

THE SCIENCE OF SACRED THEOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

## The Channels of Revelation

By Emmanuel Doronzo

*Book Three*

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## Introduction

In the preceding treatise the fact of revelation has been established through evident criteria. The question which now logically follows is: where do we find this revelation? What are the channels which bring it to us, so that we may know surely and exactly what we should believe? These channels are considered here formally as *theological "loci,"* that is, as "places" or bases of theological investigation.

Hence this treatise is a kind of theological dialectics (theological logic, or theological methodology) and belongs to fundamental theology. But, unlike the preceding tract which is merely apologetic, it considers the channels of revelation as the intrinsic foundation of theology and proceeds under the light of revelation itself. Hence it is a *dogmatic fundamental theology*.

This treatise may be defined: A scientific inquiry on the probative value of the channels of revelation, carried out under the light of revelation itself. The channels of revelation (or "loci") are the material object of this treatise, their probative value is its formal object, and the light of revelation is its formal reason.<sup>1</sup>

The channels through which revelation comes to us, and hence the "loci" or places where theologians find the principles and bases for their investigation, are essentially three, namely, Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium,<sup>2</sup> with this

<sup>1</sup> For the meaning of these three expressions, see our treatise on *Introduction to Theology*, pp. 9-13, and its *Glossary*, under the entry: Object of a science, p. 52.

<sup>2</sup> According to the list given by Melchior Cano (the founder of this treatise), and commonly followed by later theologians the *theological "loci"* would be ten, of which seven are taken on the part of

difference, however, that Scripture and Tradition are also deposits of revelation, that is, places in which revelation has been deposited and kept by God, while the Magisterium is only the organ (guardian, dispenser, interpreter) of revelation.<sup>3</sup>

This treatise is divided into two parts. The first deals with the three channels considered in themselves as to their nature and probative value, i.e., Scripture (chap. 1), Tradition (chap.

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revelation itself, namely, Scripture, Tradition, the believing Church (the sense of the faithful), the Magisterium of the Pope, the Magisterium of the Councils, the Fathers, the theologians; and three are derived extrinsically from the natural reason, that is, this reason itself according to its natural and scientific principles, the authority of philosophers, and human history.

Discarding these three extrinsic "loci," which can only lightly confirm a theological truth and help a theological investigation, all the other seven "loci" can be reduced to three, namely Scripture, Magisterium and Tradition. In fact, the Popes and Councils make up one general Magisterium, while the believing Church, the Fathers and the theologians, in as much as they are witnesses of Tradition, can be reduced to Tradition itself. The Fathers and theologians as private doctors have only a limited and fallible authority; they will be considered under this aspect together with the believing Church in special notes after the treatment of Tradition (pp. 22-32).

<sup>3</sup> With regard to terminology, until Vatican Council II Scripture and Tradition were usually called the *two sources* of revelation, both by theologians and in the documents of the recent Magisterium; thus the title of the present treatise was "On the Sources of Revelation" (together with the title "On Theological "Loci"); Pius XI speaks of the sources of revelation (Encycl. "Mortalium Animos" 1928, AAS XX 12) and Pius XII uses the same plural expression five times in his Encycl. "Humani generis" 1950 (Denz. 3886; he uses even the expression "both sources"). *Vatican II*, however, preferred a slightly different terminology, according to which the *source* of revelation is the Gospel itself (that is Christ's preaching), while Scripture and Tradition are the *deposit* (even the *one deposit*) of revelation, "entrusted" to the Magisterium.

Following this reformed terminology, we call *source* of revelation, the gospel itself; *channels* of revelation, Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium; *deposit* (or deposits since, at least materially, they are two) of revelation, Scripture and Tradition; *organ* of revelation, the Magisterium.

2), Magisterium (chap. 3). The second considers the theological content of these channels, particularly of the Magisterium, that is, dogma (chap. 4), theological conclusions (chap. 5), theological notes and censures (chap. 6).

# Part I

## The Three Channels of Revelation

The first channel of revelation is through the Scriptures. The second channel is through the Tradition of the Church. The third channel is through the Magisterium of the Church.

# I

## Scripture, The Written Deposit of Revelation<sup>4</sup>

### 1. The Nature of Scripture.

We shall gather under this heading and briefly explain five questions which are treated extensively by biblical scholars, namely, the inspiration, canonicity, authenticity, inerrancy and interpretation of Holy Scripture. These properties are all defined or taught by the Council of Trent (Sess. 4, Denz. 1501-1508), Vatican I (Sess. 3, Denz. 3029), Leo XIII (Encycl. "Providentissimus," Denz. 3291-3293), Pius XII (Encycl. "Divino afflante Spiritu," Denz. 3925-3831), and Vatican II (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, nos. 11-13).

*Inspiration* as a fact is defined by Trent and Vatican I. Its nature is described as a direct action of God into the intellect

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<sup>4</sup> Cf. J. Levie, "Les limites de la preuve d'Écriture Sainte en théologie," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 71 (1949) 1009-1029; A. Bea, "Il progresso nell' interpretazione della S. Scrittura," *Gregorianum* 33 (1952) 85-105; L. Alonso-Schokel, "Argument d'Écriture et théologie biblique dans l'enseignement théologique," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 91 (1959) 337-354; *Schrift und Tradition* (collective work), Essen 1962; *De Scriptura et Traditione* (collective work), Rome 1963; J. Dupont, "Écriture et Tradition," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 85 (1963) 337-356, 449-468; *Mysterium salutis. Dogmatique de l'histoire du salut* (collective work translated from the German), I 2: *La révélation dans l'Écriture et la Tradition*, Paris 1969; E. Hamel, "L'Écriture, âme de la théologie," *Gregorianum* 52 (1971) 511-535.

and will of the hagiographers, on account of which their writings are to be attributed to God himself as their principal author (Vatican I; Leo XIII; Vatican II). Its extension embraces all the canonical books of both Testaments, "in their entirety and in all their parts" (Trent; Vatican I; Vatican II), "in everything asserted by the inspired authors" (Vatican II) and not only in "matters of faith and morals" (Leo XIII); briefly, "everything the hagiographer asserts, enunciates, suggests" (Biblical Commission, June. 18, 1915, Denz. 3629).

*Canonicity*, that is, the definite canon or list of books which must be considered as inspired, is proposed as *de fide* by Trent and Vatican I.

The *authenticity* of the text of these books is explicitly declared by Trent and confirmed by Vatican I as regards the Latin version called the "Vulgate," by reason of its "approbation by the Church through many centuries of usage in public lectures, sermons, and explanations" (Trent, Denz. 1506; Vatican I, Denz. 3006). Two corollaries are drawn from this declaration. One is literary, namely, that the Vulgate is substantially in conformity with the original, so that it contains all and only the inspired books, as well as all the dogmatic original texts, in their sum total (although there may be a doubt or a dispute about one or another particular text, especially if it regards a modal discrepancy with the original text as critically established). The other corollary is dogmatic, namely, that the text of the Vulgate is immune from all error in matters of faith and morals, and it can be used safely and without danger of erring.

The *inerrancy* of the entire biblical text, being a mere consequence of its inspiration, can be considered implicitly defined by Trent and Vatican I, at least as regards matters of faith and morals. The absolute exclusion of all error, even in other matters, follows from the same inspiration, which makes God author of the entire text, and is considered by Leo XIII as likewise defined by the Magisterium (Denz. 3292 f).

As regards the *interpretation*, or hermeneutics, of the text, biblical scholars distinguish a *threefold sense*, namely, literal,

typical, and ampler.<sup>5</sup>

The *literal sense* (or grammatical, historical, logical sense) is that which the letter or words immediately carry and which is intended by the writer as such.<sup>6</sup> This is the necessary and primary sense in a biblical text, as in every speech or writing; the presence of only a typical sense would not be sufficient to justify the words of Scripture, for the typical sense must be based on the literal sense, as will be shown below. The literal sense, intended in a biblical text, is only one, at least according to the more common opinion. Otherwise fallacy or equivocation would be attributed to God, as was found in the oracles of pagan religions. These often carried a double contrary meaning so that the prediction would be true in either event.<sup>7</sup>

The *typical sense* (or real, spiritual, mystical sense) is that which is not attached to the words themselves but to the things or persons signified by the words, and therefore is not intended by the biblical writer but only by God inspiring his words. Hence, it cannot be known but through God's revelation, that is, from Scripture or Tradition or the sense of the Church, for the hagiographer himself under the inspiration and revelation, or the Church, under the assistance of the Holy Spirit, can infallibly interpret the sense of the Holy Scripture. Several typical senses are certainly proposed by the hagiographers themselves, either explicitly (Matt. 2.15:19.36; Cor. 10.1-11; Gal. 4.22-31) or implicitly (Matt. 5.5; 26.28; Col. 2.11 f; Heb. 12.22; Apoc. 2.7).

<sup>5</sup> The so called *accommodated sense*, based on some likeness with what is said and signified in the biblical text, is not a biblical sense. It can be used and is in fact used by preachers and spiritual writers; but this should be done with discretion and moderation, lest such sense be mistaken for the real sense or its use involve disrespect for the sacred text. See *Verbum Domini* (1938) 272-278.

<sup>6</sup> The literal sense can be either *proper* (as if I say: Peter is sly) or *metaphorical* (if I say: Peter is a fox). If an entire speech or pericope is metaphorical, its sense is called allegoric, and in the case of a particular form of allegory it is called parabolic (cf. *Summa Theol.*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 10, ad 3).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. *Problemi scelti di teologia contemporanea* (Rome 1954) 251-273.

The *ampler sense* ("sensus plenior" called also the ultra-literal or evangelical sense) would be a sense between the literal and the typical, introduced and stressed by several modern exegetes,<sup>8</sup> but rejected by others.<sup>9</sup> It would be a sense intended by God alone in the very words of the hagiographer, beyond the sense understood and intended by the latter.<sup>10</sup> It seems difficult to admit such a sense, for it would be at once literal (on the part of God) and not literal (on the part of the hagiographer); in such case the words would carry an extra sense which they do not have, since they are words proceeding from the mind of the hagiographer, whom God uses as an instrument. Hence, this opinion seems to proceed from a false notion of inspiration, because God inspires only and all that the hagiographer says, and the biblical text proceeds totally from two causes, that is, from God as principal author and from the hagiographer as God's instrument. There is no point in appealing to the case of the typical sense, intended by God and not understood by the hagiographer; for this sense is not attached to the words themselves, but only to the things signified by the words. Thus it is extrinsic to the words and is known only through the extrinsic revelation of God.<sup>11</sup>

## 2. The probative value of Scripture, as a theological place.

This value can be expressed with the following norms and rules.

<sup>8</sup> As A. Fernández, *Institutiones biblicae*, vol. 1, p. 390; D. P. De Ambroggi, J. Renié, D. Buzy, J. Cerfaux, J. M. Braun, M. Nicolau, J. Coppens (see *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* [1958] 5-20).

<sup>9</sup> As R. Bierberg, in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* (1949) 182-185; J. Daniélou (see *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* [1948] 119-126); G. Courtade (see *Recherches de science religieuse* [1950] 481-497).

<sup>10</sup> This sense is used by the aforementioned exegetes, especially in explaining some of the messianic prophecies, which the prophets would not have understood in the full messianic meaning intended by God. Thus, for instance, in the Emmanuel conceived of a young woman (the Hebrew 'almâh, translated by virgin), Isaias (7.14) may have understood Ezechias, son of Achaz, while God intended Christ, the Messiah.

<sup>11</sup> With regard to the messianic prophecies, those that cannot be sufficiently explained by the literal sense, are aptly and fully explained by the typical sense, without recourse to any "ampler sense."

*First norm.* Since Scripture is a true deposit of revelation, enhanced moreover by the charism of inspiration, it is a proper, primary, privileged, and independent theological place, from which a theologian can confidently proceed in his investigation, drawing from it certain or probable arguments, according to whether the sense of a biblical text is certain or only probable. It is true that Scripture depends on Tradition and particularly on the Magisterium with regard to the interpretation of its sense; but, once this sense has been established, theologians argue directly from Scripture, as from a proper and primary place, even before arguing either from Tradition, or from the Magisterium, which, being only the organ and guardian of the deposit of faith, is inferior to it.<sup>12</sup>

*Second norm.* Since the Vulgate version, and this alone, has been declared authentic by the Magisterium, that is, substantially in conformity with the original text, the theologian can and must take it into consideration in his labor, giving it preference to any other version or original text critically established. However, since this declaration of the Magisterium regards only the substantial conformity, in case of doubt as to the conformity of some particular text of the Vulgate with the original text as critically established, only a probable argument can be drawn from it, and, in the case of certain discrepancy, no biblical argument can be claimed but only an argument of Tradition, inasmuch as Tradition *de facto* used the text to express its faith in a particular truth. At any rate, the critical investigation of the original text is very useful to the theologian, even for the right understanding of the Vulgate text, and hence he should be aware of the critical conclusion of the exegetes about a particular text, before introducing it

<sup>12</sup> Vatican II emphasizes this inferiority, saying: "The Magisterium is not above the Word of God, but rather ministers to it, teaching only what has been handed on. Thus, by divine commission and under the assistance of the Holy Spirit, the Magisterium listens to the Word of God piously, guards it religiously and exposes it faithfully, drawing from this deposit of faith all those things which it proposes to be believed as divinely revealed" (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no. 10).

into his theological elaboration.<sup>13</sup>

*Third norm.* Regarding the interpretation of the sense of a biblical text, we may distinguish three rules.

*The first and supreme rule is the sense given by Tradition and the Magisterium,* as is explicitly and repeatedly stated by the Magisterium itself. (Trent, Denz. 1507; Vatican I, Denz. 3007; Pius XII in his Encycl. "Humani Generis;" Vatican II, Dogm. Constitution on Divine Revelation, nos. 10, 12, 23, 26). In particular note the following. The morally unanimous agreement of the *Fathers* in interpreting a biblical text, if it implies a positive and firm assertion about an object considered as pertaining to faith, makes their interpretation absolutely certain, for this agreement is the voice of Tradition; on the contrary a similar agreement of mere theologians makes their interpretation only probable, because they are only fallible witnesses to Tradition. Likewise the authentic interpretation of a text, given by the *solemn Magisterium*, is absolutely certain. This is done in two ways. Either *directly* with the manifested intention of interpreting a particular text; such is the case of Rom. 5.12 on the universality of original sin, children included; John 3.5, on the necessity of true water in Baptism; Matt. 26.26 ff. and parallel texts, on the Eucharist in its proper sense; John 20.22 f. on the sacrament of Penance; Jas. 5.14 f., on the Anointing of the Sick; Luke 22.19, on the institution of the priesthood; Matt. 16.16 f. and John 21.15 ff., on Peter's primacy (Denz. 1514, 1615, 1637, 1703, 1716, 1752, 3053). Or *indirectly*, by merely bringing forth a biblical text with the evident intention of confirming a particular truth; thus the Council of Trent introduces Rom. 5.12 to confirm the doctrine of original sin, and 2 Tim. 1.6 f. in confirmation of the sacrament of Orders (Denz. 1512, 1766). However, such intention is not always clear, for often the Magisterium quotes Scriptural texts only as a mere illustration and explanation. In this case there is no authentic interpretation, but merely a suitable use of such texts. Also the *ordinary Magisterium* enjoys per se the same authoritative interpretation, although the discernibility of its pronouncements is not so easy, by reason

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encycl. "Divino afflante Spiritu" 1943 (Denz. 3825).



of the manifold elements by which this Magisterium is made up and carried out.

The second and subsidiary rule is the recourse to the so-called "analogy of faith," that is, the mutual agreement which must exist between the different truths of the same faith, so that one cannot contradict the others, but rather one can illustrate another similar to it or connected with it. For example, the Eucharist can be illustrated by the Incarnation and vice versa, the mystery of the Church by the mystery of Christ and vice versa, and the power of granting indulgences by the general power of remitting sin.<sup>14</sup>

The third rule (the only one left if the other two fail) is the exegetical examination of the text, according to the two biblical senses, the literal and the typical (since the so-called "amplified sense" seems hardly useful). Although the typical sense is truly biblical, being intended by God, and often nobler, on account of a higher object signified, the theologian should turn his attention primary to the literal sense, for several reasons. First, because it is necessary and universal, that is, found in every word, while the typical sense is only occasionally attached to the text. Secondly, because it is fundamental, since the typical sense is based on it and depends on it. Thirdly, because it is more manifest and certain, since it is known rationally, while the typical sense is known only through God's revelation. Fourthly, because it is scientifically more efficacious, and hence more suitable to theological investigation (it is even the only one which fits an apologetical or rational purpose).<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> This expression is found in several documents of the recent Magisterium. See Leo XIII, Encycl. "Providentissimus" (Denz. 3283); Pius X, Antimodernistic Oath (Denz. 3546); Pius XII, Encycl. "Humani generis" (Denz. 3887); Vatican II, Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation (no. 12). About the use of the "analogy of faith" in theological investigation see our treatise on *Introduction to Theology*, p. 22.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. Pius XII, Encycl. "Divino afflante Spiritu" 1943 (Denz. 3829 f.). Vatican II insists especially on the observation of the "literary forms," in which the various books were written, considered both generically, whether, for instance, their style is poetical or

Having clearly established the literal sense of a text the theologian should turn his attention to its typical sense,<sup>16</sup> which often is the principal sense intended by God and which has a truly demonstrative force. Thus, for example, from the fact that Melchisedech as a priest was the typical figure of Christ, as St. Paul testifies, we rightly and certainly infer that Christ, like Melchisedech, offered a sacrifice. However, the existence of the typical sense in a particular text should not be easily asserted, for it is known only by revelation which is not clear in many cases. Moreover, even when the existence of the typical sense is certain, its extension should not be unduly exaggerated; thus, from the sure fact that Melchisedech is a typical figure of Christ by reason of the superiority of his priesthood over the priesthood of Aaron, it does not necessarily follow that he is the figure of Christ also under the other characters, by which his excellence is described in Genesis, and that we can necessarily infer such characters in Christ.

