

## Chapter Eleven

## DOCTRINES

A basic distinction is between church doctrine and theological doctrine. It follows from the distinction drawn earlier when in chapter four we set forth a notion of religion, in terms of personal experience, and in chapter five a notion of theology as an interrelated set of functional specialties. Church doctrine concerns the meanings and values of religious living. Theological doctrine pertains to a superstructure that reflects on church doctrines.

## Chapter Eleven

## D O C T R I N E S

Not only are doctrines many and opposed but the same is true of doctrines about doctrines. To investigate and, if possible, arbitrate these differences is the task not of the methodologist but of the theologian. Accordingly, to introduce the present topic, let me simply state a traditional view. Doctrines originate in God speaking to us of old through the prophets and most recently through his Son (Hebr 1, 1.2) or, again, through the decision of the Holy Spirit and of the church assembly (Act 15, 28), a precedent that was recalled in later councils. The official presentation of doctrines for Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen is to be found by going to the churches of apostolic origin and determining what there has been handed down from the apostles.<sup>1</sup> Once the canon was formed and Clement of Alexandria had laid down rules for exegesis to circumvent ~~gnostic~~ Gnostic styles of interpretation,<sup>2</sup> the canonical scriptures took their place alongside tradition now is the time for all Gnostic style of interpretation,<sup>2</sup> the canonical scriptures could effectively provide a much more accessible official presentation

A doctrine is what is taught but, in the course of time, the original teaching can move from one context to another. So a traditional Christian would distinguish substantive doctrines about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the church and its sacraments, the kingdom to come and, on the other hand, doctrines about doctrine

A doctrine is what is taught, but teachers are many and, in the course of time, teachings move from one context to another. So a traditional Christian would distinguish between substantive doctrines and, on the other hand, doctrines about doctrines. Substantive doctrines are about God, his Son, the Holy Spirit, the church and its sacraments, the kingdom to come. But doctrines about these doctrines include (1) the divine revelation in which God ~~sp~~ has spoken to us of old through his prophets<sup>t</sup> and most recently through his Son (Heb 1. 1.2), church decrees<sup>w</sup> in which the decision of assembled Christians coincides with the decision of the Holy Spirit (Act 15, 28), (3)

Not only are there Christian doctrines about God and Christ and the Spirit and the church but also there are ~~ix~~ doctrines about doctrines. Such are the inspiration of the canonical scriptures the authority of apostolic tradition now is the

Not only are there Christian doctrines about God, Christ, the Holy Spirit, the Church, and so on, but also there are doctrines about doctrines. Such are the crucial importance ascribed to of apostolic tradition in the writings of Irenaeus, Tertullian, and orig Origen;<sup>1</sup> the inspiration of the canonical scriptures; the authority attributed to church decrees; the normative value assigned to the mind of the faithful and to patristic and approved theological writings.

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- 1) Irenaeus, Adv. haer. I, 10, 2; III, 1 - 3; Harvey I, 92; II, 2 ff. Tertullian, De praescr. haer. 21. Origen, De princ., praef. 1 & 2; Ke Koetschau 7 f.
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Now the existence of doctrines about doctrines confronts the present enterprise with a dilemma. For I have consistently maintained that to determine doctrines was the task not of the methodologist but of the theologian. But now I am writing a chapter on doctrines

Not only are doctrines many and opposed, but also the same is true of doctrines about doctrines. Accordingly, I cannot open this section by reporting matters of common agreement, and so I must be content to relate some quite old and traditional views on the origin of doctrines, on their official presentation, and on the sources invoked in interpreting them.

The epistle to the Hebrews opens with the ~~statement~~ statement that of old God spoke to us through the prophets but most recently through his Son (Heb 1, 1.2). Acts contains a letter from the church of Jerusalem in which the that assembly considered its decision to have been as well the decision of the Holy Spirit (Act 15, 28). A similar view of their <sup>own</sup> pronouncements was taken by later councils.

For Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen the official presentation of Christian doctrine was found in a apostolic ~~tradition~~ tradition: one was to go to the churches founded by the apostles and learn the doctrines that had been handed down there from the beginning.<sup>1</sup> With the formation of the canon to share its authority and the New Testament was added to the Old, to provide a more generally accessible official presentation.

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In Irenaeus, Adv. haer. I, 10, 2; III, 1 - 3; Harvey I, 92; II, 2 ff. Tertullian, De praeser. haer. 21; Origen, De princ. praef. 1 & 2; Koetschau 7 f.

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Finally, sources for the proper interpretation of doctrines have been the mind of the faithful, the writings of the Fathers, and the writings of ~~accepted~~ approved theologians.

