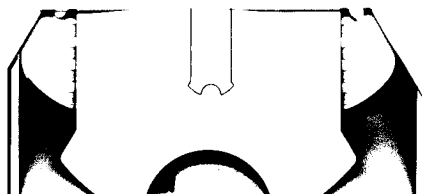
Further the finality must remain in the universal, in the species as a whole, unless there arises the potentiality of intelligible difference in the materially individuated particulars. For finality is an aspect of the intelligibility of a thing; and if the intelligibility is universal, so the finality must be universal.

Now in man there does arise this potentiality of intelligible difference. Homo est in genere intelligibilium ut potentia. He has intellect and will: the power of conceiving and of realizing intelligibilities. And because of this potential intelligible difference, the finality of man is not in the universal but in the particular with the potentiality.

What the finality is immediately follows. It is the realization of the potential intelligible difference. Man is individuated by matter that he may transcend matter by attaining intelligible differentiation. He succeeds by the intelligibility of his choices; he fails by the unintelligibility of his choices. His goal in either case lies beyond our vision: yet we may describe it as either the transcendence of the limitations of matter or a deeper intrusion into matter and its constraints.

Second, why should the dialectics exist? For it seems that they should not. For the finality of man is the finality of the particular. Yet the existence of the dialectics is a grave impediment to attaining the finality. For man attains by the intelligibility of his choices; the intelligibilities he has to choose are determined for him by the natural dialectic, while the dialectic of sin tends to make the unintelligible appear intelligible and vice versa; even the supernatural dialectic only mitigates and does not eliminate this evil.

The answer is not difficult. There is this solidarity of man in the attainment of individual finalities because natural laws follow the intelligible unit. The actual intelligible unit is the universal; actual laws of nature are therefore universal. The potential unit is the individual; in view of this potentiality the individual enjoys rights as an individual though he must operate under universal conditions and within the limitations of universal laws.



This may appear an unsatisfactory solution. The end of the individual is everything to him. Why then should he be impeded in the attainment of his end by others who chose not intelligibly but unintelligibly? Why should every human sin accumulate in the objective field as an unintelligible datum to puzzle and mislead men, to tempt him and ~~make~~ give him the excuse that doing wrong has some justification? So put the difficulty reveals that it is petitio principii. For were the individual man unlimited by matter and under no obligations of solidarity with all other men with regard to his finality, then he would not be a material particular but would already be enjoying the status of an intelligible particular. Matter is not perfect individuation: it realises the fact of individuality without conferring the rights of intelligible individuality.

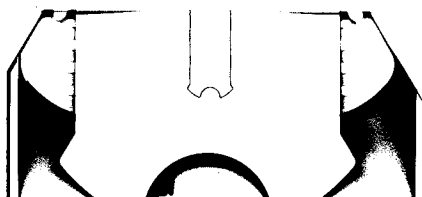
Third, there is a further question. For the very nature of the ~~natural~~ natural dialectic is an apparent injustice. It is an antecedent law of sin before men actually commit sin. First because the natural dialectic progresses from principles of low generality to principles of higher generality, it is inevitable that the men of the progress are mostly ignorant. To know the lower principle without knowing the higher is to have some direction, but an inadequate direction; it is in a way to be misdirected by persuasive half-truths. Second, this ignorance has its repercussions upon the soul of man; it involves a low activity of the higher faculties with a consequent over-activity of the lower faculties, with interest and desire centred in the field of sense and because centred there necessarily and automatically exaggerated into concupiscence.

Still this antecedent law rather of occasions of sin than of sin itself is only an apparent injustice. It is such because the occasions of sin, it might seem, should not come from nature. But it is only an apparent injustice, for the one thing that matters to the individual is his personal acts; if these are consciously sinful, he is damned, but not otherwise. Per se occasions of sin are no more than a gymnasium for virtue.

None the less, there is a real law of sin, of which this law of the occasions of sin is an integral part.

For the natural scheme of humanity fits into a supernatural scheme. According to the supernatural scheme, as we know by revelation, humanity was created in the state of sanctifying grace, beloved by God with an infinite love that would produce man to the infinite goal of the Beatific Vision. This gratuitous love to which corresponded the ~~incomprehensibility~~ supernatural loveliness of grace in the soul of man, brought with it praeternatural gifts of infused knowledge and freedom from concupiscence; and, as is plain, these praeternatural gifts would have inverted the order of the natural dialectic, making it a direct expansion with deductive security instead of the antithetical expansion by inductive trial and error. Further, both grace and its gifts terminated in the universal, so that all nature was supernaturally elevated and the victory of Adam in his trial would have been the victory of all men. But Adam, and solidary with Adam humanity, sinned. Grace was lost, love forfeited, and by a natural consequence the praeternatural gifts of infused understanding and freedom from concupiscence disappeared. Now sin is the absence of what could and should be present: actual sin is the absence in the sinner of the contrary act of good will; original sin is the absence in human nature of the supernatural grace that human nature in its solidarity ~~must~~ had gratuitously received and maliciously lost; finally the ignorance and moral difficulty that flow from the natural dialectic, that are vastly augmented by the sins of individuals in the course of history, constitute a law of sin in the sense that they proceed from sin both original and actual and lead to sin as direct occasions.