Hence the theologian should use only the more certain types and take them only within the more certain limits of their typicality. The apostles (particularly St. Paul) could handle the typical sense more freely and more surely on account of their charism of inspiration and revelation, and so could the Fathers, by reason of a special assistance of the Holy Spirit and of a connatural intuition, fruit of a deeper spiritual life and of an intimate familiarity with the truths of faith; but theologians do not enjoy such spiritual gifts.

prophetical, or historical, and specifically, that is, with regard to the contemporary style, influenced by circumstances of time and culture (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no. 12).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Pius XII in the same Encyclical (Denz. 3828).

## II

### Tradition, The Living Deposit of Revelation<sup>17</sup>

#### 1. The nature of Tradition.

##### a) General notion

Tradition (in Latin "Traditio," from "trans-do," that is, I hand over; in Greek "Parádosis" from "pará-dídomai," I hand

<sup>17</sup> Cf. R. Hull, "The Council of Trent and Tradition" *American Ecclesiastical Review* 81 (1929) 469-482, 602-615; Ch. Baumgartner, "Tradition et Magistère," *Recherches de science religieuse* 41 (1953) 161-187; G. Dejaifve, "Bible, Tradition, Magistère dans le théologie catholique," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 78 (1956) 133-151. D. Van den Eynde, "Tradizione e Magistero," *Problemi e orientamenti di teologia dommatica* 1 (Milano 1957) 231-252; *Schrift und Tradition* (collective work), Essen 1962; *De Scriptura et traditione* (collective work), Roma 1963; J. Dupont, "Ecriture et Tradition," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 85 (1963) 337-356, 449-468; Y. Congar, *The Meaning of Tradition* (trans. A. N. Woodrow), New York 1964; *Tradition and Traditions*, New York, 1967; J. Ratzinger and K. Rahner, *Revelation and tradition* (trans. from the German), Freiburg 1966; *Mysterium salutis. Dogmatique de l'histoire du salut* (trans. from the German), I 2: *La révélation dans l'Ecriture et la Tradition*, Paris 1969; P. Lengsfeld, "La tradition dans le temps constitutif de la révélation," *Mysterium salutis* I 2 (Paris 1969) 13-72; "Tradition et Ecriture. Leur rapport," *ibid.* 270-310; A. Kerrigan, "Doctrina Concilii Vaticani I de 'sine scripto Traditionibus,'" *De doctrina Concilii Vaticani Primi* (Città del Vaticano 1969) 3-26; A. Meredith, *The Theology of Tradition*, Notre Dame, Indiana 1971; J. Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition, 1: The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600)*, Chicago 1971.

over) etymologically means the action of handing over something from one to another (active Tradition), and by logical extension, it means also the thing, or object handed over (objective Tradition). In this double meaning of active and objective Tradition the word was used to signify the handing over of Christian doctrines and usages, and it became classical in Christian literature as well as in theology. Scripture speaks of doctrinal traditions of the Pharisees (Matt. 15.2,3,6; Mark 7.3, 5,8,9,13), of heretics (Col. 2,8), and of the apostles themselves (1 Cor. 11.2; 2 Thess. 2.14; 3.6). The Fathers and the theologians up to the Council of Trent used the word Tradition only in the general and complete sense of the entire Christian revelation entrusted by Christ and the Apostles to the Church and by the Church transmitted continuously through whatever means (either written or oral). After the Council of Trent, however, by reason of the Protestant claim that the Christian doctrine is found and transmitted only in the written Scripture, theologians took Tradition also in the particular and restricted sense of whatever would be found and transmitted only orally and not in the Scripture.

Hence the *objective Tradition* in theology is taken in two senses. *First* and more properly, it signifies the *integral Tradition*, that is, everything handed over in the Church from Christ and the apostles down to us, whether through inspired writings (Scripture) or orally (through other means than Scripture). *Secondly*, it signifies the *partial Tradition*, that is, only that part of doctrines and usages which is not explicitly or sufficiently found in Scripture but only in the oral Tradition.

The *active Tradition* (or the action by which Christian doctrine is transmitted) in the apostolic times consisted in preaching (Christ, the apostles, their disciples) and in inspired writings (Scripture). In the following ages it consists in common preaching, in the declarations of the Magisterium under the assistance of the Holy Spirit, in the non-inspired writings of the Fathers and of the other ecclesiastical doctors, and also, equivalently or implicitly, in various practical means by which the faith of the Church and of the people manifests itself, such as liturgical practices (liturgy), canonical laws (having dogmatic foundation), and artistic productions (archaeo-

logical, architectural, sculptural, pictorial).

b) *The proper character of Tradition as deposit of revelation.*

*Tradition, taken as a whole (integral Tradition) is a true and ever living deposit of revelation, whether it be written in inspired Scripture or given through other means; hence Scripture is not the only deposit of revelation or the only rule of faith.*

This has been defined, as *de fide*, against older and recent adversaries<sup>18</sup> by the Council of Trent, declaring that "the truth and the discipline [first promulgated by Christ and preached by the Apostles] is contained in the written books and in the unwritten traditions, which have been received by the Apostles from the mouth of Christ himself, or under the

<sup>18</sup> In the second century Irenaeus and Tertullian opposed to the Gnostics the force of Tradition. In the fourth century Pelagius, founder of Pelagianism, is quoted by St. Augustine as saying: "Let us believe what we read [in Scripture], and judge as unlawful to build up what we do not read" (St. Augustine, *On Nature and Grace* 39). Not long before the rise of Protestantism, John Wyclif repeated: "A truth, which is not found in Scripture, does not exist" (*On Civil Power* 1.44, ed. Poole, pag. 339). The Protestants hold as fundamental the aphorism "Scripture is the only rule of faith" (thus Luther, Melancthon, Calvin, and all the Confessions of Protestant faith, including the Anglican).

Regarding the preaching of the apostles themselves, the Protestants teach that it was for the time being a source of revelation, but after the hagiographers consigned into inspired writing the truths preached by the apostles, this Scripture succeeded to the preached word as the only deposit of revelation and the only rule of faith. Several modern Protestants, particularly among Anglicans and French-Swiss Calvinists, grant some connatural value to Tradition in interpreting the sense of Scripture, but they hold that only Scripture has of itself the force of rule of faith. The various valuations of modern Protestants are described in the work *Scripture and Tradition*, London, 1955.

In the Catholic work *De Scriptura et Traditione* (Roma 1963) 506-512, there is a sufficient explanation of the doctrine of both the first Reformers (Luther, Melancthon, Calvin) and the mitigated modern Protestants (I. A. Leuba, O. Cullmann, Fr. Leenhardt, M. Thurian).

dictation of the Holy Spirit have been transmitted by the Apostles and have come down to us as it were from hand to hand" (Sess. 4, Denz. 1501). This definition has been repeated verbatim by Vatican I (Sess. 3, chap. 2, Denz 3006) and explained more at length by Vatican II (Dogm. Constit. on Divine Revelation, nos. 7-10).

The truth of this statement of the Magisterium is also apparent from the following considerations. *First*, Christ himself wrote no books, but only preached his doctrine, and gave likewise the apostles no command to consign his doctrines to writings, but commanded them to preach them to all nations under the continued assistance of the Holy Spirit (Matt. 28.18 f.; Mark 16.15; John 14.16,26); hence Christ deposited his revelation in a living and perpetual Tradition.

*Secondly*, the apostles constantly claimed for themselves the office of preaching (1 Cor. 7.17; 11.23; 2 Cor. 1.18; Gal. 1.8; Col. 2.6; 2 Thess. 2.14), but never the task of writing. Hence they proposed the living Tradition as the main deposit of revelation. In particular St. Paul entrusted the same office to his disciple Timothy, saying: "Hold to the form of sound teaching which thou hast heard from me . . . Guard the good trust through the Holy Spirit . . . The things that thou hast heard from me through many witnesses, commend to trustworthy men who shall be competent in turn to teach others" (2 Tim. 1.13 f.; 2.2) and he reminded the Thessalonians of his teaching given to them through his words and his previous letter: "Stand firm, and hold the teachings that you have learned, whether by word or by letter of ours" (2 Thess. 2.14; the letter here is pointed out not as something special and formal, but as one of the two means by which *de facto* St. Paul communicated his doctrine to the Thessalonians).

*Thirdly*, the New Testament Scripture does not bear the character of an official compendium of doctrines and laws, authoritatively given to the faithful, but it shows only a limited, or secondary, or occasional character. It is a collection of historical narratives on the life of Christ and on the acts of the apostles, of pastoral and instructional letters, and of future apocalyptic events, written unevenly by few of the apostles (Matthew, author of one gospel; John, author of another gos-

pel, three short epistles and the Apocalypse; James and Jude, each author of one epistle; Peter, author of two epistles; Paul, author of most of the epistles). If the apostles had intended to leave after them the Scripture to succeed their preaching as the sole norm of faith, all of them would have cooperated, at least through a common consultation, to its drafting and they would have written it in clear and orderly manner, in the form of a code of doctrines and laws for the Church, as was done by Moses in the Old Testament for the synagogue.

Fourthly, even after the Holy Scripture, or part of it, had been written, the apostles kept appealing to the authority of their preaching; only once or twice they mentioned occasionally the authority of one or another writing of the New Testament; thus St. Peter, 2nd ep. 3.15 f., mentions the authority of the epistles of St. Paul, and John in the Apoc. 1.11; 22.7, 9, 19, 18 f., testifies to the prophetic character of his own book; St. Paul himself in his second epistle to the Thessalonians refers to his first epistle merely as to one of the two means by which he had exposed his doctrine to them (see above).

If we compare this integral Tradition with Scripture, it is manifest that it is an older, ampler and more independent deposit of revelation. It is older than Scripture, because the preaching of the revealed truth had been steadily going on for about twenty years before the oldest writings of the Holy Scripture (the two epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians) came out.<sup>19</sup> It is ampler than Scripture, first because it includes Scripture itself, which is a written Tradition and then because it contains some truths and customs which were not

<sup>19</sup> Christ preached his gospel for about two years before his death, which took place in the year 30 of our era, and he continued to instruct the apostles for forty days after the resurrection. The apostles after the Pentecost kept on preaching for about twenty years before the first writings of the Holy Scripture, namely, the two epistles of St. Paul to the Thessalonians, were issued (about 50-51; a first gospel of St. Matthew, suppositively written in Aramaic between 40 and 50, is lost and is not part of the actual canon of Scripture). The three Synoptic Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles were written between the year 62 and the year 70; the Apocalypse about the year 95; and St. John's gospel between 90 and 100.

consigned or sufficiently expressed in Scripture (see below). It is a more independent and self-sufficient deposit, because it does not depend on Scripture for its interpretation, while Scripture depends on Tradition both for its interpretation (see above, p. 7) and for its own authority since we know only from Tradition that Scripture (at least as a whole) is inspired; besides, Scripture is not absolutely necessary for the Church, but Tradition with the Magisterium as its interpreter would have been strictly sufficient.

On the other hand Scripture enjoys a relative excellence over the unwritten Tradition, first, because it is precisely a written document, for writings are more definite and more easily preserved from alteration (according to the aphorism "Words fly, writings remain"), and secondly and especially because it is written by God himself through the inspiration of the hagiographer. Hence we understand why God provided the Church and its Magisterium with this privileged channel, so that Christ's teaching could be handed over more surely and easily, and the Magisterium itself would be helped in its examination and finding of the revealed truth by the collation of both deposits of revelation. By reason of this intimate connection and community of purpose between Scripture and unwritten Tradition, we may say with Vatican II that they make up together one single and total deposit of revelation.<sup>20</sup>

We stated above (p. 11) that Tradition can be taken in two senses, that is, as integral Tradition, which includes Scripture itself, and as partial or constitutive Tradition, which is distinct from Scripture as to its object, because it contains some doctrines and usages not sufficiently shown in Scripture. Lately some writers have denied the very existence of constitutive Tradition as regards the revealed truths (not the usages), claiming that these truths are contained totally in Scripture and totally in Tradition, and hence there is no constitutive but only declarative Tradition, which only explains and declares what is already sufficiently contained in Scripture.<sup>21</sup> This

<sup>20</sup> Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, no. 9 f.

<sup>21</sup> This opinion which gave rise to a sharp controversy, was proposed for the first time, at least explicitly and definitely, in 1956 by J. R. Geiselmann, "Das Missverständnis über das Verhältnis von

opinion was simply rejected and severely criticized by other theologians of the traditional type, as being opposed to the declarations of Trent and Vatican I (see above p. 12).<sup>22</sup> However, other authors have tried to follow a middle opinion, saying that all the revealed truths are in some way truly contained in Scripture, but only as to their substance, or virtually, or implicitly, or not simply, so that Tradition accidentally and truly completes Scripture.<sup>23</sup>

Discarding the particular features of this debate, there are four things which seem to be admitted by everyone. First, several matters concerning discipline (morals and usages) of divine origin and connected with revealed truths (for instance infant Baptism) are found in Tradition and not sufficiently in Scripture; hence there is a *constitutive Tradition* regarding these. Secondly, the canonicity and inspiration of Scripture as a whole is known only through Tradition and not through Scripture itself (see above p. 14); hence there is also a *constitutive Tradition* regarding this important truth. Thirdly, the knowledge of several truths, as derived from Scripture, is not certain unless it is completed by the data of Tradition;

Schrift und Tradition und seine Ueberwindung in der katholischen Theologie," *Una Sancta* 11 (1956) 131-150; *Die Heilige Schrift und die Tradition* ("Quaestiones disputatae" 18), Freiburg-Basel-Wien 1962. He was followed by several other writers, particularly by G. H. Tavard, *Holy Writ or Holy Church. The Crisis of the Protestant Reformation*, London 1959; cf. his two articles in *Theological Studies* (1962) 337-405; (1963) 278-290, and H. Holstein, "La Tradition d'après le concile de Trente," *Recherches de science religieuse* (1959) 367-390; *La Tradition dans l'Eglise*, Paris, 1960.

<sup>22</sup> Thus H. Lennerz (who was the first to attack Geiselmann), "Scriptura sola?," *Gregorianum* 40 (1959) 39-53; "Sine apostolitiones," *ibid.* 42 (1961) 517-522; C. Boyer, "Traditions apostoliques non écrites," *Doctor Communis* 15 (1962) 5-21; cf. *ibid.* 16 (1963) 51-57; 17 (1964) 5-19; B. Xiberta, *La Tradición y su problemática actual*, Barcelona 1964; several among the writers in the collective works *Schrift und Tradition*, Essen 1962, and *De Scriptura et Traditione*, Roma 1963, edited on the occasion of this controversy and of the opening of Vatican Council II.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, among others, J. Beumer in the collective work *De Scriptura et Traditione* (Roma 1963) 17-40, and Y. M.-J. Congar, in *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 48 (1964) 645-657.

hence there is a *completive Tradition* in this regard. Fourthly, the knowledge of other truths derived from Scripture is further illustrated and confirmed by Tradition; and hence there is a *declarative Tradition*. These are the four ways in which Tradition truly completes and perfects Scripture.<sup>24</sup>

But, furthermore, it seems to us that the *constitutive Tradition* must be enlarged with regard to several other truths, which can hardly be said to be sufficiently expressed or indicated in Scripture, even implicitly, so as to be necessarily drawn from other truths, explicitly related in it. Such are, for instance, the validity of Baptism administered by a heretic or a pagan, which St. Augustine claims from Tradition alone (*On Baptism* 5.23); the necessity of Baptism for infants, or their inclusion in John 3.5, which the Council of Trent refers to the "tradition of the apostles" (sess. 5, can. 4, Denz. 1514); the non-necessity of Communion for infants, or their non-inclusion in John 6.53, according to the same Council (sess. 21, chap. 4, Denz. 1730); the sevenfold number of the sacraments;

<sup>24</sup> These are also the conclusions briefly indicated by Vatican II (Dogm. Constit. on Divine Revelation, no. 8 f.). The Council teaches: "Through Tradition the complete canon of the Sacred Books comes to be known by the Church"; "through Tradition the Sacred Writings are more fully understood and become unceasingly active"; "Tradition transmits integrally the word of God to the successors of the apostles [that is, to the Magisterium], so that through their preaching they may faithfully preserve, explain, and spread it"; "The Church draws its certitude about all the revealed things not from the Sacred Scripture alone."

The Council, therefore, attributes four things to Tradition, namely, the knowledge of the canonical books, a fuller understanding of what is contained in Scripture, the transmission of the entire revelation, and the certitude about all the revealed truths. The first two things are attributed to Tradition alone, as distinct from Scripture; of which the very first shows a constitutive Tradition, the second a completive, or at least a declarative, Tradition.

In one passage the Council says that "the apostolic preaching is expressed in a special manner in the inspired books." This refers both to the character and force of the charism of inspiration, and to the fullness of particular facts and circumstances about Christ's life and the apostolic ministry, known through the Gospels and the Acts.

the cult of images, which St. John Damascene refers to Tradition (*On the Orthodox Faith* 4.16); the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, truths which were developed only in later Tradition through the sense of the faithful.