## Chapter Eleven

## D O C T R I N E S

1. The Methodological Viewpoint

A doctrine is what is taught, but teachers are many and, in the course of time, teachings move from one context to another. So a traditional Christian could distinguish between the doctrines contained in the original message and, on the other hand, the doctrines about these doctrines. The original message was about God, his Son our Lord, the Holy Spirit, the mission of the <sup>twelve,</sup> ~~church,~~ the kingdom to come. But stages in the proclamation of the message gave rise to doctrines about doctrine. Thus, there is the divine revelation <sup>in</sup> which God has spoken to us of old through his prophets and most recently in his Son (Heb 1, 1.2). There are church decrees in which the decision of assembled Christians coincides with the decision of the Holy Spirit (Act 15, 28). There are apostolic traditions: the teaching given by the apostles to the churches they founded and handed down from generation to generation to be appealed <sup>to</sup> as the criterion of sound doctrine by Irenaeus, Tertullian, Origen.<sup>1</sup> There is the inspiration of the canonical scriptures that provided a far more accessible criterion, once the canon had been formed and hermeneutical principles explained.<sup>2</sup> There

1) Irenaeus, Adv. haer. I, 10, 2; III, 1-3; Harvey I, 92; II, 2 ff. Tertullian, De praescr. haeret. 21. Origen, De princ., praef. 1 & 2; Koetschau 7 f.

2) Contrast the crisp principles of Clement of Alexandria (Strom. VIII, 2 ff.; Stählin III, 81 ff.) with the struggles of Irenaeus (Adv. haer. I, 3, 1.2-6; Harvey I, 24-26.31).

witness found in the mind of the faithful, in the writings of the Fathers, in the views of accepted theologians.

~~Besides doctrines and doctrines about doctrines~~

Doctrines about doctrines are the source of the series of theological notes from De fide divina et catholica right down to the minimal communior or probabilior. While we ~~must~~ must leave to theologians the clarification of this array of distinctions,<sup>3</sup> we have to recall our earlier accounts of

For a start see Sacramentum mundi 6, 226-232 published in Montreal by Palm, in New York by Herder & Herder, in London by Burns and Oates, etc.

religion in chapter four, of theology in chapter five, and of methodology in chapter one. Corresponding to these three there are to be distinguished church doctrine, theological doctrine, and methodological doctrine. Church doctrine expresses the meanings and values<sup>constitutive</sup> of religious living. Theological doctrine expresses the views of individuals or of schools that reflect upon a religion. Methodological doctrine offers an account of the operations performed by theologians. The y three are distinct and so must not be confused, but no less they are very intimately related. For theology arises from a differentiation in religious consciousness, and methodology arises from a differentiation in theological consciousness.

the solution of such issues. For over four centuries there has been considerable devotion to doctrinal issues, and it manifested itself laying down one's doctrines about doctrines and proceeding to foreordained conclusions. The contribution to Christian unity has not been conspicuous. A method would offer a new deal

in the ancient church is the mind of the faithful, and the record of it in the writings of the Fathers. In the middle ages there emerged a thorough-going, technical, collaborative reflection on religious doctrines with a consequent differentiation between church doctrines and theological doctrines. In the controversies of the reformation and counter-reformation a key issue became doctrine about doctrines, and it is still with us in the slogan, sola scriptura. Finally, the present effort to provide theology with a method involves a still further differentiation. For an account of a method is a doctrine, a teaching. But it is not church doctrine <sup>for that would</sup> ~~which would~~ communicate the meanings and values constitutive of religious living. It is not theological doctrine <sup>for that</sup> ~~which~~ arises is a collaborative and thorough-going reflection on church doctrines. It stands at a still further remove, for it aims at an account, not of the <sup>products</sup> ~~objects~~ of theological operations, but of theological operations themselves.

Now it is not possible for the methodologist to speak of theological operations without mentioning the church doctrines, on which theologians reflect, and the theological doctrines, which the theologians produce. But it is not necessary for him to specify which church doctrines are true or which theological doctrines are true. He can treat them in general terms, speak of their functions, their variations, their development, the contemporary crisis and, finally, the functional specialty named doctrines. He can leave to the churches to determine their church doctrines and to the theologians to determine their theological doctrines.

Such is the methodological viewpoint. In no way does it imply that the methodologist is indifferent to doctrinal issues. On the contrary, it reveals a highly effective devotion to

the solution of such issues. In the past a ~~summary devotion~~ devotion to doctrines has only prolonged disunion. If, in the future future, dissident communions employ a common method, if they acknowledge that the radical issue lies in religious, moral, and intellectual conversion, then at least there will exist a dynamic reaching through authenticity to union.

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~~men have~~ the several Christian communions have been  
 laying down our <sup>diverging</sup> doctrines about doctrines and, on that basis,  
 proceeding to foreordained conclusions

the solution of such issues. For in so far as a method takes a determinate stand on matters on which Christians are divided, it only calls forth another method that takes an opposed stand, so that disunity is perpetuated. But in so far as a method is neutral, in so far as it does not presuppose the solution of issues on which Christians are divided, in that measure it can be employed by all. With all operating within a common framework, with all committed to seeking the full authenticity of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, there is initiated a dynamic of events conducive to increasing mutual good will, understanding, and ~~agreed~~ agreement.

Now the method we are proposing is not neutral in every respect. It is not methodically neutral, for it ~~proposed~~ supposes that theology has become highly specialized, it proposes determinate procedures, and it means what it says. It is not philosophically neutral, for it takes its stand on an intellectual and moral conversion. It is not religiously neutral, for it is <sup>a</sup> theological method precisely because religious conversion can and does occur.