The first bestowal of grace upon humanity was an act of bounty; its second bestowal through Christ is besides an act of mercy. Christ, the beloved Son, "in whom I am well pleased," has grace in his own right; he is loved by God with an infinite love because he is himself God, coeternal with the Father. The principle of the redemption is that those loved by Christ are for Christ's sake loved by God with the love that is the infusion



of sanctifying grace and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Through the love born us by the Humanity of Christ we are raised to the saving love born us by the Divinity.

The economy of the redemption is the systematisation of the principle of the redemption in history. In this economy we may distinguish ~~the~~ the constitution of the redemption and its application.

The constitution of the redemption is the life and teaching and sacrificial death of Christ: this sacrificial death is at once the one act of the universe that can be of itself pleasing to God in that order of infinite pleasure and love in which the supernatural moves; but besides being an act whose finality is in God Himself as Infinite and Transcendent, the sacrificial death of Christ is also satisfaction for the sins of men and ~~merits~~ merits for the Sacred Humanity the right to unite to itself in its grace before God other men, children of wrath and solidary with the sin of Adam.

The application of the redemption is the economy of the Mystical Body of Christ.

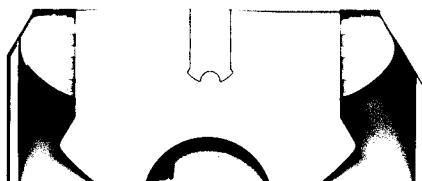
Man is born solidary with Adam, a sharer in Adam's sin, a victim of the limitations of the natural dialectic and the perversions of the dialectic of sin. The first point in the economy of the Mystical Body is its constitution; man is solidary with Adam by carnal generation from Adam; he becomes solidary with Christ by inclusion in the Mystical Body through the sacrament of Baptism. Thus Christ is a new Adam, the first-born of many in a new series of the universal, humanity; baptism is this regeneration, being born again of water and the Holy Ghost, into the new humanity which is Christ's and out of the old humanity which is the solidarity of the descendants of Adam.

The second point in the economy of the Mystical Body is its character. This character is putting off the old man and putting on the new, not merely in the radical act of separation from Adam and union with Christ, but in every act of life. It is conforming oneself to Christ, imitating Christ. It is the transmission through time of the figure of Christ, to realise the virtues of Christ in all the varieties of human life and circumstance. It is passing the flaming torch of divine loveliness resplendent in Christ as in its source into those nearer receptacles, the lives of holy men, that everywhere the world may be luminous with the Light of the world and everywhere sinful man may experience the drawing power of Christ on his cross through the crucified lives of those who would sooner have to suffer than be able to have pleasure because in suffering they come nearer to loving Christ as he ought to be loved.

The third point in the economy of the Mystical Body is its organisation. The Mystical Body of Christ is not an amorphous growth nor does it share the blind spontaneity that marks the unorganic. It is a true though a spiritual society, with its hierarchy of members and functions, with its teachers and magistrates, its doctrines, its laws, its sanctions. It is a reflex society, the conscious preservation of the supernatural deposit of faith against the usurpations of the natural dialectic, logically and deliberately seeking consistency in all things with its basic principles and supernatural foundation. And as a reflex society, the Mystical Body is the attainment in humanity of what the natural dialectic should attain but fails to attain.

The fourth point in the economy of the Mystical Body is its force. To produce a series of new Christs, children of Adam conformed to the Son of God, is not the work of nature but of a supernatural power called actual grace. In the illuminations and inspirations of the Holy Ghost lies the wisdom of the saints and the balanced prudence of confessors, the strength of martyrs and the purity of virgins. Thus, the Holy Ghost who formed the body of Christ in the womb of the Blessed Virgin, who attracts men into the fold of the Church, who guides them along the ways of holiness within the Church, is by a just analogy called the informing soul of the Mystical Body; another aspect of this attribution to the Holy Spirit lies in the infallible guaranteed the supreme doctrinal and moral direction of the Church.

The fifth point in the economy of the Mystical Body is its finality, the glory of God, pleasing God in the infinite order of the supernatural, and by giving God such pleasure meriting eternal life where in knowledge of and union with the Infinite the supernatural reaches its term. As is patently



To please God infinitely is not the work of man, to please God supernaturally is not in the power of nature. Such pleasure comes from Christ alone. But in giving it man may participate, above all, in the sacrifice of the mass which is the repetition of the sacrifice of calvary, but also in every act that is done in Christ Jesus, in the mystical Body of Christ, by an organ or member of that Body. Hence the insistence of St Paul in 1 Cor 13 upon the uselessness of what is without charity; hence also the nature of merit which is attached not to any human act but to acts within the Mystical Body.

In conclusion, the significance of human history lies in all three elements of its form, in the supernatural element principally and per se, but also in the natural element as giving the material basis and conditions of the supernatural element, and in the element of sin as in what calls forth from the mercy of God the restoration and salvation of what had been elevated and gone astray.

A more precise formulation of the significance of history would involve considerations of the content of history. This we would defer till we come to treat of Catholic Action which is the role of the supernatural dialectic in the natural problems of human life.