However, we can say that these and all the other revealed truths are found also in Scripture in some way, inasmuch as one can always find in Scripture itself *some seed or foundation* from which they can be derived by means of the data of Tradition. Thus we can understand better how Scripture and Tradition complete each other and make up, as it were, one single deposit of revelation having two modes of expression, interrelated and necessary for the full knowledge of a revealed truth. This seems to be the mind of the Vatican Council II, when it prefers to speak of "one deposit of revelation," as well as of Pius XII himself who, defining the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin, declares: "All these arguments and considerations of the Holy Fathers and theologians are based on the Sacred Writings as their ultimate foundation" (Denz. 3900).

c. *Discernibility of Tradition.*

There are two ways, or criteria, through which we can find out for certain whether a doctrine or practice belongs to Tradition.

The *first* and primary criterion is *the declaration of the Magisterium*, especially the infallible and solemn. Hence, if the Magisterium explicitly declares that a doctrine is found in Tradition, it is certainly so; if the Magisterium merely defines or teaches a doctrine, such a doctrine is necessarily found in the deposit of revelation, and hence either in Scripture or Tradition or both.

The *second* criterion (open both to the theologian and to the Magisterium itself which, before defining a truth must inquire whether it is really contained in the deposit of revelation) is the examination of the various means through which the objective Tradition is transmitted, or in which the active Tradition consists (see above p. 11). This criterion is generically expressed in the famous statement of *Vincent of Lerins* (+before 450): "In the Catholic Church great care must be taken that

*we hold what has been believed everywhere, always, and by all*" (*Commonitorium primum*, chap. 2); this is to say, that a doctrine which *de facto* is universally believed, belongs to Tradition. This universality of belief can be ascertained especially in two ways, namely through the doctrine of the Fathers and through the common sense of the faithful. Hence if the Fathers commonly teach, as a truth of faith, a doctrine not sufficiently contained in Scripture, such a doctrine has surely been transmitted or developed by Tradition; likewise, if a doctrine, whose origin cannot be ascertained through the Fathers or the Councils, is nevertheless commonly believed in the Church, it certainly comes down from Tradition.

2. *The probative value of Tradition, as a theological place.*

This value can be expressed with the following *six norms*.

*First norm.* Since Tradition is a true and primary deposit of revelation, it is consequently a *proper, primary and independent theological place*, from which a theologian can confidently proceed in his investigation. It is a primary place even with respect to Scripture, in the sense explained above (p. 14). It is simply independent from Scripture, even for its interpretation, it is also independent from the Magisterium, not as to its interpretation (for the Magisterium interprets both Scripture and Tradition), but as to its probative force, as explained above with regard to Scripture (p. 6).

*Second norm.* In interpreting the sense of Tradition, the first and supreme rule is the *authentic declaration of the Magisterium*, as we stated also for Scripture (p. 7). However, this does not dispense a theologian from inquiring directly into the various means by which Tradition is handed over (see above p. 11), in order to clarify the truth of the magisterial declaration and to complete his own theological knowledge.

*Third norm.* A theological argument or investigation can be based on any of the means by which Tradition is handed over, as the Magisterium, the Fathers, liturgy, etc.; but it will be more effective, if it is *based on several at once*, in the manner of a synthesis, showing how a truth flows from the original source through the various channels and branches of the same Tradition.

*Fourth norm.* Among these means, the doctrine of the Fathers has a particular value and a greater force in any argument drawn from Tradition, because it is scientifically the surest and easiest way to find the truth; this is the reason why the argument from Tradition is often called "argument from the Fathers" and is confined mainly to their doctrine.<sup>25</sup> In the making of such an argument, the texts should be critically and certainly established, the doctrine should be carefully evaluated, to make sure that the Fathers speak of a doctrine about faith or morals and propose it positively (not merely opinatively) as something to be held with faith, and finally the morally unanimous agreement of the Fathers on such a doctrine should be established.<sup>26</sup>

*Fifth norm.* Since a particular truth can be contained in Tradition only implicitly and later become explicit through legitimate and logical progress in the Christian mind and conscience (see below p. 49), the argument of Tradition for such a truth consists precisely in showing how it was implicitly con-

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<sup>25</sup> We are dealing here with the Fathers only as witnesses of Tradition or as part of it. Further below (pp. 24-27) we shall consider them as private doctors having a personal and fallible authority and we will also explain the proper concept and meaning of the title "Father of the Church."

<sup>26</sup> In order to have a morally unanimous agreement, it is sufficient that all the Fathers of one age agree; for, Tradition being one and immutable, one age cannot disagree with another. It is also sufficient that all the Fathers of one large part of the Church, for instance the Western or the Eastern regions, agree, while the other part does not positively disagree; for, the Church being one in faith, it is impossible that a large part of it disagrees with the other about the same faith. Likewise, it is sufficient that several outstanding Fathers, in various principal churches and in various places and times, agree; for, it is impossible that a large and important part of the Church be lacking in faith. It may also happen that the doctrine of very few Fathers, or even of one single Father, be sufficient, as expressing the tacit agreement of the others, if those Fathers or that Father have been recognized (particularly by the Magisterium) as doctors or defenders of the common faith in a particular circumstance or with regard to a particular dogma, as is the case of St. Athanasius in the question of Incarnation against Arianism, and of St. Augustine in the question of grace against Pelagianism.

tained in another explicit truth since the beginning and how afterwards it progressed step by step from implicit to explicit. Thus, for the truth of the Immaculate Conception, the logical and historical steps of its progress were: the fullness of grace in Mary (the biblical "Hail, full of grace"), the comparison with the purity of Eve before the original sin (several Fathers), the greatest sanctity after that of Christ as was fitting divine maternity (Fathers and theologians, particularly S. Thomas), finally privileged immunity from original sin in conception (definition of the Magisterium).

*Sixth norm.* When the preceding direct ways of determining a traditional truth fail or are less efficacious (by reason of the lack of documents or the multiplicity of elements necessary to show the continuity of a doctrine with the apostolic times), the theologian may have recourse to the so-called *argument of prescription*, which, although indirect, is likewise based on Tradition.<sup>27</sup>

This argument can take a negative or a positive form. Its *negative form* amounts to this: The Church, in some determined age and for a long time before, has peacefully taught a doctrine as being of apostolic origin (for instance the doctrine of the seven sacraments, held explicitly from the 12th to the 16th centuries, when the Protestants attacked it). But adversaries cannot prove the non-apostolic origin of such doctrine, or assign the author, time, place, manner, by which it would have arisen in some subsequent age. Therefore, they have no right to attack the apostolic origin of such doctrine and the Church has the title of prescription of such doctrine, that is, the right of not being disturbed in its profession.

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<sup>27</sup> This argument was sagaciously introduced and effectively used first by Tertullian in his work *On the Prescription of Heretics* (about the year 200), who transferred analogically the concept of prescription from its proper juridical object to the apologetico-theological field. Its basic principle is: "The possessor has the juridical advantage" ("Melior est conditio possidentis"); which means that no one can be disturbed in his peaceful and continued possession of something, until certain documents are brought forward to prove that he has no right on such thing. Cf. P. De Labriolle "L'argument de prescription," *Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuse* (1906) 408-429, 497-514.

Its positive and stronger form, which goes beyond the mere concept of prescription by showing the exclusion of possible causes of a post-apostolic origin of some doctrine, runs as follows: If a doctrine, which is considered apostolic, would have been introduced in some later time, this would have happened in two ways, namely, either by a common conspiracy of deception, or by a general relaxation, carelessness, and inadvertence, through which an error would have been slowly introduced. Now, both ways are excluded, in view of the diversity of places and persons, and especially of the zeal of many faithful and pastors in guarding the deposit of faith. Therefore, such a doctrine is truly of apostolic origin and pertains to Tradition.

Note 1. On the sense of the faithful, as a theological place.<sup>28</sup>

We stated above (p. 19) that one of the ways of discerning Tradition, or knowing whether a particular doctrine belongs to Tradition, is to consult the common sense of the faithful. This common sense can be considered as one of the means by which Tradition is handed over, or rather it is an outstanding witness to Tradition.

The importance of this witness lies in its infallibility, usually called passive infallibility (with respect to the active infallibility of the Magisterium, which has a great influence on it); however it likewise has its own true active character as being also under the direct influence of the Holy Spirit. This infallibility is based on the assistance of the Holy Spirit promised by Christ to the Church as a whole, even abstracting from the Magisterium (cf. John 14.16; 17.20-22; 1 Tim. 3.14, where the entire Church is called "the pillar and the mainstay of the truth"). It is shown also by the following considerations. The purpose of the infallible Magisterium, which is to direct and strengthen the faith of the Christian people (cf. Matt. 16.18; 28.18-20), would be frustrated if the people would ever

<sup>28</sup> Cf. F. Marin-Sola, *L'évolution homogène du dogme catholique* (Fribourg, Suisse 1924) 353-392; C. Balic, "Il senso cristiano e il progresso del dogma," *Gregorianum* 33 (1952) 106-134; W. M. Thompson, "Sensus fidelium and Infallibility," *American Ecclesiastical Review* 167 (1973) 450-486.

err in matters of faith. The Fathers in their controversies with heretics, and the Magisterium itself in its definitions, appeal to the common sense of the faithful; thus Pius IX before defining the Immaculate Conception inquired of the bishops throughout the world "what was the piety and devotion of their faithful toward the Immaculate Conception of the Mother of God;" moreover the Vatican Council II explicitly declared the infallibility of the Christian people, as a property of the prophetic office of the Church in which they share.<sup>29</sup>

Reason itself illustrates this truth by an analogical comparison with that kind of natural infallibility, resting on intuition, which is found in the so-called common sense. For, just as this natural sense spontaneously springs up from common natural reason, on the basis of evident general principles, and becomes an acknowledged criterion manifesting natural truth, so the common agreement of the faithful about some supernatural truth can not but spring connaturally from their common faith, infused and moved in their hearts by the Holy Spirit.<sup>30</sup>

The principal means of discerning this sense of the faithful are Christian literature, the practice of prayer and devotions, popular preaching, and the monuments of Christian art itself (architectural, sculptural, pictorial).

By reason of its infallibility, this Christian sense, besides being a witness or sign of Tradition, can be taken also as a distinct theological place, having by itself the force of a principle of theological argumentation. However, it must be used

<sup>29</sup> "The holy People of God shares also in the prophetic office of Christ, by spreading a living testimony to Him especially by a life of faith and charity and by offering to God a sacrifice of praise, the fruit of lips praising His name (cf. Heb. 13.15). The whole body of the faithful, anointed as it is by the Holy One (cf. John 2.20 and 27), cannot be deceived in his belief. It manifests this property by means of the supernatural sense of faith of the whole people, when, 'from the Bishops down to the lowest member of the laity' [St. Augustine, *On the Predestination of Saints* 14.27] it shows a universal agreement in matters of faith and morals" (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, no. 12).

<sup>30</sup> Cf. Marin-Sola, *op. cit.* 382 f.



with careful discretion, that is, only when the universal agreement of the Christian people is certain and when it is question of principal and more common truths which alone are easily brought into explicit and general knowledge, as well as into definite and common practice, just as in the order of natural truths no one would reasonably appeal to the common sense, except in those things which are of interest to all and suitable to the intelligence and judgment of all.

Note 2. On the Fathers of the Church as a theological place.<sup>31</sup>

The Fathers of the Church can be considered in two ways. First as witnesses to Tradition, as we considered them above (pp. 7, 11, 19, 20), and thus they are a primary and sure theological place, or rather they mingle with other elements into one primary theological place which is Tradition itself. Secondly, they can be considered in themselves or in their capacity and value as private doctors in the Church, and thus they represent a particular and distinct theological place, but of secondary and mere probable value, as we shall explain below, after a brief determination of the notion of Father of the Church and of the connected notions of ecclesiastical writer and of Doctor of the Church.

*Father of the Church*, as a title of traditional use, was originally connected with the concept of generating others in Christian faith, and later received its full theological meaning, according to which Father of the Church is properly defined: *He who, by reason of a particular holiness, eminent and orthodox doctrine, remote antiquity, and ecclesiastical approbation, had a connatural influence in the generation of the faithful and the propagation of the faith.*

Hence four qualities are required in a man to deserve such title. *Particular holiness* is required, by reason of the intimate connection between Christian life and Christian doctrine. *Eminent and orthodox doctrine* is required by the concept of paternity in faith, lest the petty would generate the petty and the blind would guide the blind; however, the eminence of

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Y. M.-J. Congar, "Les Saints Pères, organes privilégiés de la Tradition," *Irénikon* 35 (1962) 479-498.

doctrine is to be understood relatively to the time and other circumstances (as is, for instance, effective refutation of heresies); orthodoxy is not affected by a particular error, either secondary (as found in many Fathers) or material (as was St. Cyprian's error on rebaptism). *Remote antiquity*, or nearness to the beginnings of the Church, is required that one may be considered as generating and bringing to maturity the adolescent Church; this condition applies strictly to the first five centuries, (up to and including St. Gregory the Great +604), but theologians commonly extend the patristic age to the eighth century, more exactly up to St. Isidore of Seville (+636) in the West and to St. John Damascene (+about 749) in the East. *Ecclesiastical approbation* is required because only the Magisterium is qualified to judge on the orthodoxy of a writer; this approbation is given either in general, inasmuch as Councils and Roman Pontiffs in their acts refer generically to the authority of the Fathers, or in particular, and again either implicitly, if the works of a writer are publicly used in the acts of the Magisterium, or explicitly, if the works of an individual writer are commended by name (thus St. Augustine's works were directly commended by Popes Celestine and Hormisdas; Saints Cyprian, Gregory Nazianzen, Basil, Athanasius, and others, were commended by Pope Gelasius; cf. Denz. 237,353) or even solemnly by the attribution of the special title "Doctor of the Church" (as Saints Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and others; see below).

*Ecclesiastical writer*, in the strict sense and as distinguished from "Father," is the one who enjoys antiquity but lacks one or another of the three remaining properties required in a Father, that is, holiness, orthodoxy, or approbation of the Church. Especially by reason of the lack of full orthodoxy, the title of Father of the Church is to be refused to some very outstanding ecclesiastical writers, such as Tertullian, Origen, and Eusebius of Cesarea.<sup>32</sup> However, in the theological argument

<sup>32</sup> The following are not strictly Fathers: some among the so-called Apologists of the second century, that is, Aristides, Athenagoras, and Tatian (this one on account of his heretical Encratism); likewise Tertullian (on account of his montanist heresy), Origen (who was condemned several times for some unorthodox opinions, such as the preexistence of souls and the universal eschatological rear-

from the Fathers or from Tradition, these and other ecclesiastical writers are included on account of the value of their remaining doctrine, in which they are at times far superior to those who are properly Fathers; such is Tertullian in apologetics, Origen in exegesis and generally in theology, and Eusebius of Caesarea in ecclesiastical history.<sup>33</sup>

*Doctor of the Church* is a special and specific title given by the Magisterium, since the end of the thirteenth century (starting from Boniface VIII in 1295). It was first given to some of the Fathers, and then also to theologians and other ecclesiastical writers, for both their holiness and their eminent doctrine, which in some particular matter or manner contributed to the building up of the faith. Up to the present time 32 have been declared doctors, 20 among the Fathers and 12 among theologians (of whom two are women, Catherine of Siena and Theresa of Avila). The first Fathers declared doctors by Boniface VIII in 1295 are the four great doctors of the West: Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, and Gregory the Great; much later Pius V in 1568 gave the same title to the four great doctors of the East, Athanasius, Basil, Gregory of Nazianzus, and Chrysostom. The first theologian to receive the title was St. Thomas Aquinas (by Pius V in 1567) and the second was St. Bonaventure (by Sixtus V in 1588).<sup>34</sup>

rangement of the fate of men), Arnobius, Lactantius, Eusebius of Caesarea (who was not sufficiently exempt from Arianism), Rufinus of Aquilea (who indirectly favored Origenism), Theodoret of Cyrus and Theodore of Mopsuesta (for their connection with Nestorianism).

<sup>33</sup> Often in the same argument are included also some of the outstanding writers of the late patristic or medieval age, particularly Bede (+735), Anselm of Canterbury (+1109), and Bernard of Clairvaux (+1153).

<sup>34</sup> The other doctors among the Fathers, besides the eight just mentioned, are: Anselm of Canterbury (declared doctor in 1720), Isidore of Seville (1722), Peter Chrysologus (1729), Leo the Great (1754), Peter Damian (1828), Bernard of Clairvaux (1830), Hilary of Poitiers (1851), Cyril of Alexandria (1882), Cyril of Jerusalem (1882), John Damascene (1890), Bede (1899), Ephraem (1920).

The other doctors among theologians, besides St. Thomas and St. Bonaventure, are: St. Alphonsus Liguori (1871), St. Francis de Sales (1877), St. Peter Canisius (1925), St. John of the Cross (1926), St.

*The Fathers* (and proportionally also the other ecclesiastical writers), not as witnesses to Tradition (see above, p. 20) but as *private doctors*, that is, when they do not propose a doctrine as to be held by faith or do not unanimously agree on such a doctrine, make up a *proper and distinct theological place, but only secondary and probable*, on which therefore a theologian can base only a probable argumentation.