The method, then, does presuppose a theological doctrine about grace and conversion. But this presupposition lies, not in the use of the method, but in an account of the method. ~~The doctrine of grace is not a premise from which theological~~ It does not lie in the use of the method, for there what ~~counts~~ counts is the fact of conversion, the new man with a new self to understand, a new understanding of himself, and a new horizon within which to understand the past. It does lie in an account of the method, ~~of~~ for in such an account one has to explain why it is that the method can and will lead to a sound theology.

Thirdly, there are theological doctrines. Etymologically theology means a discourse about God. Within a Christian context it denotes a person's reflections on the revelation given in and by Christ Jesus. In the medieval schools such reflecting became ~~collaborative~~ methodical, collaborative, ongoing. Research and interpretation took the form of ~~commentaries and of sentences now is the time~~ commentaries on scripture and on other eminent writers. Systematic theology grew out of Abelard's search for coherence in his Sic et non. There he had drawn up one hundred and fifty-eight propositions and had proceeded both to prove and disprove each one with arguments from scripture, from tradition, and from reason. Such <sup>proof</sup> prove and <sup>disproof</sup> disprove later became the first step in the technique of the quaestio. Abelard's non became Videtur quod non, and his sic became Sed contra est. There followed a statement of principles of solution or reconciliation and then the ~~the~~ principles were applied to each of the arguments. Research and system came together when the technique of the quaestio was applied to the classified materials in a book of sentences. Finally, because the theologian's ~~theologians~~ solutions to his questions had themselves to be coherent, recourse was had to the Aristotelian corpus whence were quarried the concepts and theorems that provided a substructure for a theological world-view.

~~Moreover, the method is not culturally neutral, for it. For all its neutrality, the method does presuppose that theology has developed to the point where it is highly specialized.~~

the method  
Again, ~~it~~<sup>^</sup> has been worked out from a Roman Catholic background, and it may well contain elements or tendencies unacceptable to other Christians. But where adaptations are desired, surely there will not be lacking the ingenuity needed to bring them about. Nor will such methodical divergences defeat the ecumenical goal, for no less than<sup>n</sup> doctrinal differences, methodical differences can be submitted to the critical fire of dialectic.

Further, the book has been composed from within the Christian tradition. But, I believe, God gives his grace to all men. The requirement, then, of religious conversion does not restrict the use of the method to the study of the Christian religion but leaves it relevant, with suitable adaptations, to all religious studies.

Finally, while the philosophic presuppositions are large and formidable, this may prove a blessing in disguise. For it may attract the better workers and so obtain the solid results that will reveal how worth while the method is.

## 2. Variations in Doctrines

Variations in doctrines are an ancient and long-standing fact. Vincent of Lerins had no doubt that the canonical scriptures were more than sufficient for the guidance of Christian living. But there seemed to him to be almost as many interpretations of the scriptures as <sup>were</sup> there <sup>discordant multiplicity,</sup> interpreters. To escape this <sup>pluralism</sup> he laid it down that only those doctrines were to be accepted that were believed everywhere in the church, at all times, and by everyone.<sup>3</sup>

The variations with which Vincent was concerned ~~arose~~ were attributed to ~~from~~ the innovations of heretics, and the remedy he proposed added a classicist immobility to the veneration for apostolic tradition shared by Irenaeus, Tertullian, and Origen<sup>e</sup>. The immobility can no longer be accepted, for we know that doctrines develop; and all variations must be envisaged <sup>in an empirical inquiry,</sup> and not merely those due to heresy. In so far as doctrines are not simply the repetition of hallowed formulae, in so far as they are assimilated and ~~lived~~ lived, they vary with the cultural background of the believer, with the degree to which he has attained intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, and to the extent to which his consciousness has been differentiated. Let us add a few words on each ~~of~~ of these.

Doctrines vary with cultural background, and the variation is all the greater when consciousness is undifferentiated. For then religious expression is largely a matter of image, symbol, metaphor, and in different cultures different images, symbols,

3) "... quod ubique, quod semper, quod <sup>ab</sup> ab omnibus creditum est...." Commonitorium chap. II. Flor. Patrist. 10, ed. A. Jülicher (Freiburg i. B. & Leipzig 1895) p. 3.

metaphors are resonant and effective. To my knowledge the best documented illustration of this type of variation, of which there are very ~~an~~ numerous instances, has been provided by Jean Daniélou. He distinguished an orthodox and a heterodox development of Judaic Christianity, listed the sources for the orthodox variant, discoursed on its manner of exegesis and its frequently employed apocalyptic style and form, devoted two hundred pages to outlining what for us is the extremely odd manner in which Christian doctrines were expressed by the orthodox, added two further books on their symbols and exegesis and, to round out the picture, gave an account of the Christian message in <sup>H<sup>1</sup></sup> hellenistic culture.<sup>4</sup>