However, these probable patristic arguments are not to be discarded or undervalued, for these writers greatly contributed to the increase and evolution of theological science, as is evident particularly of so many secondary doctrines of St. Augustine, which gave to medieval theologians the opportunity of inquiring further into various theological truths, some of which (as that on the sacramental character) reached later on the maturity of a dogma defined by the Magisterium. Naturally the force of probability in such arguments grows according to the number of Fathers who can be brought forward (short of universal agreement), to their greater nearness to the apostolic age, and to the greater authority of one or another individual Father, based on a superior intelligence, or a particular inquiry into the subject matter, or a special approbation of the Church (such is the theological authority of St. Augustine above all the other Fathers, even of the Eastern Church).

Note 3. *On the theologians as a theological place.*<sup>35</sup>

Like the Fathers, theologians can be considered in two ways. First, as witnesses to Tradition; thus all that has been said above about the Fathers (p. 20) applies proportionally to them, although in a much lesser degree of importance and authority.

Robert Bellarmine (1931), St. Albert the Great (1932), St. Anthony of Padua (1946), St. Lawrence of Brindisi (1959), Ste. Theresa of Avila (1970), Ste. Catherine of Siena (1970). Regarding these last two Doctors, first among women to be honored by the Church with such title, see *Civiltà Cattolica* 121 (1970), vol. 3, pp. 458-468; vol. 4, pp. 18-30; *Claretianum* 12 (1972) 257-289.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. H. Lamiroy, "De auctoritate theologorum," *Collationes Brugenses* 24 (1924) 66-69; H. Van Laak, *Theses quaedam de Patrum et theologorum magisterio necnon de fidelium sensu* (Roma 1933) 33-49.

Secondly, they can be considered as *private doctors*, and in this respect they are like the Fathers, but at a lower level, a distinct theological place of secondary and mere probable value.

Theologians by definition are *Catholic men, who after the closing of the patristic age have taught or teach sacred science, either by word in the schools or (and especially) by writings, with an eminently orthodox doctrine and under the approbation of the Magisterium.*

Among the four properties required in the Fathers (see above p.24), only two are required in a theologian, that is, no antiquity and no official holiness, but eminent orthodox doctrine and the approbation of the Magisterium.<sup>36</sup>

The *doctrine* must be strictly theological, although auxiliary sciences are not excluded by reason of their intimate connection with theology. It can be also a doctrine proposed only by words (as in teaching or preaching), although it is usually given or accompanied by writings. It must be eminent; for not everyone who dabbles with theology, or even teaches theology, or achieves the academic degree of doctor in theology, is properly a theologian, but only he who produces valuable theological writings, according to the common estimation, or spends a long and successful teaching career. It must be orthodox, essentially and as a whole, notwithstanding a possible secondary or material error, as we said in regard to the Fathers themselves (p.25). The *approbation of the Church* must be at least general and implicit, that is, contained in the very fact that the words or the writings of a doctor are allowed by the vigilant Magisterium to be used in preaching, instruction of the faithful, and in the program of schools. However, also an explicit approbation has often been given to theologians by the Magisterium, either in general or in particular (as in the case of St. Thomas), and moreover some of them (twelve up to the present time, as shown above, p. 26) have been also given the

<sup>36</sup> Hence strictly speaking all the ecclesiastical writers from the eighth century on, including St. Bede (+735), St. Anselm (+1109), and St. Bernard (+1153), are theologians, although in a stricter or more common sense, only the scientific writers from the twelfth century on are called "theologians."

official title of Doctor of the Church (first in time St. Thomas himself).<sup>37</sup>

Theologians, considered not as witnesses to Tradition, but as *private doctors*, that is, when they do not propose a doctrine as of faith or do not unanimously agree on such doctrine, constitute, like the Fathers themselves, although on a lower level, a *proper and distinct theological place, but only secondary and probable*, whose force is greater or lesser according to the authority and the number of the defenders of a doctrine. Such theologically probable doctrines should not be undervalued, for they often carry the seed of a future certain doctrine, which will finally gather the general agreement and pave the way to a solemn declaration of the Magisterium; at any rate, they are always useful for a deeper understanding of the revealed truths.

As regards the solid probability of a theological opinion, and hence its conformity with the teaching of the Magisterium, it is not sufficient that such an opinion be held by one or a few theologians, unless it is a question of a theologian especially commended by the Magisterium, particularly under the title of Doctor of the Church (such as St. Thomas), or of a few commonly recognized as weighty authorities in their field. Hence Alexander VII condemned the following laxist proposition: "An opinion, expressed in the book of a younger or modern

<sup>37</sup> Among others, the following are certain and outstanding theologians: The twelve Doctors of the Church, mentioned above (among whom two women); the leaders of the better known theological schools, as St. Thomas, Scotus, Suárez; their principal predecessors and followers, as Peter Lombard, Alexander of Hales, Albert the Great, Bonaventure, Capreolus, Cajetan, Ferrariensis, Victoria, Cano, Toletus, Vásquez, Molina, Bellarmine, John of St. Thomas, St. Alphonsus Liguori, and many others up to our present time, in a special manner the authors of works used as manual or reference books in theological schools, for the instruction and formation of future apostolic preachers.

Heretical and schismatic writers, as well as those whose doctrine has been censured by the Magisterium (as Catholic Semirationalists and Semimodernists), however learned they may be in auxiliary sciences or disciplines, are not theologians, for lack of orthodox doctrine.

author, should be considered as probable, as long as it is not evident that it has been rejected as improbable by the Apostolic See" (Denz. 2047).<sup>38</sup>

Thomas Aquinas, among and above all other theologians, may be considered as a particular and distinct theological place, having a stronger probable value for a sound and sure theological investigation.<sup>39</sup> This is based on a very special commendation of his works and doctrines by the Magisterium, beyond the title of Doctor of the Church, given also to several other theologians. The Magisterium, in fact, besides continuously praising and commending his doctrines through centuries since the very day of his canonization by John XXII

<sup>38</sup> This is more than a warning to that kind of theological laxism or immoderate freedom, claimed for probable opinions in the present time. Some recent writers have even gone so far as to claim for the theologians a kind of Magisterium in the Church, practically equal or at least parallel to that of the Hierarchy, based on an alleged true magisterial office which would pertain to the entire Church. Thus we read in the work *Dissent In and For the Church* (by Charles E. Curran, Robert E. Hunt, and others, New York 1969, p. 86 f.): "In the face of this trend toward establishing an exclusive teaching prerogative in the hierarchy, recent historical studies have exercised a modifying influence by pointing out the presence of error in past papal and episcopal teaching and the correction of error by way of theological dissent. Dissent thus appears traditionally as one possible, responsible option in the theological task, and, in its own way, is an intrinsic element in the total magisterial function of the Church. The entire Church, as truly magistral, can never be contained simply and exclusively in what has become known as the hierarchical magisterium." See the right evaluation and criticism of this book made by J. F. Costanzo, "Academic Dissent: an Original Ecclesiology," *Thomist* 34 (1970) 636-653.

<sup>39</sup> Cf. I. B. Raus, "L'enseignement de la doctrine de saint Thomas considérée dans ses rapports avec le Code et les écoles théologiques," *Nouvelle revue théologique* 52 (1925) 261-291, 358-380; H. Dieckmann, "De auctoritate theologica S. Thomae Aquinatis," *Scholastik* (1926) 567 ff.; R. Villeneuve, "Ite ad Thomam," *Angelicum* 13 (1936) 3-23; I. M. Ramirez, *De auctoritate doctrinali S. Thomae Aquinatis, Salmanticae* 1952; "The Authority of St. Thomas," *Thomist* 15 (1952) 1-100; A. D. Lee, "Thomism and the Council," *Vatican II: the Theological Dimension* (collective work, The Thomist Press 1963) 451-492.

(July 18, 1323), has recently proclaimed him "Prince and Master of all scholastic doctors" (Leo XIII, Encycl. "Aeterni Patris"), "Particular support and glory of the Catholic Church" (*ibid.*), "Leader of Studies" (Pius XI, Encycl. "Studiorum ducem"), "Common or universal Doctor of the Church . . . whose doctrine the Church has made its own" (*ibid.*), the one who occupies "the main place" among Catholic doctors (Paul VI, Allocution given at the Gregorian University, Sept. 10, 195).<sup>40</sup> Besides, the Magisterium has insistently and strongly declared that theological studies should be made according to the doctrine of St. Thomas. His *Summa Theologiae* was prescribed as a text for the Italian Seminaries by Pius X (*Motu Proprio* "Sacrorum antistitum") and by Benedict XV in 1920, and for Germany by this same Pope in 1921. Under the same Pontiff the Code of Canon Law proposed St. Thomas' teaching in seminaries under the form of a law: "Professors shall handle the studies and the instruction of their students according to the method, the doctrine, and the principles of the Angelic Doctor and keep these religiously" (can. 1366, §2). Pius XII in his Encycl. "Humani generis" urged the application of this canonical law. Vatican II declared that the study of speculative theology in the seminaries should be made "under the guidance of St. Thomas" (Decree on Priestly Formation, no. 16) and in Catholic schools, particularly in Universities and faculties, modern questions and investigations should be made "following in the footsteps of the Doctors of the Church, above all of St. Thomas Aquinas" (Declaration on Christian Education, no. 10).

As long as the aforementioned law remains in the Code, there is an obligation for professors of theology to follow the teaching of St. Thomas in its main principles and conclusions, or as a doctrinal body, although the weight of this obligation is judged more or less strictly or lightly by various theo-

<sup>40</sup> The three special names given to S. Thomas are: "Angelic Doctor" (used since the 15th century, repeated by Pius V and later commonly by the theologians and the Magisterium), "Eucharistic Doctor" (used in the 17th century, at least by the Salmanticenses in their treatise on the Eucharist, and repeated by Pius XI), and "Common Doctor" (first and pointedly introduced by Pius XI).

gians. However, no faithful or prudent son of the Church, nor any docile hearer of its Magisterium, can conscientiously overlook the fact that the Church has made the doctrine of St. Thomas its own doctrine and the Magisterium has been insistently urging the theologians to follow it, for the good of the Church and for their own good.

### III

## The Magisterium, Organ of Revelation<sup>41</sup>

### 1. *The nature of the Magisterium.*

This matter is to be examined more distinctly in the treatise on the Church, as in its proper place. Here we briefly gather a few general and essential notions, which are necessary to establish the other and principal point of this question, namely the value and use of the Magisterium as a theological place, or base of theological investigation.

*Magisterium* is defined as the right and the duty of teaching authoritatively the revealed truth, to which on the part of the faithful corresponds the obligation of accepting the proposed doctrine with submission of heart and mind.

It is *divided* into ordinary Magisterium and extraordinary or solemn Magisterium.

The *ordinary Magisterium* is that which is exercised in a

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<sup>41</sup> Cf. Baumgartner, Dejaifve, and Van den Eynde, cited above, on p. 10; M. Caudron, "Magistère ordinaire et infaillibilité pontificale d'après la Constitution Dei Filius [de Vatican I]," *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 36 (1960) 393-431; A. Piolanti, "Il magistero della Chiesa e la scienza teologica," *Divinitas* 5 (1961) 531-551; L. Ciappi, "Il magistero della Chiesa nel pensiero di S. S. Pio XII," *ibid.* 552-580; P. Nau, "Le magistère pontifical ordinaire au premier Concile du Vatican," *Revue thomiste* 62 (1962) 341-397; *Mysterium salutis. Dogmatique de l'histoire du salut* (trans. from the German), I/3: *L'Eglise et la transmission de la révélation*, Paris 1969.

common manner by the pastors of the Church (Pope and bishops) or under their direction, by means of ordinary papal documents or allocutions, documents of the Roman Curia, pastoral letters and allocutions of local bishops, preaching of priests, writings of Fathers and theologians, scholarly teaching and catechetical instructions. It can be either infallible or noninfallible.

The *extraordinary* Magisterium consists in a formal, explicit and solemn declaration, made only by the supreme authority in the Church, namely, the Roman Pontiff or an Ecumenical Council. Depending on the will of this authority and on the mode or formula of the declaration, it can be either infallible (as are the definitions of Vatican I) or noninfallible (as are the Constitutions, Decrees, and Declarations of Vatican II).

The Magisterium, both extraordinary and ordinary, is the *organ of revelation*, that is, the channel through which revelation comes to us from the deposit of Scripture and Tradition. When it proposes with infallibility a revealed truth, it becomes also the *proximate rule of faith*, that is, the norm determining for us the object to be believed, while Scripture and Tradition remain the remote rule of faith; in other words, what we believe and we have to believe is not simply the word of God contained in Scripture and Tradition, but that same word as determinately and authoritatively proposed to us by the infallible act of the Magisterium.<sup>42</sup> By being the organ of revelation contained in Tradition, the Magisterium becomes also part of the active Tradition, that is, one of the principal means by which the objective Tradition is transmitted, as we noted above (pp.11,18).

## 2. The probative value of the Magisterium, as a theological place.

This value can be expressed by the following three norms.

<sup>42</sup> *Vatican I*: "By divine and Catholic faith, all those things must be believed which are contained in the written or transmitted Word of God and are proposed by the Church, either through a solemn pronouncement or through the ordinary and universal Magisterium, to be believed as revealed truths" (sess. 3, chap. 3, Denz. 3011).

*First norm.* Since the Magisterium is the organ of revelation and the proximate rule of faith, on which depend the interpretation and the presentation of Scripture and Tradition, it is a *proper, primary, independent, proximate and most efficacious theological place*, or basis of theological investigation. It is true that the Magisterium, being only an organ and a guardian and not a deposit of revelation, depends on Scripture and Tradition, as the object to be guarded and interpreted (see above, pp. 6, 15), but *subjectively on our part*, and hence for theological investigation, *it is the first theological place*, since Scripture and Tradition depend on it for the right interpretation of their sense (see above pp. 6, 7, 18, 19).

*Second norm.* The *ordinary Magisterium* has the same theological value as the extraordinary; it is even in itself more valuable, inasmuch as it consists in the ordinary and connatural proposition and explanation of the entire deposit of revelation, while the extraordinary Magisterium has a provisional character and a particular objective, namely, that of solemnly proclaiming a particular truth or condemning a particular error.

However, on our part and for theological investigation, the extraordinary Magisterium is much more efficacious, because it has a well-determined subject (the Pope and the Council) and it manifests itself in well-definite formulas, while the ordinary Magisterium is made up of numerous and different elements, expressing themselves in various and indefinite forms. Hence it is more difficult to ascertain and to determine. This is evident as regards those truths that are only implicitly contained in the deposit of revelation and gradually are brought into explicit knowledge (such as the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption); but also those truths which, being explicit and fundamental (as the divinity of Christ, the hypostatic union, and the mystery of the Trinity), were proposed since the beginning by the ordinary Magisterium, have received a more definite and theologically more valuable formulation by the extraordinary Magisterium.

*Third norm.* Before using a declaration of the extraordinary Magisterium for a theological argumentation or investigation, it is necessary to ascertain the degree of its force, its proper

and direct object, and the exact sense of its words or formulas.

Regarding the *degree of its force*, it has to be noted that not all the declarations of this Magisterium, however solemn, are definite pronouncements implying infallibility, but often they are simple authoritative explanations of a doctrine, preferred by the Magisterium and more common in the Church, or warnings, advices, persuasions, censures and prohibitions of opinions, condemnations of errors, without a definite and final judgment that the doctrine is to be held as an article of faith. Moreover, it is not always easy to ascertain whether a particular declaration carries the weight of infallibility. The surest signs of this are: a declaration made under the form of a profession of faith, as is the Creed of the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople I; the use of the explicit formula "We define such doctrine to be a revealed truth, or to be held by faith, or under pain of incurring heresy," as in the definitions of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption; the infliction of the note of heresy on the opposite doctrine, as is done also under the word "anathema," at least in some of the canons of Trent and Vatican I, while in other canons, especially of older Councils, this word means only excommunication, or separation from the unity of the Church.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Hence, among recent pronouncements of the Magisterium, the surest infallible definitions are the canons of Trent and Vatican I, and the two definitions of the Immaculate Conception (by Pius IX) and the Assumption (by Pius XII).

Non-infallible documents are most of the doctrinal encyclicals of Leo XIII and subsequent Popes, and the constitutions, decrees and declarations of Vatican II.

Doubtful infallible definitions, by reason of the various judgments of theologians, are some of the most important documents of recent Popes, as the encyclical "Quanta cura" by Pius IX 1864 (against Naturalism and Socialism), the Syllabus by the same 1864 (against Rationalism), the mere chapters of Vatican I (the same holds for the chapters of Trent), the epistle "Apostolicae curae" by Leo XIII 1896 (on Anglican ordinations), the encyclical "Pascendi" by Pius X 1907 (in which Modernism is condemned as "a collection of all heresies"), the encyclical "Casti connubii" by Pius XI 1930 (on Matrimony), the encyclical "Mystici Corporis" by Pius XII 1943 (on the nature of the Church), the apostolic constitution "Sacra-

From the *proper and direct object*, which alone is infallibly defined, have to be excluded the things which are casually and incidentally asserted (usually under an indirect form), the merely explanatory propositions without which the sense of the defined truth remains unchanged, and the reasons or arguments added to prove the defined truth. For the Magisterium does not intend to define incidental or accidental determinations, nor is it infallible in arguing and proving truths but only in determining them and judging on them.

In determining the *exact sense* of the words and formulas with which this proper and direct object of the definition is expressed, careful attention should be paid to two things. *First*, to the sense which those words and formulas had at the time they were used, considering the historical circumstances and the contemporary status of the sacred science and ecclesiastical terminology (for instance, at the time of Trent and Vatican I). *Second*, to the intention and the character of the Pope or the Council defining, considering especially the circumstances which provoked the definition, the acts of the Council, as well as the character and mentality of the heretics against whom the definition was issued. From the lack of such examination, it happens at times that the words of older Councils (even of Trent itself) are unduly understood according to the developed and more definite sense which they gradually acquired in more recent theological terminology.