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- 4) Jean Daniélou, Théologie du judéo-christianisme, Tournai & Paris (Desclée) 1958; E. T., London (Darton, Longman & Todd) 1964. Les symboles chrétiens primitifs, Paris (du Seuil) 1961; E. T., London (Burns & Oates) and Baltimore (Helicon) 1964. Études d'exégèse judéo-chrétienne, Paris (Beauchesne) 1966. Message évangélique et culture hellénistique aux II<sup>e</sup> et III<sup>e</sup> siècles, Tournai (Desclée) 1961.
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A second source of variation is the presence or absence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, and the thoroughness with which such conversion has been accepted. Where cultural differences affect whole groups, the presence or absence of conversion is an individual matter, and gives rise to <sup>differences and oppositions</sup> ~~oppositions~~ within groups. But this matter has ~~not~~ been explained already in the chapter on dialectic.

The third source of variation is the differentiation of consciousness. Undifferentiated consciousness has its sacred places and times, its narratives and rituals, its promises and warnings, its commands and prohibitions. As piety grows and

But the unconverted may have no real apprehension of what it is to be converted. Sociologically they are Catholics or Protestants, but ~~are~~ <sup>in</sup> a number of ways they deviate from the norm. Moreover, they may well lack an appropriate language for expressing ~~that~~ what they really are, and so they will use the language of the group with which they identify socially. There results a tendency towards an inflation, a devaluation, of language and so of doctrine. Terms that denote what one is not will be stretched to denote what one is. Doctrines that are embarrassing will not be mentioned. Unacceptable conclusions will not be drawn. So unauthenticity can spread. It can become a ~~last~~ tradition and, for those brought up in such a tradition, becoming authentic human beings and authentic Christians will ~~be~~ <sup>be</sup> a matter of purifying the tradition in which they were brought up.

~~Now inasmuch as the foundational reality is intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, inasmuch as it is the foundational reality that selects doctrines from among the multiple alternatives reached in dialectic, doctrines themselves will be the fruit of conversion and they will reveal to the unconverted yet sincere person the existence of his lack of conversion.~~

his state  
 Now it is doctrines that reveal to the sincere person that happens not to be converted~~x~~. For the doctrines are selected from the multiple alternatives set forth in dialectic by foundational reality, and foundational reality is the person that has been converted intellectually, morally, and religiously. There is, then, a normative function to doctrines, and this function is to bring to light in any individual or group whatever lack of conversion they may suffer from.

as problems are resolved and living is simplified, intensifies, there may occur a shift towards religiously differentiated consciousness. One is in love with God; one belongs to him; and this being and belonging become somehow self-sufficient. They constitute a state of prayer, of self-oblation, in which images, words, thoughts are not needed and, if they occur, seem accidental. Such silence, when it later is expressed, is perhaps at the heart of apophatic theology.<sup>5</sup>

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- 5) On religion and depth psychology, see Olivier Rabut, L'expérience religieuse fondamentale, Tournai (Casterman) 1969. On prayer itself, William Johnston, The Mysticism of the Cloud of Unknowing, New York, Rome, Tournai, Paris (Desclée) 1967.
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Systematically differentiated consciousness made its ~~initial and incidental~~ appearance in the Greek Christological councils now is the time to come to the aid of the party party-fully fledged appearance in the thirteenth century, when the Aristotelian system was partly adopted and partly adapted to facilitate the construction of a learned and coherent account of Christian doctrines. In contrast, the thinking of the Greek and Latin Fathers was, not systematic, but humanistic; they lived in a culture that had been influenced by philosophers; they could think clearly and speak eloquently; on occasion they could employ techniques with philosophic origins; but they did not have the differentiation of consciousness illustrated by Eddington's two tables or Aristotle's prior in itself and prior for us.

Again, the decrees of Nicaea, Chalcedon, Constantinople III, do use technical terms such as "consubstantial," "person," "nature," "will," "operation." But their meaning is clear enough from the context in which they stand. They were introduced because there was an emergency to be met. While they resulted in the development of a technical theology both at Byzantium in the East and later in the universities of the West, this effect was not intended. But after the rise of Scholasticism the contrary process took place. Even though systematically differentiated consciousness was perhaps rare, the technical vocabulary and the thinking of the schools exercised considerable influence on conciliar decrees, right up to the pastoral council, Vatican II, when this tendency was reversed in favor of a more biblical style.

Finally, there is interiorly differentiated consciousness. It is a condition of the possibility of the method we are proposing, as it also is a condition of the possibility of understanding what differentiated consciousness means and what are its different kinds. The ideal theologian will be the man or woman rich in common sense, profoundly devoted to prayer, familiar with the structures of his conscious and intentional operations and, on the basis of that familiarity, achieving the clarity and precision of systematic thinking. Common sense is needed if one is to deal intelligently with one's concrete situation. The spirit of prayer is needed to do so religiously. Interiorly differentiated consciousness is needed to master epistemological problems and to understand transcultural movements. Only systematic thinking is clear and precise and it can achieve continuity without rigidity only if it is based on interiority.