Moreover, it is to be noted that the definitions of the Magisterium, considered in their proper object, do not necessarily express the full positive sense of a revealed truth, since they are usually brought forth to exclude some particular error, rather than to explain directly a doctrine in itself. Hence it is necessary further to compare such definitions with the deposit of revelation (Scripture and Tradition), not so much in order to prove their conformity with it, as to grasp the fuller sense of the proposed truth.

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mentum Ordinis" by the same in 1947 (on the matter and form of the Sacrament of Orders).

From the proper and direct object, which alone is infallibly defined, have to be excluded the things which are casually and incidentally asserted usually under an indirect form, the merely explanatory propositions without which the sense of the defined truth remains unchanged, and the reasons or arguments added to prove the defined truth for the Magisterium does not intend to prove the defined truth for the Magisterium, nor is it infallible in arguing and proving truth, but only in defining truth.

## Part II

### The Theological Contents Of the Channels of Revelation

In determining the exact sense of the words and formulas with which this proper and direct object of the definition is expressed, careful attention should be paid to two things. First, to the sense which those words and formulas had at the time they were used, and secondly, to the historical circumstances and the theological content of those words and formulas.

The proper contents of revelation, and hence of its channels, are either explicit truths, which can be called dogmas in a generic sense, or implicit truths, able to be drawn from the explicit truths themselves, which are called theological conclusions. Both are *theological contents* of those channels, because a theologian must necessarily deal with them in his scientific investigation, since there is nothing else in theology, as in any other science, than principles and conclusions. Hence, this second part of our dialectic and methodological treatise about the channels of revelation consists in a theological evaluation of both *dogma* (chap. 4) and *theological conclusion* (chap. 5). It is logical to add to this an explanation and determination of the so-called *theological notes* and censures, which imply a judgment about the agreement or disagreement of a proposition with the contents of revelation (chap. 6).

express the full. Hence it is necessary further to explain directly a doctrine in itself. Hence it is necessary further to compare such definitions with the deposit of revelation (Scripture and Tradition), not so much in order to prove their conformity with it, as to grasp the fuller sense of the proposed truth.

Incultum Ordinis" by the same in 1947 (on the matter and form of the Sacrament of Orders).

doctrinal decree or obligatory doctrine. With this specific sense the word was later introduced, especially by St. Augustine and Vincent of Lerins into the Latin Church and became classical in ecclesiastical literature in the 17th century.

## IV

### Dogma<sup>44</sup>

on the occasion of the Jansenist controversy, the word received also the more strict and technical sense of a doctrine of faith defined by the Church. In this sense it is used occasionally in the documents of the Magisterium (Pius VI speaks of the "dogma of Transubstantiation" and Vatican I of the "dogmas proposed by the Church," and of the infallibility of the Pope as "a divinely revealed dogma," Denz. 2828, 3043, 3073). Hence "dogma" in ecclesiastical and theological use has two senses: one general, that is any revealed truth, and one specific, that is any revealed truth which is a dogma.

#### 1. Notion of dogma.

Dogma (a Greek noun, from "dokéo"—I think, I decree) etymologically signifies either *an opinion* or *a precept*, and in this twofold sense it is used both in Scripture (Luke 2.1 and Acts 17.7: imperial decree; Acts 14.4: ceremonial laws of the O.T.; Col. 2.14: God's decree) and by the Greek Fathers, who however, gradually gave to the word the stricter sense of a

<sup>44</sup> Alszeghy, Z. and Flick, M., *Lo sviluppo del dogma cattolico*, ed. 2, Brescia 1969.

Boyer, Ch., "Lo sviluppo del dogma," *Problemi e orientamenti di teologia dommatica* 1 (Milano 1957) 359-380.

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Marin-Sola, F., *La evolución homogénea del dogma católico*, Valencia-Madrid 1924. Second edition in French (trans. B. Cambon),

*L'évolution homogène du dogme catholique*, 2 vols., Fribourg, Suisse 1924. The best and most complete work on this subject.

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Parente, P., "La formola dommatica di fronte alla cultura in evoluzione," *Doctor Communis* 22 (1969) 89-108.



doctrinal decree or obligatory doctrine. With this specific sense the word was later introduced, especially by St. Augustine and Vincent of Lerins, into the Latin Church and became classical in ecclesiastical literature. In the 17th century, however, on the occasion of the Jansenist controversy, the word received also the more strict and technical sense of a *doctrine of faith defined by the Church*. In this sense it is used occasionally in the documents of the Magisterium (Pius VI speaks of the "dogma of Transubstantiation" and Vatican I of the "dogmas proposed by the Church" and of the infallibility of the Pope as "a divinely revealed dogma," Denz. 2629, 3043, 3073). Hence "dogma" in ecclesiastical and theological use has two senses, one general, that is, any revealed truth, the other specific, that is, a *revealed truth infallibly defined by the Magisterium as to be believed of divine faith*.

In this second sense and proper definition, dogma is made up of two elements, that is, the revealed truth, which is the direct and only object of our faith, and the definition of the Magisterium, which is not the object of our faith, but only its proximate rule, that is, the necessary condition, without which we are not obliged to believe what is found in the deposit of revelation, as far as the force of the mere deposit is concerned.<sup>45</sup>

Rahner, K., "The Development of Dogma," *Theological Investigations* (tr. C. Ernst) 1 (Baltimore 1961) 39-77.

Rondet, H., *Les dogmes changent-ils? Théologie de l'histoire du dogme*, Paris 1960; *Histoire du dogme*, Tournai-Paris, 1970.

Schultes, R. M., "Circa dogmatum homogeneam evolutionem," *Divus Thomas* (Piacenza) 2 (1925) 83-89, 554-564; "Eclaircissements sur l'évolution du dogme," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 14 (1925) 286-302.

Various authors, *Gregorianum* 33 (1952), no. 1 (It deals entirely with the progress of dogma).

Vollert, C., "Doctrinal Development," *Catholic Theological Society of America* 12 (1957) 45-74.

Walgrave, J. H., *Unfolding Revelation. Nature of Doctrinal Development*, London 1972.

<sup>45</sup> Note, however, that the Magisterium actually proposes in a general way the whole Bible to our belief, and hence we are obliged to believe whatever is clear and explicit in Scripture. But for things and truths that are not clearly shown in it, or about which some reasonable doubt may be raised, we need an additional and particular

Whatever has been revealed by God and infallibly proposed by the Magisterium becomes a dogma to be believed with supernatural faith, whether it be a supernatural truth (as the Trinity), or a natural truth (as the existence of God, which can also be known by the natural reason, but at any rate has been also revealed), or a thing to be done (moral acts), or a particular historical fact (such as all those that make up the life of Christ). For all these objects have a close connection with the principal object of revelation (Deity) and with its proper purpose (our salvation and beatific vision).

## 2. The immutability of dogma.

Dogma, once established through the revelation of God and the definition of the Magisterium, becomes *absolutely immutable*, both objectively and subjectively. It is *objectively* and essentially immutable in itself, because on the one hand God's affirmation cannot change or proved to be false, and on the other hand the Magisterium can no longer revoke its definition, since it is a mere temporary condition required for eliciting the assent of faith which is irrevocable. It is also *immutable subjectively* on the part of the faithful, who cannot change or corrupt it in their knowledge, because of the infallibility of the believing and the teaching Church under the assistance of the Holy Spirit, promised by Christ.

This absolute immutability has been explicitly declared on several occasions by the Magisterium, against *Liberal Protestants and Modernists*, denying the very objective immutability of dogma, on the basis of the subjective nature of religion, and against *Orthodox Protestants and Jansenists*, denying only the subjective immutability of dogma, on the basis of their denial of the infallibility of the Church.<sup>46</sup> *Vatican*

declaration of the infallible Magisterium in order to be obliged to believe.

<sup>46</sup> *Liberal Protestants and Modernists*, based on agnostic Rationalism (see our treatise on *Revelation*, p. 5), deny the first element of dogma, that is the *objectivity of the revealed truth*. According to them religion itself and its revelation is something merely subjective and human, that is, a sense of the conscience, which changes and develops with the evolution of the consciousness of humanity, under the influence of various circumstances and cultures. Dogma is a

Council I defined: "If anyone shall say that, in view of the progress of science, the dogmas proposed by the Church could at times be understood in a sense other than that in which the Church has understood and understands them: let him be anathema" (sess. 3, can. 3 on faith and reason, Denz. 3043; cf. chap. 4, Denz. 3020).

This immutability belongs only to dogma itself, not to its expression or *dogmatic formula*, which can vary or change as long as it does not alter or render ambiguous the concept itself, carried by the definition of the Magisterium. However, such a change depends exclusively on the Magisterium itself.<sup>47</sup>

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definite formulation, in an objective form, of this subjective religious sense, and consequently it is bound to change with it, having each time only a normative and practical value, without any objective foundation. This modernistic system is explained at length and severely censured by Pius X in the Encyclical "Pascendi" (Denz. 3477-3488).

*Orthodox Protestants* deny the second element of dogma, that is, the *infallibility of the Magisterium* in proposing the objective revealed truth, and hence they admit the possibility of at least a partial and substantial change in things believed by the faithful, under the influence of human causes and circumstances. *Jansenists* speak of the possibility of a general obscuration or darkening of fundamental truths in the Church (cf. a proposition of the Synod of Pistoia, condemned by Pius VI, Denz. 2601). A. Günther, a Catholic semirationalist, taught that the definitions of the Magisterium have only a temporary validity, and that the progress of science may demand their change (cf. his condemnation by Pius IX, Denz. 2829, and by Vatican I, Denz. 3043). A similar opinion is being spread ambiguously in recent days by the so-called "progressive theologians."

<sup>47</sup> It is evident that, in order to express the revealed truths aptly, the Magisterium in its definitions has had to use words and expressions, current in the common language and culture (even philosophical) of each time, adapting them to fit an ecclesiastical terminology. Thus the Council of Nicaea adapted the Greek word "homouosios" ("consubstantial" - "of the same nature") to signify the numerical identity of the divine nature in Christ and in the Father, although the word can signify also a merely specific identity, as between two men; likewise the Council of Trent adopted the word "Transubstantiation," already used by the scholastic theologians, to signify the eucharistic change, declaring it to be "a very apt expression."

Only the Magisterium is competent in using or changing a dog-

### 3. Development or progress of dogma.

The absolute immutability of dogma does not necessarily exclude its development or progress, with regard to the finding and understanding of its full meaning and of its virtual implications.

*The existence of the development*, understood at least in a generic and indefinite manner, is evident from the fact that Christ entrusted to the Apostles and their successors the office of transmitting the deposit of revelation, which implies necessarily some kind of development in the manner of transmission, according to different times and cultures. The Church furthermore, actually has accomplished this office in many and ever more perfect ways of explaining, interpreting and defending the original revealed truths. It is also in a more definite manner declared by the *Vatican Council I* quoting the famous statement of Vincent of Lerins (see above, p. 18 f.): "Therefore . . . let the understanding, the knowledge, and wisdom of individuals, as well as of all, of one man as well as of the whole Church, grow and greatly progress through ages and centuries, but let such progress be only of its proper kind [i.e. homogeneous], that is within the same dogma, the same sense, and the same understanding" (sess. 3, chap. 4 on faith and reason, Denz. 3020). *Vatican II* repeats the same declaration, pointing out also the two causes of this progress, namely, the

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matic formula. In future definitions, the Magisterium will, as usual, adapt its new formulas to the culture of the time, as far as such a culture will be able to be used for the right expression of the revealed truth. As regards past definitions the Magisterium has never changed any of the principal formulas once used, both because they conform also to common sense and understanding, and because they are a safeguard against alteration of doctrines. At any rate, if, for instance, the word "Transubstantiation" should come to be changed by the Magisterium, it would necessarily be replaced by a word which would mean that the nature of bread (whatever it is that makes bread to be bread and not meat or other things) is no longer existing in the Eucharist, but has been changed into the body of Christ.

*Vatican II* (Constit. "Gaudium et spes," no. 62) invites theologians to adapt their teaching to the culture of the present time, but does not give them the right to discard the defined dogmatic formulas.

teaching of the Magisterium and the experience of the faithful.<sup>48</sup>

The proper nature of this development is not so easy to understand and determine, as is evident from the different explanations given by theologians. The difficulty arises from the fact that through such development we have now arrived at believing several truths which do not seem to be sufficiently contained in the deposit of revelation, but seem rather derived through an elaborate process of natural reason, based more over on philosophical and perishable systems; such are, for instance, the sacramental character, the sevenfold number of the sacraments, transubstantiation, the sacramentality of Matrimony, the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption. To this difficulty theologians usually answer that in these and other similar cases, the development of dogma is *not objective but subjective*, that is, it consists not in an addition to a revealed object but in a further explanation and understanding of the same object; or it is also an objective progress, but only *from implicit to explicit*, that is, not again by the addition of a new object or truth, but only by rendering explicit to us an object or truth which was already implicitly contained and so believed in another object or truth which was explicitly believed in previous times. This latter and better formulation of the development of dogma is to be clarified with the following observations.

*First.* Throughout the Old Testament up to and including Christ and the Apostles, revelation developed *objectively* by

<sup>48</sup> Dogmatic Constitution on Revelation, no. 8: "This Tradition, which comes down from the apostles, progresses in the Church under the assistance of the Holy Spirit. Indeed, the understanding of the things and of the words, which have been handed over, grows either by means of the contemplation and study of the faithful, who keep and compare them in their hearts (cf. Luke 2.19,51), as well as by an intimate understanding of the spiritual things they experience, or through the pronouncements of those who have received, with the episcopal succession, the sure charism of truth. Thus the Church through succeeding centuries, moves constantly toward the fulness of divine truth, until the words of God reach their complete fulfillment in her."

*addition* of new truths, not contained, even implicitly, in the formerly revealed truths, although contained in the same reality. Hence there was a development not from reality to reality, but from one concept to another concept, really distinct from the first and not contained in it, even implicitly. Thus in the same reality of God there was a passage from the simple concept of one God to the concept of the Trinity of Persons, and in the same reality of Christ there was a passage from the concept of Messiah to the concept of God and then to the concept of Son of God. It is evident that the concept of God does not contain, even implicitly, the concept of several persons in God (otherwise we would know through natural reason the mystery of the Trinity as we know the existence of God). Likewise the concept of Messiah does not include the concept of God, nor does the concept of God include the concept of Son of God (as is clear from the person of the Holy Spirit, who is not Son of God).

*Second.* Such an objective development of dogma by addition of new truths is impossible in the Church, because *public revelation* has been completely given by Christ and the Apostles and has been *closed at the death of the last apostle* (that is, of St. John who died toward the end of the first century, as Catholic exegetes unanimously agree).<sup>49</sup> This fact, proposed

<sup>49</sup> After Christ's Ascension *public revelation continued through the apostles*, as founders of the Church, and only through them, so that whatever revelation may have been given to others of the faithful, at that time, even to the coapostolic ministers of the Word, does not belong to public revelation or to the object of our faith. But with regard to the extent of the revelation given to the apostles themselves, we know very little from Scripture. St. Paul sometimes speaks of revelations received from the Lord, but their object is something that had already been revealed by Christ and was known by the other apostles, as the mystery of the Eucharist (1 Cor. 11-23) and the Gospel in general (Gal. 1.11-24). However, *three new revelations* seem certain from Scripture, namely, the *inspiration of the books of the New Testament*, since they were written after the Ascension, the *eschatology* consigned by St. John in the Apocalypse (cf. 1.1-3), and the so-called *Pauline privilege* (1 Cor. 7.12-15), for it can hardly be said that the apostles were instructed by Christ on such things before the Ascension. It is probable that several other things were revealed to the apostles and transmitted through oral Tradition.

equivalently by the Council of Trent (sess. 4, Denz.1501) and more directly by Pius X in the Decree "Lamentabili" against Modernism (Denz.3421), has been finally explicitly declared by Vatican II saying: "No further public revelation is now to be expected before the glorious manifestation of Our Lord Jesus Christ" (Dogm. Constit. on Divine Revelation, no. 4).<sup>50</sup>

*Third.* Hence there remain only two ways by which dogma can develop in the Church. The first and simple way is a merely *subjective process*, consisting in a clearer explanation and understanding of a formally identical object which is contained in the deposit of revelation and was believed since the beginning. However, this is not a progress of dogma itself, but only of man in his knowledge of a dogma, and it explains only the succession of new and better formulas, expressing the same truth, such as the Divinity of Christ, not the rise and definition of new dogmas, which, as the Immaculate Conception, the Assumption, and the others mentioned above, seem entirely or formally different from the ones explicitly contained in the deposit. Hence there remains only one way of explaining a proper development of dogma, applicable to this sort of new dogmas, that is, *an objective process from implicit to explicit*. Such a process consists in this, that a truth, which

<sup>50</sup> *Private revelations*, which belong to an undying charism in the Church, have the same nature as public revelation and the same general purpose of helping the Church. Their object is either the same as the public revelation, that is, an explanation of the revealed truths, or *something new* by which public revelation may be accidentally extended. It does not, however, identify with public revelation and *does not become an object of faith* for others than the person to whom it is given and who is bound to believe it by the same supernatural faith, if he is certain of the revelation by a miraculous sign of God (either exterior, or interior in his mind). If the *Magisterium* approves such revelations (as in the case of St. Margaret Mary Alacoque about the Sacred Heart and of St. Bernardette at Lourdes), one is only obliged to admit their fittingness as approved by the Church, but he can also, if he chooses, believe them, along with the public revelation, with the same supernatural faith. Such revelations are also useful for the *development of dogma*.