### 3. The Function of Church Doctrines

In chapter four on Religion there were discerned two main components in Christianity. On the one hand, there is God's gift of his love in our hearts. On the other hand, there is God's revelation of his love in Christ Jesus and its mediation to us through the Christian community. ~~Clearly~~ the two belong together to constitute the Christian encounter with God.

Now a community exists in the measure that its members share a common field of experience, understand it in a similar or complementary <sup>me</sup> ~~order~~ fashion, agree about what is true and what is false in areas of common concern, respect the same values and pursue similar or common goals. Inversely, community begins to <sup>fall apart,</sup> ~~disrupt,~~ when the members are out of touch, when misunderstanding generates suspicion, distrust, fear, hatred, violence, when judgements conflict, when opposed <sup>or incompatible</sup> goals are pursued.

The Christian community not only must be a community -- a high achievement indeed -- but also must bear witness to Christ and put itself at the service of mankind. Without the witness God's revelation in Christ Jesus would be forgotten. Without the ongoing community ~~where~~ the witness would be lacking. Without the service to mankind Christ's teaching might be preached but it would not be practised and <sup>so</sup> it would lack credibility. Actions speak louder than words.

Still the words too are needed. Earlier we noted that meaning fulfilled a communicative, a cognitive, a constitutive, and an effective function. So too does Christian meaning.

As addressed to the individual, it is personal. Cor ad cor loquitur. God's grace in the speaker resonates with his grace in the hearer, and the hearer is eager to listen and to follow. His listening and following and coming back to listen again are constitutive of his being a Christian, of being one that not only has the gift of God's love but also has it complemented and fostered and explained and directed by the witness to Christ. As that meaning is constitutive of his being a Christian, so too it is cognitive of what it is to be Christian, and it is effective of the good works the meaning urges Christians to perform. Finally, as communicative, Christian meaning summons the assemblies that give Christians a common field of experience, promote a common understanding of human life and death, of holiness and sin, of good and evil, instill common judgements, common values, common ideals, common goals.

~~The function, then, of church doctrines is clear. It is to safeguard both the authenticity of the Christian's encounter with God through Christ Jesus and the Christian community and, consequently, the authenticity of the living and doing of Christians both individually and collectively.~~

The function, then, of church doctrines is clear. If the Christian community is to mediate God's revelation in Christ Jesus, the meanings it represents and expresses must be authentic. Moreover, the meanings have to remain authentic despite the variations that do arise from cultural diversity, from the absence as well as the presence of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion, and from the differentiations of consciousness.

To understand such variations and to judge which succeed and which fail in mediating authentically God's self-revelation in Christ Jesus calls for a teaching office in the Christian community.

#### 4. Doctrinal Developments

Contemporary exegesis asks no <sup>u</sup> questions that do not arise from the text. It seeks no understanding that is not substantiated by the text. It ~~accepts~~ accepts no revisions of earlier views that do not yield a better understanding of the available data. It does not prescind from what is rarely found, from what is obscure, from what is ambiguous, to concentrate on what is common, clear, certain. It does not limit its aim to the immediately attainable but strives for an ideal goal that eventually may be reached. It is out to reconstruct the constructions of mankind and it would do so not in some current new key but in the antique mode. It can be aided by such general sciences as psychology, sociology, economics, politics, but its concern is with texts that, in the main, deal with particular persons or peoples and particular issues, and it would come to know persons, peoples, issues in their individuality and in all their differences. The New Testament scholar would know just not what is common to Mark, Matthew, Luke, Paul and John, but where each differs from the other and to what extent he differs.

I have outlined the aims of contemporary exegesis because they ~~the~~ contrast most vividly with the aims of the teaching office of the Christian community. For apart from <sup>the labors of</sup> ~~its~~ biblical scholars within the ~~ix~~ last century there has been little effort to ~~reconstruct~~ reconstruct the mind of first century Christians.

For this there have been two compelling reasons. The first is that the early Christians and, in particular, the various authors of the New Testament had, not a mind, but minds. As the prophets of old they too spoke in fragmentary and varied fashion. Nor can we be surprised. As was seen in an earlier chapter<sup>6</sup> there never

6) Chapter 8, section 5.

is attempted let alone achieved an exhaustive account of a historical process. The most that can be hoped for is a set of perspectives selected by different minds and then, how the selections are to be fitted together, often cannot be told. The second reason is that later Christians ~~has~~ had their own lives to lead, their own minds to guide them, their own problems to solve. Their Christianity was not conceived as putting on Matthew or Mark or Luke, Paul or John, James ~~or~~ or Jude. It was to put on Christ. If one does that, if one does it ~~thorough~~ thoroughly, then one does it within the Christian community, under the guidance of the Christian community, but also inevitably in one's own way and with one's own style. Becoming Christian is not becoming a ~~stereotyped~~ stereotype. ~~It is becoming a person of a quite special type now is the time for~~ becoming the person God wills one to be.