Cf. K. Rahner, "Les révélations privées," *Revue d'ascétique et de mystique* 25 (1949) 506-514; P. De Letter, "The Meaning of Lourdes," *Clergy Monthly* 20 (1958) 3-16.

is actually contained in another and hence known and believed in another, is not yet known in itself and as to its inclusion in the other, but later on, under favorable circumstances and by means of a logical and necessary process of the mind or of a forceful intuition of the Christian sense, it comes to be known as such, passing from implicit to explicit in our knowledge and in our faith, as well as in the deposit of Tradition itself. Thus, there is no change nor addition of an entirely new truth, but the same truth, explicitly believed since the beginning or at some time, is later known under a new concept implicit in it, or according to its implicit content and virtuality. For instance, from the truth or concept of Divine Maternity Tradition passed to the truth or concept of the greatest sanctity after that of Christ (included in it as a necessary consequence) and from this concept the same Tradition later passed to the concept of exemption from original sin (included in it as a necessary effect).

*Fourth.* This implicit inclusion of one truth in another and its subsequent extraction from the other, cannot be explained but by the existence of a necessary and infallible connection between the two, by force of which, if one is posited, the other must necessarily follow. This connection can be the connection of an *essential property*, which is absolutely inseparable from the essence of a thing, as are, for instance, intrinsic extension in regard to quantity, radical possibility of dying or of sinning which always remains in man in heaven. Or this connection can be that of an *effect to its metaphysical cause*, that is, to a cause which not only has the power of producing the effect, but also contains virtually and actually the effect itself, as the spirituality of the soul contains its immortality and God's immutability contains his eternity.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>51</sup> There is of course a third way of intimate connection and inclusion, which we may call *connection of essentiality*, and which exists either between a thing defined and its definition (thus rational animal is included in man), or between the essence and its essential parts (thus the body is included in the essence of man), or between a universal thing and its particular (thus Peter is included in mankind), or between two relative things (thus the concept of son is included in the concept of father, and vice versa). However, by means of this connection, there is no real and objective development of dog-

Examples of development of dogmas, based on the connection of an *essential property*, are the following: The Nicene dogma of the numerical consubstantiality of Christ with the Father is a consequent property of his divine sonship, because by being Son he has necessarily the same nature as the Father and by being God he has necessarily the same individual nature as the Father. The dogma of the two wills in Christ, or the existence of a human will in him, defined by the Council of Constantinople III, is deduced from the truth that Christ is a true and perfect man, similar to us, whose essential property is the human will.

More numerous are the examples of development based on connection of *effect with its metaphysical cause*. The Ephesus dogma of Divine Maternity is drawn as a metaphysical effect from the concept of "Mother of Christ," coupled with the concepts of Christ's divinity and of a single person in Christ. From the fullness of grace, hailed in the gospel (or at any rate following from the Divine Maternity) are drawn both the Tridentine dogma of the privileged exclusion of venial sin in Mary and the dogma of the privilege of Immaculate Conception. Likewise the Assumption can be drawn from the Divine Maternity or from the Immaculate Conception. Transubstantiation is implicitly contained, like an effect in its cause, in the Real Presence, considered not abstractly but as concretely expressed in the words "This is my body" (other than "Here is my body"), which are not true if the bread remains, and hence they require not only the presence of Christ but also the

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ma itself, but only the aforesaid subjective progress of our knowledge, about the same truth, by way of clearer and more definite formulas, or of definite equivalent concepts, which are obtained by a mere analysis of the truth, or the so-called explanatory syllogisms, as when from Christ's divine sonship we conclude that one of the other two persons of the Holy Trinity is a Father.

To this improper and subjective progress of dogma belong the various declarations of the Magisterium which express a truth, already believed, with other clearer words or formulas (as are the various symbols of faith), or with more polished and authentic words (dogmatic formulas, of which some are more definite and particular and hence they are called more strictly dogmatic formulas, as those that are found in the later councils).

absence of the bread. The infallibility of the Pope, as successor of Peter, is implicitly contained, as an effect in its cause, in the amplitude of his primacy, explicitly revealed, because such ample primacy has been given to Peter and his successors with reference to all the things that are necessary to confirm the brethren in their faith and to be the rock or foundation on which the Church stands firmly, even in matters of faith.

The *historical mode or way* of such a development is twofold. The first is a *rational and deductive way*, by which, from a doctrine already definitely and explicitly known, another is deduced which is implicitly and necessarily contained in the former, as we have just explained. The second is an *empirical or inductive way*, consisting in this that the sense of the Christian people, by a sort of connatural intuition, perceives the necessary connection between a truth, already explicitly believed, and another, although the necessity of this connection cannot be proved in a rational and deductive way (see above, pp. 22-24).

In this second case, the common Christian sense does not create this connection between the two truths, otherwise there would be a mere pious fiction and an arbitrary invention of a dogma; but it only finds it instinctively and more easily than it would be found through a rational deductive process, which for instance, might be apparently blocked or temporarily stopped by the consideration of another dogma.

This is particularly illustrated by the case of the development of the truth of the Immaculate Conception. This truth is implicitly contained in and necessarily deduced from the fullness of grace in Mary, provided however that this fullness is understood not in any way, but in all the amplitude compatible with the dogma of the universal redemption of men through Christ. But, through a rational and deductive process, it was not clear that it should be taken in such an ample sense, which even seemed to be positively excluded by Christ's universal redemption that had to include also the Blessed Virgin; hence the majority of the great theologians in the Middle Ages (St. Thomas included) and many others afterwards were opposed to the privilege of the Immaculate Conception, until the persevering conviction of the Christian people, shown

particularly in their devotion and in their interpretation of the existing feast of the Holy Conception of Mary, obliged the theologians themselves to remove the aforementioned obstacle, apparently deriving from the truth of the universal redemption, by a rational distinction between releasing redemption, common to all men, and merely preservative redemption, proper to Mary, and thus to arrive through such a forced rational process to the point where the Christian sense had easily preceded them.

The direct causes of such a development are included in these same two ways, that is, *theological science* and the *Christian sense*; the third and principal cause is the *Magisterium* itself, as directing the other two and closing by its solemn definition the whole development of a dogma. The indirect causes, or occasions, of the development are especially three. First, the necessity of refuting *errors or heresies*, which brought along the declaration of several important dogmas, as those defined by the great Councils of the first centuries and later by the Councils of Trent and Vatican I. Second, the fittingness of settling some grave doubt or controversy among Catholic doctors, such as the controversy about rebaptizing heretics at the time of St. Cyprian, which the Magisterium resolved negatively, and the medieval controversy about the rational soul as the form of the body, settled in the affirmative by the Council of Vienne. Third, the utility of strengthening the *cult and devotion* of the people, as in the case of the Immaculate Conception and the Assumption; in this regard, also private revelations may have their influence, inasmuch as they would impel the Magisterium to examine their conformity with the truths contained in the deposit of public revelation.

The *degrees or steps* of development may be described generically as follows: there is first a period of simple faith in some explicit truth, then a period of further explanation or controversy about its proper and full meaning, finally a period of precise and definite determination and formulation, or, as the case may be, of the explicit expression of a new truth, implicitly contained in the former. A more precise and important question is that of the *continuity of the dogmatic progress*, that is, whether the knowledge of revealed truth has been always

progressing, or on the contrary there has been or could be a regress, notwithstanding the essential immutability of dogma, as explained above.

With regard to the *apostles*, it is certain that they had a better and deeper understanding (probably even infused) of the truths explicitly revealed; this agrees with their instruction received from Christ before the Ascension for forty days, with Christ's promise to send the Holy Spirit who would "teach them all things, all truths" (John 14.26; 16.3), and also with the manner of their doctrine (shown in the Acts and the Epistles, particularly of St. Paul). As for the implicitly revealed truths, which are now explicit to us, it is possible, but it does not seem probable that they knew them clearly and sufficiently (although some theologians think so, as Dorsch, Marín-Sola, Lercher-Schlagenhaufen); if they had thought, for instance, of the Immaculate Conception, transubstantiation, the sacramentality of Matrimony, the sacramental character, they would likely have left some signs or hints of these important, though not fundamental, truths, in their preaching consigned in the Holy Scripture.

Regarding the *post-apostolic age*, if we consider the time of elaboration of a dogma, which precedes its explicit knowledge and its definition by the Magisterium, there can surely be a kind of *general oscillation*, or even obscuration and regress, connatural to all development, as happened in the development of the truth of the Immaculate Conception, which was denied for a long time by many theologians. But in the time following the explicit knowledge and definition of a dogma, there cannot be a real general regress, such as to throw back into implicitness what has been explicit. For this would imply either a negation, or a renewed controversy, or a complete oblivion of the truth, which would be contrary to the indefectibility of the Church. However, there can be a *partial diminution or obscuration* of a dogma, in such manner that a notable part of the faithful fall into heresy, at least material, as happened to the truth of the full divinity of Christ at the time of Arianism, or that some dogma may be less clearly known or valued, as happened to the truth of the Roman Primacy at the time of Western schism and of Jansenism and Gallicanism.

# V

## Theological Conclusion<sup>52</sup>

### 1. Notion of theological conclusion.

A theological conclusion is a proposition (or a judgment or a truth), which through a discursive process is derived from a revealed principle. It is called conclusion, because it is not revealed in itself, but only deduced from a revealed truth; it is called theological, because revealed truths are the principles of theology. Since every discursive process (usually expressed in the form of a syllogism) implies two principles or premises (major and minor) from which a conclusion is deduced, a theological conclusion may be inferred either from two revealed principles (for instance God knows the day of the last judgment, but Christ is God, therefore Christ knows the day of the last judgment) or from one principle of faith and one principle of reason (for instance, a perfect man has a human will, but Christ is a perfect man like all other men, therefore Christ has a human will).

There are two kinds of theological conclusions. One is a *theological conclusion improperly so-called, or explanatory*, which is a mere explanation of the principle and does not contain a new concept, different from what is contained in the principle, but expresses the same concept in another manner

<sup>52</sup> See the bibliography, listed above (p. 39), especially Doronzo, Gardeil, Grandmaison, Marin-Sola, Schultes. Cf. also A. Gits, *La foi aux faits dogmatiques dans la théologie moderne*, Louvain 1940; J. F. Bonnefoy, in *Marianum* 12 (1950) 194-226; A.M. Elorriaga, several articles in *Estudios eclesiásticos* 1926-1929; A. M. Lubik, in *Antonianum* 36 (1961) 29-68, 173-198.

or by an equivalent concept, drawn immediately from a mere analysis of the first. This happens when one concept is included in the very essence of the other, according to the four ways explained above.<sup>53</sup> The second is a *theological conclusion properly so-called*, in which three things are required; first, it must be *truly illative*, that is, bringing forth a new concept, formally distinct from the concept expressed in the principle; second, it must be also a *necessary* and scientific conclusion (for if it is only probable, it does not properly belong to the science of theology); third, it must be an *absolutely necessary* conclusion, causing an absolute certitude, because a conclusion shares in the same certitude of its principles, and the principle of a theological conclusion is a revealed truth of faith which is absolutely certain.<sup>54</sup>

This absolute necessity and certitude in a theological conclusion can be obtained only in two cases, namely, when the concept expressed in the conclusion is either an *essential property*, or a *metaphysical effect* of the concept expressed in the principle, as has been explained above with pertinent examples (p. 47).

<sup>53</sup> See footnote 51. These *four ways* of essential inclusion can be exemplified in theological conclusions improperly so-called, as follows: either the *definition* is inferred from the thing defined (as: Christ is man, therefore he is a rational animal); or an *essential part* is inferred from the whole essence (as: Christ is a man, therefore he has a soul); or a *particular* is inferred from the universal (as: Christ is man, but all men belong to the same genus or family of Adam, therefore Christ belongs to the family of Adam); or one *relative* concept is inferred from its correlative (as: Christ is a divine Son, therefore he has a divine Father).

<sup>54</sup> As we noted in the treatise on *Revelation* (p. 17), absolute certitude is founded on metaphysical (and mathematical) laws, that is, in the very essence of things, which admit no exception, while the conditional certitude is founded on physical and moral laws, which allow exceptions, and it is sufficient in physical and moral sciences.

The certitude required in a true theological conclusion is absolute and of the metaphysical order; hence, certain conclusions, which are derived from revealed principles with only a physical or moral necessity, are not truly theological conclusions, but have to be considered as mere probable theological opinions.

## 2. Definability of a theological conclusion.

The question is whether the Magisterium can *infallibly define, as to be held with divine faith*, not only a revealed truth, but also something logically derived from a revealed truth, that is, a *theological conclusion* properly so called.<sup>4</sup>

About this question there is a variety of judgment and a real controversy among theologians, depending mainly on what is to be called a theological conclusion. Hence we shall first indicate the three things on which they all agree, and then show and try to resolve the proper point of controversy.

All the theologians agree that the Magisterium can infallibly define as to be held with divine faith the following three things. First, the theological conclusions *improperly so called*, since they are mere explanations of a revealed truth and hence they are equivalent to it. Second, those theological conclusions *which we called proper and truly illative*, as in all the examples given above (see pp. 48, 53), and which however, some other theologians consider as improper conclusions; in either consideration, the reason of their definability is their intimate and essential connection with the revealed truth. Third, also those *proper* theological conclusions which are derived from *two principles or premises of faith*, as explained above; the reason of their definability is again their intimate and total connection with the revealed truth, since no principle of reason intervenes in the process of deduction.

The *point of controversy* is whether the Magisterium can infallibly define, as to be held with divine faith, also other things, no matter how we call them. Such other things would be either *proper theological conclusions* (abstracting from the above-mentioned), that is, those that everyone considers as expressing a concept truly distinct from the one expressed in the revealed principle and at the same time proceed from *one principle of faith and one principle of reason*, or the so-called *dogmatic facts*, that is, facts intimately connected with revealed truth (which, at least in our opinion, have to be reduced to theological conclusions).<sup>55</sup>

<sup>55</sup> These *dogmatic facts* are usually divided into mere *historical facts*, on which the authority of a Pope or a Council depends (for

Because this question is somewhat ambiguous, on account of the various senses in which a proper theological conclusion is understood by theologians, we shall put it in the following general and unmistakable form: *Whether the Magisterium can infallibly define as de fide any conclusion which follows with absolute necessity and certitude from a revealed truth*. There is a twofold opinion, one denying and the other affirming.

The *first and negative opinion*, held by several modern theologians and particularly emphasized by R. M. Schultes, O.P.,<sup>56</sup> teaches that theological conclusions, expressing a truly new concept and derived from one principle of faith and one principle of reason, cannot be infallibly defined as of divine faith, because their object, being deduced partially from reason, extends beyond the revealed truth and is not homogeneous with it; the same reason holds for the so-called dogmatic facts. Of course, the Magisterium infallibly defines such things, which, though not revealed, are intimately connected with revelation, but it defines them as to be believed not with divine faith, as the revealed truths, but with an *ecclesiastical faith*. This faith is neither divine nor simply human, but is found as it were in between the two, that is, resting solely on the authority of the infallible teaching of the Magisterium; thus, while the motive of the assent of divine faith is: "I believe this because God has revealed it," the motive of the assent of ecclesiastical faith is: "I believe this because the Magisterium teaches it infallibly."<sup>57</sup>

instance, whether the Anglican Orders are valid), and *doctrinal facts or dogmatic texts*, that is, the sense of signs by which revelation is expressed (for instance, the true meaning of a word, expression, or book of an author).

<sup>56</sup> *Art. cit.* (footnote 44). Supporters of this opinion are, among others, Billot, Hugon, Garrigou-Lagrange, Lennerz, Zapelena, De Aldama, Elorriaga.

<sup>57</sup> The name of *ecclesiastical faith* was explicitly brought forward for the first time around the middle of the 17th century during the controversy with Jansenists about the definitions of dogmatic facts (see footnote 62). But the concept itself had already been inculcated by L. Molina (+1600), N. Becanus (+1624), and J. Granados (+1632), and was urged in the 18th century under the very name of *ecclesiastical faith* by Antoine, Tournely, and Kilber, until it became quite common in the 19th and 20th centuries.



The second and affirmative opinion, held by an increasing number of recent theologians and particularly emphasized by F. Marín-Sola,<sup>58</sup> teaches that all true and necessary theological conclusions, as well as dogmatic facts, because of their intimate and necessary connection with revealed truths, can be defined infallibly as of *divine faith* by the Magisterium.

The reasons for this *more probable opinion* are the following:

*First.* The Magisterium has in fact defined, as dogmas of *divine faith*, several true and illative theological conclusions, that is, which express a concept truly new and distinct from the one expressed in the revealed truth, and which are derived from one principle of faith and one principle of reason.

This fact is, of course, denied by the defenders of the first opinion, who say that all such conclusions, defined by the Magisterium as dogmas of *divine faith*, are not proper and illative conclusions, but only improper and explanatory conclusions, and they contain nothing truly new and distinct from the revealed truth. However, if this can possibly be said of some of those truths which we listed above as proper and illative conclusions (p. 48), such as the consubstantiality of Christ with the Father and the Divine Maternity, which are very close to revealed truths, it cannot be reasonably said of other very particular and distinct truths, defined as *de fide* by the Magisterium. Such are, for instance, among the many things defined by the Council of Trent, the permanence of concupiscence after the remission of original sin, the necessity of the intention of doing what the Church does in the minister of a sacrament, and the necessity of natural water in Baptism. Who would reasonably say, or try to explain, that all these and many other similar truths are explicitly revealed and not merely inferred from other revealed truths through a proper

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.* (footnote 44). Supporters of this opinion are especially De Grandmaison, Gardeil, Journet, Balic, Rondet, Sauras, Bonnefoy, Roschini, Dhanis, Garcia Martinez. There are a few discrepancies among these authors (for instance, some of them extend the infallible definition of the Magisterium even to probable theological conclusions); but they all agree in the essential positive doctrine.

and illative process?<sup>59</sup>

*Second.* A conclusion which brings out a formally new concept and follows with absolute necessity and certitude from a revealed principle, even with the concurrence of a principle of reason, is implicitly revealed and truly homogeneous with the explicit revealed truth. This is so because it is nothing else than the proper and intrinsic virtuality of the revealed truth itself, *actually although implicitly contained in it*, in the manner of an essential property or effect, and distinguished from it not by a real distinction, but by the so-called distinction of reason having its foundation in the reality of things (see above, p. 47). Therefore such a conclusion can be defined in the same way as the explicitly revealed truths.

Again it is not reasonable to object that such conclusions are not proper but improper conclusions; for they bring forth a new and formally distinct concept, as in the examples just mentioned. Nor can one oppose that such conclusions go beyond the revealed truth and are not homogeneous with it, since they mingle with natural reason; for, natural reason is involved only in the process of concluding, not in the object of the conclusion itself, which is directly drawn from the revealed truth, although with the help of the natural principle and of the natural reasoning. The same thing happens, essentially and proportionally, when a theological conclusion is drawn from two premises of faith (in which case all theologians admit that it can be defined as of *divine faith*); for in both cases a new distinct concept is drawn from a revealed truth by means of a process of natural reasoning, and the difference of the two premises of faith is accidental to this matter.

*Third.* Any infallible definition of the Magisterium carries with it the obligation of assenting by *divine faith* to the proposed doctrine. The reason is because an *infallible definition* obliges to an infallible assent of faith (that is, an assent that cannot be deceived), and only the assent of *divine faith* is infallible, because only God is infallible. Hence, an assent which would be based directly on the sole authority of the Magisterium, even under God's assistance, is only an assent of fallible

<sup>59</sup> Cf. Gardeil, *op. cit.* (footnote 44) 171.

faith based on a fallible human authority. Hence the so-called *ecclesiastical faith* involves a contradiction, by being at once infallible and not divine, that is, infallible and not infallible. There is no middle term between divine faith and purely human faith.<sup>60</sup>

What has been said about the definition of theological conclusions applies likewise to the definitions of *dogmatic facts*, pronounced infallibly by the Magisterium; namely, these definitions also carry the obligation, not of the so-called ecclesiastical faith (as the aforementioned theologians claim), but of the same divine faith by which the revealed truths themselves are believed. This however, cannot be explained but by *reducing the dogmatic facts to theological conclusions*, that is, by considering them as implicitly contained in the revealed truths and brought out into explicit knowledge by the infallible declaration of the Magisterium. The inclusion of these facts in the revealed truths can be understood as that of a *particular in the universal*, not however simply and absolutely (as Peter is included in the human race), but hypothetically and conditionally, that is, on the supposition that some condition is verified.

Thus, the *dogmatic historical fact* that the Council of Trent is infallible, is implicitly contained in the general revealed truth that all ecumenical Councils are infallible, provided they are legitimate. Such a fact can be brought into explicit knowledge by merely and naturally verifying Trent's legitimacy through a reasoning process, which leads to the following proper theological conclusion: "Every ecumenical Council is infallible in its definitions, if it is legitimate in its convocation and acts; therefore, the Council of Trent is infallible." This same process applies to other dogmatic facts, both historical and doctrinal.<sup>61</sup> Thus the *dogmatic doctrinal fact* of the

<sup>60</sup> Marin-Sola: "The ecclesiastical faith is a useless invention" (*op.cit.* [footnote 44] I 454). Gardeil: "The so called ecclesiastical faith [is] a word and a thing entirely new, unknown to thomistic theology, a kind of fourth theological virtue, invented to designate the assent given to theological conclusions . . . supported by an act of the ecclesiastical authority" (*op. cit.* [footnote 44] 183).

<sup>61</sup> See their distinction above, footnote 55.

orthodoxy or heterodoxy of a word or proposition or text or book of an author, is contained implicitly in the revealed truth and brought out from it through the following conclusion: "All texts, which bear a sense contradictory to revealed truth, are heretical; but this particular text bears a sense contradictory to revealed truth; therefore this particular text is heretical."<sup>62</sup>

<sup>62</sup> Such was the case of the condemnation of Jansenius' work "Augustinus." The Jansenists tried to weaken the strength and sense of that condemnation, distinguishing between the question of right (that is, whether a proposition taken in itself is heretical) and the question of fact (that is, whether a proposition, as contained in this particular book and as pertaining to this particular author, is heretical), and they granted the condemnation only in the first sense. But Alexander VII rejected this interpretation, declaring that "the propositions of Jansenius had been condemned in the sense intended by Jansenius himself" (Denz. 2012).

## VI

### Theological Notes and Censures<sup>63</sup>

THIS QUESTION is logically and methodologically connected with the two preceding questions, because the note or critical judgment about a doctrine, as to its agreement with revealed truth, shows its greater or lesser value as a principle of theological argumentation, according to whether it is a doctrine of faith, or only theologically certain, or merely probable.

#### 1. Notion of theological note and censure.

"Note" or "mark" means generically a distinctive sign, while "censure" (from the Roman office of censor) means an act of rebuke. In ecclesiastical science, "note" is taken in two senses, namely, *apologetically*, as a distinctive sign of the Church (the four notes of the Church, called unity, sanctity, catholicity, and apostolicity), and *dogmatically*, as a favorable judgment on the theological value of a doctrine (whether it is *de fide*, or certain, or probable). Likewise "censure" is taken both in the canonical sense of penalty (canonical censure) and in the dogmatic sense of unfavorable judgment (theological censure). Theological note and theological censure are often taken interchangeably, and they are also called theological value or qualification.

They are properly defined: a judgment about the dogmatic

<sup>63</sup> Cf. C. Cahill, *The Development of the Theological Censures After the Council of Trent (1563-1709)*, Fribourg, Switzerland 1955; S. Cartechini *De valore notarum theologiarum et de criteriis ad eas dignoscendas*, Roma 1951; *Dall'opinione al dogma. Valore delle note teologiche*, Roma 1953; E. Doronzo, *Theologia dogmatica 1* (Washington, 1966) 526-542.

*value of a proposition*, or more distinctly: a judgment about the agreement or disagreement of a proposition with a doctrine proposed by the Magisterium. If the judgment is of agreement, it is called more properly "note;" if it is of disagreement, it is called more properly "censure."

#### 2. History of theological notes and censures.

Pronouncing such judgments is a part of the teaching office of the Church, which has exercised it since the beginning in various manners. St. Paul condemns as "anathema" any one who would spread false doctrines (Gal. 1.9; cf. 1.6-8; 1 John 2.22; 4.1-3; 2 John 7 and 10). In the first centuries, the Magisterium condemned schismatics and heretics with the same censure of "anathema," which in the canons of ancient Councils meant a solemn excommunication, implying also a declaration of heresy in the case of a doctrine (see in Denzinger the various canons and decisions of the Councils of Rome, Carthage, Ephesus, Orange, Constantinople II and IV, Nicaea II). Only in the 14th century the Magisterium began to use those particular expressions and distinctions, which have become traditional and classical in theology. John XXII (+1334) condemned various errors, using for the first time four out of the five principal censures, more commonly listed by theologians, namely, *heretical*, *erroneous*, *temerarious*, and *ill-sounding* (Denz. 916, 924, 946, 979); the Council of Constance in 1418 added the fifth censure, "*offensive to pious ears*" (Denz. 1251). From then on the same censures were frequently repeated, along with other names; several of them were particularly and distinctly used by Innocent X against Jansenius (Denz. 2006), by Alexander VIII against certain moral opinions (Denz. 2269), and by Pius VI against the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia (Denz. 2601-2700). The Councils of Trent and Vatican I in their canons used consistently the word "anathema," also in the sense of heretical. Recent documents generally abstain from applying particular censures under the aforementioned names and simply condemn or proscribe errors (cf. the condemnation of Bonnetty, Günther, the Rationalists, the Ontologists, Rosmini, and the Modernists, Denz. 2811 ff., 2828 ff., 2841 ff., 2901 ff., 3241, 3466).

#### 3. Author of notes or censures, and manner of their applica-

tion.

The principal *author* is naturally the Magisterium, as the authentic guardian and defender of revelation. Hence this task belongs to the Roman Pontiff (acting directly or through the Roman Congregations) and to the bishops (in Councils or individually), and it is usually exercised by way of censure rather than by positive theological notes. However, also private doctors or theologians, as specialists in their field and qualified witnesses of revelation, can assign a theological censure or note; such a right was often put into practice by great universities, as those of Paris and Louvain, and is usually applied by various theologians in their writings, who try in this manner to interpret the pronouncements of the Magisterium.

The *manner* in which censures are applied by the Magisterium is various. Often an *individual* proposition is directly condemned, either with a simple censure or with several (for instance, as heretical, erroneous, and temerarious). Sometimes several propositions are condemned *together and "in globo,"* either equally with one or several censures or unequally and respectively, so that one or another of the assigned censures regards each proposition, without any further determination (cf. Denz. 1251, the first global censure, issued by the Council of Constance against Wyclif and Hus; Denz. 1592, against Luther; Denz. 1980, against Baius; Denz. 2332, against Jansenists, etc.).

#### 4. Division of notes and censures.

As there are many ways of valuating a proposition, the number and the names of notes and censures vary in the documents of the Magisterium, and in the writings of theologians. However, among the censures issued by the Magisterium, there are five which show a more definite and distinctive character, and are brought to particular attention by theologians, namely, *heretical, erroneous, temerarious, ill-sounding, and offensive to pious ears.* These and many others used by the Magisterium<sup>64</sup> can be reduced to two general headings; some involve a doctrinal defect, either in the concept itself

<sup>64</sup> See especially the Constitution "Auctorem fidei," issued in 1794 by Pius VI against the Jansenist Synod of Pistoia (Denz. 2601-2693).

(heretical, erroneous, temerarious), or in its expression (ill-sounding), others involve directly only a moral defect (offensive to pious ears; under the same heading would come more serious censures, which easily involve also a grave doctrinal defect, as scandalous, blasphemous, and schismatic).

*Heretical proposition* (opposed to the note: *de fide*) is the gravest censure, involving a direct opposition to a proposition defined by the Magisterium as *de fide*. Such opposition can be either a direct contradiction (by saying, for instance: Christ is not a man) or a simple contrariety (Christ is an angel); in both cases there is heresy, because two contradictory, as well as two contrary propositions, cannot be true at once.<sup>65</sup> With this censure are connected three lower and intermediate censures, which have a peculiar and undetermined opposition to faith, namely, *proximate to heresy* (opposite note: *proximate to faith*), *tasting heresy* (resembling heresy), and *suspected of heresy*; these last two imply only a probability of heresy.

*Erroneous proposition* (opposed to the note: *theologically certain, or Catholic doctrine*), which is the principal definite censure after that of heresy, implies an opposition not immediately to faith itself, but to a proposition directly and necessarily connected with faith, so that if this is denied, faith also would be denied, at least logically if not actually. Such a prop-

<sup>65</sup> The opposite note "de fide" is distinguished by some theologians into that "of divine faith" (which would correspond to truths as merely found in the deposit of Scripture and Tradition) and that "of Catholic faith" (which is attributed to truths defined by the Magisterium). But it would be better to abstain from such a distinction, since there is only one faith and one object of faith, that which follows the definition of the Magisterium. Hence the expression "This is a truth of divine and Catholic faith," occurring in some documents of the Magisterium, is a mere pleonasm which brings forth the two elements necessary to constitute the object of faith, namely the revelation of God and the proposition of the Magisterium.

As shown above (p. 58), there is no such thing as an ecclesiastical faith, distinct from divine faith; consequently we discard the corresponding note and censure (truth of ecclesiastical faith, error or heresy in ecclesiastical faith), listed by the supporters of this "faith."

Hence, the triple division, divine faith, Catholic faith, and ecclesiastical faith, is to be avoided, as a cause of confusion.

osition, necessarily connected with faith, is either a strict *theological conclusion* (see above, p. 53) or the so-called *Catholic doctrine*, that is, a doctrine so intimately connected with faith that it is commonly believed to be certainly revealed, and hence proximately definable, although it has not yet been defined by the Magisterium as *de fide*; also such a point of Catholic doctrine is to be objectively reduced to a theological conclusion, although its intimate connection with faith is not known through a logical and a priori process, but through an evident sign, that is, from the fact that it is commonly thought to be a revealed truth and as such is proposed also by the Magisterium, before defining it infallibly.<sup>66</sup>

*Temerarious proposition* (opposed to the note: *highly probable, or morally certain*) is a less definite censure and more difficult to describe. A temerarious proposition is opposed to a proposition not entirely certain but highly probable and in this sense morally certain, as being solidly founded and commonly accepted among theologians. It is called temerarious, precisely because it affirms or denies something either without sufficient foundation or against the common opinion of theologians.<sup>67</sup>

*Ill-sounding proposition* (opposed to the note: *correct-sounding*) implies a defect regarding not the truth itself but its *expression*. Such a defect consists in the inaccuracy or the ambiguity of the expression (due to the words themselves or to historical circumstances) which may lead to error about the truth; for, as St. Thomas remarks after St. Jerome, "a heresy may arise from words wrongly used" (*Summa Theol.*,

<sup>66</sup> Such are the chapters of Trent and Vatican I, the two dogmatic Constitutions of Vatican II (on the Church and on Revelation), the Encyclical "Quanta cura" and the Syllabus of Pius IX, the Encyclical "Pascendi" and the Decree "Lamentabili" of Pius X, the Encyclical "Casti Connubii" of Pius XI, the Encyclical "Humani generis" of Pius XII. However, some of these documents may be infallible definitions *de fide*, as we noted above (footnote 43).

<sup>67</sup> Such would be, for instance, the affirmation of an immaculate conception for St. John the Baptist; the negation of the necessity of interior intention in the minister of a sacrament, or of the objective gravity of sexual intercourse outside marriage.

p. 1, q. 31, a.2).<sup>68</sup>

*Offensive to pious ears proposition* (opposed to the note: *fitting for piety*) implies a defect not of doctrinal order (regarding the truth or its expression) but only of *moral order*. Such a defect consists in saying a truth, which should be kept unsaid out of reverence for holy things, or in saying it in a manner which would cause contempt for holy things; both of these things offend the sense of piety and are opposed to the virtue of religion.<sup>69</sup> However, such a theological offense to pious ears must not be valued and measured according to the ears of any vulgar crowd, who easily take childish offense or pharisaic scandal, but according to sound and Christian common sense.

##### 5. Interpretation and use of notes and censures.

With regard to the *interpretation* of these qualifications, careful attention should be paid to their author (whether they procede from the Magisterium itself or from the private judgment of theologians), to their proper and historical sense, and especially to their proper force, as to the agreement or disagreement of a proposition with revealed truth. For, while the two first censures of heretical and erroneous propositions (and their opposite notes) are absolutely immutable, on account of the evident opposition of these propositions to revealed truth, the last three censures are reformable with the change of circumstances, which are the cause of the aforementioned pernicious character.

Thus, what is a temerarious proposition at one time may

<sup>68</sup> Such would be, for instance, the following propositions: "In God there are three relative essences" (in which essence is incorrectly taken for person and may induce one to believe that in God there are simply three essences, and hence three gods); "In the Trinity the Father is the cause of the Son" (which in the strict sense of causality, as the word "cause" is understood in the Latin Church, would imply subordination and inferiority on the part of the Son).

<sup>69</sup> Such would be, for instance, an emphasis on some moral defects or sins of the apostles or other saints (who should be highly revered), as in the following prayer: "O Magdalen prostitute, Matthew usurer, Peter perjurer, Paul persecutor, pray for us!"

not be temerarious at another time, if such a proposition becomes solidly probable, after sufficient reasons for it have been advanced (for instance, the affirmation of an immaculate conception for St. Joseph is no longer temerarious, as it used to be branded). *A fortiori* an ill-sounding proposition may lose such character, when words and formulas change their meaning through historical or doctrinal evolution, as happened to those used to express the mysteries of Trinity and Incarnation. The same holds *a fortiori* for a proposition offensive to pious ears, whose offensive character has only a relative basis, so that what is offensive at one time and in some circumstances may not be such in other times or circumstances.

With regard to *the use* of notes and censures by theologians, the following observations may be suitable. These qualifications should be based on and derived from the documents of the Magisterium, when the Magisterium itself has not assigned any explicit qualification. They should be simplified as to their number and their names, as we did above; the five qualifications, just explained, seem to be sufficient, at least generally, and in particular in theological manuals for the schools; the note "*de fide*" should not be sub-divided into those of "divine faith" and "Catholic faith," much less with the addition of "ecclesiastical faith;" and the note "Catholic doctrine," if used, should be accompanied by a clear explanation, on account of its broad and somewhat ambiguous sense.

Regarding the *moral value* of these qualifications, it should be noted that only the first censure (heretical) implies a sin against faith and the loss of this virtue, while all the others imply only a sin against the virtue of religion, and the last three (temerarious, ill-sounding, and offensive to pious ears) involve also a sin against prudence.