Along with personal differences there arise the variations <sup>absence</sup> due to the presence or ~~absence~~ of intellectual, moral, religious conversion and to the measure of ~~its~~ its thoroughness. As the Old Testament spoke of false prophets, so the <sup>↓</sup> New spoke ~~speaks~~ of sham apostles (2 Cor 11, 13). There was a need for teachers to be authenticated, for divisions to be healed, for ~~disputes to be settled, for doctrines to be enumerated~~

disputes to be settled, for errors to be repudiated, for doctrines to be formulated, for the canon of sacred writings to be formed, for the doctrine common to the apostolic churches to become a rule of faith.

But even the combined resources of scripture and tradition may not suffice to settle simply and summarily all issues that arise. Such issues of course may be of concern to few, and then the community may ignore them. On the other hand, they may be propagated among believers, divide communities, be tolerated by some bishops and rejected by others. Such were the circumstances that led to the council at ~~Ninnes~~ Nicea in 325, and it was further questions raised by the decision at Nicea that led to Constantinople I, Ephesus, Chalcedon, and Constantinople III.

I have just illustrated  
~~I am illustrating,~~ doctrinal developments by a series of examples, and I have done so deliberately. Some readers, no doubt, may desire a systematic account of the legitimate development of Christian doctrines. But for me the first steps are in research, interpretation, history, dialectic with regard to each new formulation emerging in the church's life. Whether the new formulation was or was not legitimate is revealed by the dialectic to the intellectually, morally, religiously converted theologian.

However, certain types of developments may be distinguished. There is the transcultural type. When Christianity is emerging in a new culture, it can express itself effectively only by making a creative use of that culture's stage of development, its language, its potentialities for symbolism and metaphor. Without using the resources of the culture, there is no ~~expression~~ communication with the members of that culture. Without creative use of those resources, there is no communication of anything

specifically Christian.

A second type is dialectical. New truth comes to light by being denied. What is not so, is asserted by the innovator. ~~Wahmmmmmm~~ But the benefit of his innovation is that ~~the~~ the community comes to know what is so.

A third type has been named cultic. This is Prof. Geiselmann's remainder concept for the definitions of the Immaculate Conception and of the Assumption, which in the Roman Catholic church did not ~~adman~~ clarify what previously was believed but only solemnized the duty to assent.

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J. R. Geiselmann, "Dogma" in Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe, edited by ~~Heinrich~~ Heinrich Fries, München (Kösel) 1962. I, 231.

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A fourth type reflects the emergence of a differentiation of consciousness. Mystical experience would seem to inspire apophatic theology. Systematic thinking was behind the medieval development. Interiority is the base from which the relations of common sense, mysticism, and system can be grasped. Finally, sooner or later, such developments in theology flow over into church doctrines in various ways and on various grounds.

~~5. The Contemporary Crisis~~

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While the crisis has existed for some time, it was long evaded by the Roman Catholic church and only since the second Vatican council has it been out in the open

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Only for Roman Catholics is the crisis strictly contemporary. In other communions it has long been acknowledged and <sup>has</sup> passed through such phases as liberal, dialectical, demythologizing, and radical theology.<sup>8</sup>

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8) See for example J. C. Cooper, The Roots of Radical <sup>T</sup> theology, Philadelphia (Westminster) 1967.

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## 5. The Contemporary Crisis

The contemporary crisis is the Catholic crisis. In other communions ~~in~~ a religious crisis has long been acknowledged and has frequently been described.<sup>8</sup> But in Roman Catholic circles theologians could know about problems, they could work towards their solutions quietly, but until the second Vatican ~~council~~ council they did not get them out into the open. Then the dykes broke.

Different writers would no doubt offer different analyses of the current Catholic situation, and my thoughts on the matter have already perhaps been sufficiently expressed. But it may be well to put them together here at the risk of some repetition. For the difficulties often are exaggerated with the result that, in the minds of not a few, there is little acceptance of doctrines and little sympathy for them.

Very briefly, my analysis is that a number of once widely held views are no longer accepted. The cumulative result of this change is the bankruptcy of the manualist tradition in theology. In consequence there has erupted an almost feverish amount of theological study and writing and not all of it equally sound. The need, as I see it, is for the unification and discrimination that an appropriate method could bring about.

For centuries, then, the Christian's image of himself and of his world was drawn from the first chapter of Genesis, from the theological doctrine of the creation of each human soul, from Jewish apocalyptic and Ptolemaic astronomy. That image

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8) See for example J. C. Cooper, The Roots of Radical Theology, Philadelphia (Westminster) 1967.

The classicist was quite aware that circumstances alter cases, and casuists were brilliant in envisaging ever varying cases to be solved by subsuming them under ~~appropriate-universal~~ appropriate universal principles and rules. But, from the nature of things, the principles and rules were not subject to change. The one eventuality that classicist thought did not envisage was that classicist culture might be superseded by another, different culture. It was that blindspot that for so long preserved older ways in Catholic circles and that, even after Vatican II, can contemplate change as only a disaster.