## Glossary of Technical Words Occurring In This Treatise

**Analogy of faith** is a theological expression which adopts the philosophical term of analogy, meaning a similarity between two concepts. Hence analogy of faith means a similarity between two revealed truths, or more properly the agreement which is necessarily found between the various truths of faith, so that from one we can rightly judge about the other: thus from the perpetual virginity of Mary we understand that those who are called brothers and sisters of Christ in the Gospel are only close relatives to him.

**Argument-Conclusion.** Argument or demonstration is a process by which we draw a conclusion from principles. This is done in any science. Hence it is proper to theology as a science to use arguments, that is, to draw conclusions from the principles of revelation, which are the various truths revealed by God. These theological conclusions, if they follow not merely probably but necessarily from the revealed principles, can be infallibly defined by the Church Magisterium, just as the revealed principles themselves, and hence they become also the object of our faith. Thus, from the revealed truth that Christ is also a true man similar to us, it is necessarily concluded that Christ has also a human will besides his divine will, and the Magisterium explicitly defined this as an article of divine faith in the Council of Constantinople III in 681.

**Faith** can be taken in two ways. First in a subjective sense, that is, for the virtue of faith residing in our mind and the consequent act of faith by which we express our belief in the word of God; in this sense Christians are called "The Faithful." Secondly, faith is often taken in an *objective sense*, that

is, for the objects or truths we believe, briefly the word of God. It is in this second sense that faith is taken in the following expressions commonly used in theology:

*Preambles of faith* are those truths about God which can be known through natural reason (such as his existence and Providence) and which therefore are presupposed to, and prepare the understanding of, the supernatural truths. *Foundations of faith* are the revealed truths themselves, briefly revelation, which is the object and hence the foundation of faith. This is the reason why the theological treatise on revelation is called fundamental theology. *Principles of faith* are the same revealed truths inasmuch as they become the principles of all theological reasoning and conclusions. *Truths of faith* are the same revealed truths considered in themselves. *Articles of faith* are more strictly the principal or fundamental truths of faith, as those contained in the Creeds or Symbols of faith. *Formula of faith* is a definite expression of revealed truth, such as the various symbols of faith or the definitions of the Magisterium. *Symbols of faith* (the Creeds) are the formulas expressing the principal revealed truths. *Rule of faith* is the authoritative factor which determines for us the object to be believed; it is divided into the *remote rule* (Scripture and Tradition) and the *proximate rule* (the Church Magisterium). *Dogma of faith* (or simply dogma) is revealed truth, contained in the deposit of Scripture and Tradition, as presented to us for belief by the infallible Magisterium; dogmatic formulas are the various expressions of the same dogma in the documents of the Magisterium. *Analogy of faith* is the necessary agreement existing between various revealed truths.

**Magisterium** generically means teaching function or office, whether freely accepted by others or imposed upon them by social rules. It implies always a *doctrinal authority* in the sense that a master or teacher as such knows more than the disciples or listeners, and hence impresses them with his superiority and has an influence on their mind with his knowledge. But a merely human Magisterium has no practical authority, that is, it cannot force anyone's mind to accept what it says or teaches, for the human intellect is an interior faculty and hence ontologically and socially free from coercion.

*God's Magisterium* on the contrary has also a *practical authority*, that is, it can command to the mind of man to accept his words and his teaching, not only by virtue of his infinite and infallible knowledge (which implies a supreme doctrinal authority), but by his dominion over our intellect as well as over our whole being. Moreover, nothing prevents God from communicating this practical authority of his to a man with regard to others, to be exercised by him in God's name and as it were instrumentally, in the manner of a commissioned office. Such is precisely the *Magisterium of the Church*, which can oblige the faithful to believe its pronouncements or presentations of the word of God. For this reason it is called the authentic or authoritative Magisterium.

**Reason.** When we speak of natural reason, or light, or principles, in opposition to supernatural revelation, or light, or principles, we point out the proper and specific power of our intellect, working out its knowledge from its own innate principles in the light of that proper perfection that makes man a rational animal. For this proper work our intellect does not strictly and physically need any additional supernatural help from God, although in the present condition of fallen nature after the original sin, we morally need such help only to promptly and definitely understand, as we should, moral and religious truths (such as God's existence, creation, Providence, and our fundamental obligations to him and to our neighbor).

But with regard to the knowledge of truths concerning supernatural religion (such as the Trinity, Incarnation, sanctifying grace, faith, hope of beatific vision, love of friendship for God) our natural intellect is powerless and blind, and hence it needs a proportionate *supernatural help*, that is, a *higher light* (of revelation, faith, or beatific vision). This supernatural light blends, as it were, with the natural light of reason itself and makes it able to elicit a supernatural act (of knowledge, of faith, or beatific vision). Thus reason is elevated to a higher order and the rational animal becomes a partaker of the proper light of God.

**Revelation** is generically the manifestation of a hidden truth, either in the natural or in the supernatural order.

Supernatural revelation, taken *subjectively* on the part of the act of knowledge, can signify in a broader sense any supernatural help in the line of the intellect, just as grace can signify any supernatural help in the line of will, or in both lines. However, strictly speaking, revelation is such a supernatural help which makes us understand directly a supernatural truth and thus it is equivalent to speech of God to man. In this strict sense *revelation* is distinguished from two other supernatural lights or helps. These are, first *inspiration*, that is, a supernatural movement of God for writing without error what God wills a man to write, given in such a manner that God becomes the principal author of the writing. This took place with the various men who wrote the Bible, called therefore the inspired books. Second, *assistance of the Holy Spirit*, by which God disposes and arranges things and human actions in such a manner as to prevent a human writer or speaker from any error in a particular work or speech (as in the case of the Pope or an ecumenical council when defining infallibly a revealed truth).

Taken *objectively*, revelation is the truth manifested to us by God through the aforementioned supernatural light, that is, the revealed truth. To this concept of revelation are referred the theological terms of source, channel, deposit and organ of revelation, of which we are about to speak in the following entry.

**Source, channel, deposit, organ of revelation.** All these terms carry the same general concept of means of transmission of God's revelation to man. However, there is a shade of meaning between them, by reason of which they are not used interchangeably in theology. Up until the Second Vatican Council, Scripture and Tradition were called sources of revelation; the term channel has always kept an indefinite meaning and attribution. Vatican II suggested a change in theological terminology by using the term source of revelation only to signify the Gospel itself, and the term deposit to signify Scripture and Tradition. Hence the terminology, as it stands now, is the following. The *source* of revelation is the Gospel preached by Christ; Scripture and Tradition are the *deposits* (or rather one total deposit) of revelation (or the channels

containing revelation); the Magisterium is the *organ* of revelation (or the channel immediately transmitting revelation to us). To use a common image, the living water of revelation comes down from the Gospel as its original source; it is gathered into the water tower of Scripture and Tradition; from this it is finally channelled to us, for our immediate needs and obligations, through the pipeline of the Magisterium. Of course it is up to our good will and savoir-faire to turn the faucet the right way in order to get from the indefectible pipeline of the Magisterium the limpid water, gathered into the unbroken reservoir of Scripture and Tradition from the inexhaustible source of the Gospel.

**Theological "Loci"** are called the places in which theologians find the proper principles of their investigation and demonstrations. The ten theological "loci" usually listed after Melchior Cano (+1560), their first illustrator (namely, Scripture, Tradition, Believing Church, the Magisterium of the Pope, the Magisterium of the Ecumenical Councils, the Fathers, the theologians, natural reason, the authority of philosophers, and history), can be reduced to three (omitting the last three which are merely extrinsic and confirming "loci"), namely, *Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium*, which are also channels of revelation and rules of faith.



## Analytical Index

**Analogy of faith**, an expression used by theologians and insisted upon by the Magisterium, is the mutual agreement which necessarily exists between the various truths of faith, 8.

**Apostles**. After Christ's Ascension the apostles received several public revelations, footnote 49, but with the death of the last apostle (St. John who died about 100) public revelation was closed forever, 45. The apostles had a deeper understand of the revealed truths, at least of those which are explicitly revealed, 51.

**Believing Church**. The sense of all the faithful about a doctrine of faith, or a doctrine connected with it, is witness to Tradition, 19, 22- 24. It carries also infallibility in matters of faith, 22. It can be compared to the natural common sense with regard to the first principles of reason, 23, 49. It is an influential cause of the development of dogma, 49 f.

**Censures (theological)**. See *Notes (theological)*

**Channels (of revelation)** are divided into deposits of revelation (Scripture and Tradition, which can be considered as one total deposit) and organ of revelation (the Magisterium), footnote 3, 15. See *Source (of revelation)*

**Conclusions (theological)**. In the strict sense a theological conclusion is a proposition necessarily derived from a revealed truth by means of a discursive process of our natural reason, 52 f. It is distinguished from a mere explanation of the revealed truth and also from a proposition which follows only probably from a revealed truth, 52 f. Various examples

of theological conclusions 48, 56. To theological conclusions are to be reduced the so-called dogmatic facts, that is, those historical or doctrinal facts that are necessarily connected with the revealed truth, 54; see *Dogmatic facts*. The Magisterium can infallibly define theological conclusions, but it is disputed whether in that way they become the object of divine faith (as is more probable) or of an inferior kind of ecclesiastical faith, 54-59; see *Faith (ecclesiastical)*

**Deposit (of revelation)**. See *Channels (of revelation)*

**Doctors (of the Church)**. See *Fathers (of the Church)*

**Dogma**. In the strict sense dogma is a revealed truth infallibly defined by the Magisterium as to be believed of divine faith, 40 f. It is objectively immutable with regard to the defined truth itself, 41 f., but it undergoes development and progress with regard to the formulation and the logical implications of the revealed truth, 43-51. This progress is both subjective, as to a clearer understanding of the truth, and also objective, consisting in the passage of a truth from implicit to explicit, 44-50. Nature of this passage and various examples, 46-49. Historical ways and causes of the development of dogma, 49-51. There can be in the history of the Church an obscuration or regress about a revealed truth, totally so before its solemn definition by the Magisterium, and only partially afterwards, 51. See *Conclusion (theological)*. *Faith (divine)*, *Revelation*

**Dogmatic facts** are those historical or doctrinal facts that are necessarily connected with a revealed truth, such as the orthodoxy or eterodoxy of a doctrine or writing of an author, and the legitimacy of a Pope or Council, 54, 58 f. They are to be reduced to theological conclusions; see *this entry*. They can be infallibly defined by the Magisterium, but it is disputed whether they become the object of divine faith (as is more probable) or of an inferior kind of ecclesiastical faith, 54-59; see *Faith (ecclesiastical)*

**Faith (divine)**. Scripture and Tradition are only the remote rule of faith, while the Magisterium is its proximate rule,

infallibly determining for us the object to be believed, which thus becomes dogma of faith; see *Dogma Magisterium Scriptures Tradition*. A "de fide" proposition is the first theological note, to which a heretical proposition is directly opposed, 63; see *Notes (theological)*

**Faith (ecclesiastical)**. as to its origin, its supporters, and its weakness, 55, 58, 66, footnote 65. See *Conclusions (theological)*. *Dogmatic facts*

**Faithful**. See *Believing Church*

**Fathers (of the Church)**. They can be considered in two ways, that is, as witnesses to Tradition, 7, 11, 19, 20, 24, and as private doctors, 24, 27. Considered as witnesses to Tradition, their doctrine is the principal part of what is called argument of Tradition, 20; in this argument the doctrine of the Fathers should be carefully valued, 20; see *Tradition*. Considered as private doctors, their doctrine is the basis of a secondary and mere probable argument in theology, 27. The four qualifications required to be a Father of the Church, 24 f. Distinction between Fathers and both ecclesiastical writers and Doctors of the Church, 25 f. List of the Doctors of the Church, 26

**Inspiration**. Its notion and extension, 2 f. It gives to Scripture its importance and its relative excellence over Tradition, 15, footnote 24. However, we know only from Tradition itself that Scripture, as a whole, is inspired, 14, 15

**Magisterium (of the Church)**. Notion and division into ordinary and extraordinary 33 f. The ordinary Magisterium has the same value as the extraordinary, 7, 35. The Magisterium is the channel and the organ of revelation as well as the proximate rule of faith, and under this consideration it is for us more important than Scripture and Tradition, footnote 3, 34 f. The Magisterium declares the sense of Scripture, 7, 35, and of Tradition, 19, 35. It is, however, inferior to Scripture and Tradition inasmuch as these are the deposit of revelation from which the Magisterium derives its doctrine, 6. The Magisterium is also part of Tradition, taken in-

tegrally, 11, 19. It is the basis of the strongest argument in theology, 35; for this purpose the various pronouncements of the Magisterium should be carefully valued, 35-37. The Magisterium is one of the causes of the development of dogma in various ways, 43, 50. Once infallibly defined by the Magisterium, a truth becomes formally a dogma of faith, 40 f., objectively immutable, 41, and subjectively free from a general obscuration or regress in the Church, 50 f.

**Modernists** deny the objective value and immutability of dogma, footnote 46

**Notes (theological)**. Their notion and distinction from theological censures, 60 f., their history, 61, author, 61 f., division, 62-65, interpretation and use, 65 f. The principal notes are three, namely, a proposition of faith, a proposition theologically certain, and a proposition greatly probable, to which three censures are opposed, that is, heretical, erroneous, and temerarious propositions, 63 f.

**Prescription (theological)**, as to its value and the manner in which it should make up a theological argument, 21 f.

**Protestants** discard Tradition as a rule of faith, holding firmly to their aphorism "Scripture alone," footnote 18; they deny also the infallibility of the Magisterium and the immutability of dogmas defined by it, footnote 46

**Revelation**. Its object; see *Conclusions (theological)*. *Dogma*. The means of its transmission or channels (which come down to us from the Gospel, its source) are Scripture and Tradition, as deposits of revelation, and the Magisterium, as its organ; see *these three entries*. Public revelation, given by Christ and partially continued through the apostles after his Ascension, has been definitely closed at the death of the last apostle (St. John who died about 100), 45 f. Private revelations are not an object of faith, even after their approbation by the Magisterium which only declares them to be in harmony with faith and christian life, footnote 50

**Scripture.** Regarding the senses of biblical texts, *See Sense (biblical)*. Chronology of the various biblical writings, footnote 19. Scripture is not properly the source of revelation, but its channel and deposit, footnote 3, 6. Comparison between Scripture and Tradition as to their value under the aspect of deposit of revelation, 12-18. The interpretation of biblical texts depends on Tradition and on the Magisterium, 6 f. *See Inspiration. Magisterium. Tradition. Vulgate*

**Sense (biblical)** is usually divided into literal, typical, and ampler, 3-5. The third sense, introduced by some modern scholars under the name of "sensus plenior," seems difficult to admit, 5. The literal sense is practically the most important, 8 f. The typical sense should not be easily asserted because it is known only through God's revelation, 9

**Source (of revelation)**, according to the new terminology introduced by Vatican II, is the Gospel itself and not Scripture and Tradition, which are only the deposit of revelation, footnote 3. *See Channels (of revelation)*

**Theologians**, as distinct from the Fathers of the Church, 27 f. Not everyone who teaches theology or even holds a doctorate in theology is properly a theologian in the theological sense, but to be qualified as such two things are required, namely, eminent doctrine and approbation (at least implicit) of the Magisterium, 28 f. Theologians, considered as private doctors, are the basis of a probable argument in theology, especially in the case of general agreement, 29 f. Theologians have no Magisterium of their own but they are only commissioned to teach by the authentic Magisterium, footnote 38. Theological reasoning is an influential cause of the development of dogma, 46-49

**Thomas Aquinas.** His doctrine can be considered as the basis of a strong probable argument in theology by reason of its very special approbation by the Magisterium, which considers St. Thomas as the "Doctor Communis," 30-32. Vatican II points him out as the guide to be followed in Catholic schools and theological faculties, 31. He was the first among theologians to be declared Doctor of the Church, 26

**Tertullian**, who introduced and effectively used the so-called argument of prescription, footnote 27, is not properly speaking a Father of the Church because of some important errors in matters of faith, 25

**Tradition** is a channel and a deposit of revelation, footnote 3, 12-14, 19. Taken integrally, it implies all the means through which the revealed truth is transmitted, including Scripture and the Magisterium, 11, 19, 23. The restrictive sense, which opposes and distinguishes Tradition from Scripture, has been introduced by the theologians only after the Council of Trent, 11. Comparison between Tradition and Scripture in their value as deposited of revelation, 12-15. Ambiguous controversy among recent authors about the very existence of the so-called constitutive Tradition which would contain some truths not sufficiently contained in Scripture, 15-18. Tradition depends on the Magisterium as to its interpretation, 18, 35. The argument of Tradition should be carefully valued, 19-21. *See Fathers (of the Church)*

**Vatican Council II** introduced a new terminology, calling the Gospel alone source of revelation, and Scripture with Tradition only deposit of revelation, footnote 3. It considers also Scripture and Tradition as one total deposit rather than two deposits of revelation, 15, 18. The Magisterium is not above the word of God but merely its channel and organ, footnote 12. The mind of the Council about the so-called constitutive Tradition, footnote 24. The sense of all the faithful in matters of faith is infallible, 23. On the development of dogma, 43 f. Public revelation has been closed forever at the death of the last apostle, 46. This Council issued no definitions of faith, even in the two dogmatic constitutions on revelation and the Church, footnote 66

**Vulgate**, or the Latin version of the Bible, as to its authority and theological use, 3, 6