Modern culture conceives culture empirically. It is the set of meanings and values constitutive of a way of life. So there are many cultures, from those of primitive ~~peoples~~ peoples, through the ancient high civilizations and the <sup>much later</sup> distinctive achievements of the Hebrews, the Greeks, the Persians, the Indians, the Chinese, up to modern culture itself. More than any other, modern culture knows that it has constituted itself. There are the modern languages and the modern literatures and they were developed in opposition to the models offered by ~~Greek and~~ Greece and Rome. There are modern mathematics and modern science and they differ not only by their enormous extent but also ~~by~~ in their very nature from Greek achievement. There are modern technology and industry, modern commerce and finance, modern education and modern ~~modern~~ medicine, modern media and modern art, the ~~and~~ modern idea of history and the modern idea of philosophy. In every case modernity means the desertion, if not the repudiation, of the old models and methods, and the exercise of freedom, initiative, creativity. So modern man is fully aware that he has made his modern world and, no less, that other peoples have made theirs or else have made do

insight is one thing, while the massive accumulation of insights achieved by specialized historical study is quite another. But the great need of Scholasticism was the discovery both of historical scholarship and of human historicity. For its problem of assimilating tradition in an orderly and coherent ~~and~~ fashion was as much a problem of historical perspective as of logical coherence and metaphysical literalness. But so far was the Aristotelian corpus from guiding study and thought ~~in this direction that it encouraged the ideal of a static system. now is the time for all good men to come to the aid~~ in this direction that it joined hands with classicist tendencies to reinforce the ideal of static system. Up the beginning of the seventeenth century commentaries were still being written on the Sentences of Peter Lombard. From the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries there were composed a notable series of commentaries on the Summa theologiae of Aquinas. From the end of the ~~eighteenth~~ seventeenth century right into the twentieth professors of dogmatic theology were expected to be at home in the Old and New Testament, the Greek and Latin Fathers, the medieval, renaissance, and later theologians. The incomprehension with which theologians had met modern science was extended to historical scholarship.

was parallel to medieval anticipations of the ~~proed~~ procedures of modern science. But the intellectual ideal of Aristotle's Posterior Analytics is incompatible not only with the ideal of modern empirical science but also with that of modern mathematics. Now while Aquinas ~~was~~ <sup>did</sup> write a commentary on the Posterior Analytics, still his procedures remained true to a far more traditional mold. But some thirty or forty years later Aristotle's Organon ~~was~~ <sup>had</sup> become something that ~~is~~ <sup>was</sup> taken for granted. Its rigor and, at the same time, a verbalism that treats common names as if they were scientific terms offer some explanation for subsequent scepticism and decadence. Finally, ~~At least,~~ there is no doubt that Aristotelian tenets ~~misled~~ <sup>misled</sup> later Scholastics into their resistance against modern ~~contributed~~ contributed to the stubbornness with which later theologians and churchmen met modern science and its discoveries with both incomprehension and opposition.

Next, with regard to history, the middle ages was not ~~lacking in a critical sense. The first to note that the la~~ ~~that an Arabic work entitled was now is the time for all~~ ~~that an Arabic work entitled in its Latin translation, Liber de~~ lacking in a critical sense. After All, Aquinas himself was the first to note that an Arabic work entitled, in its Latin translation, Liber de causis, was an abbreviated presentation of the Elementatio theologica of Proclus.<sup>10</sup> But an occasional

10) H. D. Saffrey, Sancti Thomae de Aquino super Librum de Causis Expositio, Fribourg and Louvain (Textus Philosophici Friburgenses, 4/5) 1954, pp. xvi and 3.

systematic meaning is to be repudiated.

To this protest we shall return later when we discuss the permanence of dogmas and the pluralism of communications. But now we have to consider the fuller involvement with systematic meaning brought about by Scholasticism. In its fundamental intention Scholasticism was an admirable and thorough-going effort to bring about an orderly and coherent assimilation of the Christian tradition. The enormous differences between an Anselm in the eleventh century and an Aquinas in the thirteenth result from unremitting efforts over a century and a half to assemble and classify data, to interpret them in commentaries, and to digest them by resolving series of questions. This process was both cumulative and progressive ~~and to~~ and, to see how enormous the progress was, one has only to contrast the issues raised in Peter Lombard's Libri distinctionum quattuor with the issues treated ~~in the questions~~ by Aquinas in his Scriptum super Sententias Magistri Petri Lombardi.<sup>9</sup>

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9) For a specific instance see the references to Peter Lombard in my Grace and Freedom, London (Darton, Longman & Todd) 1971 and Notre Dame (Notre Dame University Press) 1971.

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However, Scholasticism turned to Aristotle for its substructure. But while the immediate result was an enormous gain, while there existed no better source for a rational account of the natural world, still subsequent events have brought to light the deficiencies of Aristotelianism.

In particular, three points have to be observed. They regard science, history, and ~~epistemology~~ epistemology.

The <sup>intellectual</sup> ideal that governed the first flowering of Scholasticism

with a world fashioned by bolder ancestors<sup>1</sup> only to be handed on by ~~us~~ an inert posterity.

No doubt, there is much evil in the modern world, but that only means that Christianity has a great redemptive task to undertake. No doubt, there is much relativism in modern thought, but that only means that the error of relativism has to be clearly and accurately stated. Relativism is not mistaken when it rejects immutable propositions. Relativism is mistaken when it does not acknowledge that a principle is a first in an ordered set, that besides propositional principles there are real principles, that the real principles of change in human affairs are man's attentiveness, his intelligence, his reasonableness, his responsibility, that these real principles develop indeed but ever remain normative for human authenticity.

I have been contrasting classicist and modern culture, but I must also insist on continuity. Such continuity can be discerned, I feel sure, by anyone that would compare three of my books. Thomist intellectual theory is presented in Verbum: Word and Idea in Aquinas. Contemporary intellectual theory is presented in Insight: A Study of Human Understanding. And continuous with the preceding though going beyond them is the present Method in Theology. If a slogan is appropriate, I would say that to be a Thomist today is, not to repeat St. Thomas, but to do for the ~~twentieth~~ twentieth century what he did for the thirteenth.

So far I have been content to stress cultural change in man's image of himself, in human studies, in the notion of science, in the conception of philosophy, in the classicist and the modern appreciation of change. But something has to be

has been assaulted by Copernicus, by Darwin, and by Freud. It has been the great merit of Teilhard de Chardin to have recognized the Christian's need for a coherent image of himself and his world and to have done not a little towards meeting that need.

Scholarship once revealed itself in the attainment of humanistic eloquence. But early nineteenth-century Philologie set itself the goal of reconstructing the constructions of mankind. Its initial successes were in the fields of classical studies and of European history. But it has long since moved into biblical, patristic, and medieval studies. What formerly was considered the work of the theologian as uomo universale, now can be the work only of a very large team.

Once it was held that science is certain knowledge of things through their causes. Modern science is not certain but probable. It is concerned with data rather than things. It speaks of causes but means correlation and not end, agent, matter, form.

Once it was held that science was about the universal and necessary. Today ~~the~~ necessity is a marginal notion in ~~mathematics~~ mathematics: conclusions follow necessarily from their premisses, but the basic premisses are not necessary truths but freely chosen postulates. In the early decades of this century scientists still spoke of the necessary laws of nature and even of the iron laws of economics. But ~~see~~ quantum theory and the Keynesians have put an end to that.

There was a time when necessary principles were the acknowledged basis of philosophy, and ~~these~~ these principles were identified with <sup>the</sup> self-evident propositions that supplied the basic premisses for philosophic deductions. Now there is

no doubt that there exist analytic propositions: if one defines A by the possession of a relation R to B, then there cannot be an A without a relation R to B. But it is equally true that there need not exist any A with a relation R to B. For existence is known not by defining terms, not by ~~construction~~ constructing analytic propositions, but in each first instance by empirical observation.

Aristotle and his followers acknowledged ~~some~~ special sciences that deal with beings of determinate kinds and a general science that dealt with being as being. Now the natural and the human sciences aim at accounting for all the data of sense. Accordingly, if there is to be any general science, its data will have to be the data of consciousness. So there is effected the turn to interiority. The general science is, first, cognitional theory (what are you doing when you are knowing?), secondly, epistemology (why is doing that knowing?), thirdly, metaphysics (what do you know when you do it?).

The shift to interiority was essayed in various manners from Descartes through Kant to the nineteenth-century idealists. But there followed a still more emphatic shift from knowledge to faith, will, decision, <sup>action,</sup> in Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, <sup>er</sup> Newman, Nietzsche, Blondel, the personalists, the existentialists. This further shift is correct inasmuch as the fourth level of intentional consciousness -- the level of moral deliberation, evaluation, decision -- sublates the prior levels of experiencing, understanding, and judging.<sup>9</sup> But not only does the fourth

9) On the nature of sublation, see above p.

level sublate the previous three, but also the previous three differ notably from the speculative intellect of Greek and rationalist thought. Such speculative intellect grasped self-evident, necessary truths. It could ~~can~~ claim complete autonomy. But in fact what human intelligence grasps in data and enounces in concepts and hypotheses is, not a necessarily relevant intelligibility, but a possibly relevant intelligibility that always is in need of a further process of checking and verifying before it can be asserted as de facto relevant to the data in hand. Accordingly, modern scientific activity is under the guidance of method, and the method that is selected and followed is the fruit not only of experience, understanding, and judgement but also of a decision.

I have been indicating a series of points on which thinking has changed. They are part of the transition from a classicist culture to modern culture. All human living is informed and, in part, constituted by meaning. But the informing and partially constitutive meanings follow different styles. The classicist cherished his immortal works of art, demanded that literary genres conform to static models, found in his laws and customs the deposit of the wisdom and the prudence of mankind, contemplated the eternal verities in his perennial philosophy, conceived culture not empirically but normatively so that there was but one genuine culture, in which all might partake, either by submitting to the necessary studies, or else by thinking and saying and doing what their betters bade them. Of course, not all do partake. Besides the educated classes there were the people, the natives, the barbarians and, similarly, in religion besides the theologians and canonists there were the simple faithful and the pagans.