

medic and myself went to him. We were pinned down to the bottom of the ditch by crossfire. I laid down beside the boy and heard his confession and anointed him. Not a word of complaint did he say. He said "Thanks" and that he felt everything was going to be all right now, and that he hoped nobody thought that he was yellow because he yelled for a priest. The medic told me that he didn't have a chance, but we carried him back to the line, and some other men took him to the aid station. I never heard whether he lived or not—he was not out of our Regiment.

On the 19th of December, I was sitting around after dinner with a group of Service and Reg. Hq. Co. men just shooting the breeze, when Mr. Sheen, the Communication Warrant Officer came in. "You should see what I have just seen," he said, "A bunch of paratroopers machine gunned on this road." He didn't know whether they were 501st men or not. I asked him where the place was, but he couldn't explain very well. I told the Medical Executive Officer that I would be right back soon. My driver and I piled into the jeep and away we went. We couldn't find the bodies Sheen had spoken about, so I decided to keep going a couple of miles farther on to where our Division medical company had been captured by the Germans the night before. A few German vehicles, armored cars, *etc.*, had come up from a side road, shot up several American trucks bringing in supplies, and captured our whole medical co. at the same time. Our own Regimental supply trucks for the medics were captured there, and Doc Waldman had told me that we were getting very short of medical supplies. So I decided to salvage some of the stuff that the Germans left from our captured medical company. I loaded my jeep with a couple of chests of much-needed equipment, and was ready to head back for the Reg. aid station. A soldier there told me, however, that there had been quite a skirmish last night on the other side of the hill. He thought there were still some wounded left there. We drove over the hill to see, and just over the crest of the hill we ran into Germans—hundreds of them. They jumped out from behind trees yelling something, and a couple of reconnaissance vehicles levelled their guns at us from about forty feet. I told the driver to stop, and that I was sorry to have gotten him into this mess. We were captured.

(To be continued)

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THE FRAMEWORK OF DOCTRINAL DEVELOPMENT

As we develop and grow mentally we find ourselves the possessors of an ever increasing body of ideas, ideals, and convictions. We find that these ideas have become the living tissue of our minds. Yet were we called upon to trace the course by which any one of these ideas became a part of the living whole we would find ourselves faced with a most difficult task. We would have to go back over our reading in any number of fields. Experience of many kinds would have to be conjured up again. It would be necessary to recall numbers of casual meditations, periods of intense concentration, moments of spiritual insight. Requisite, too, would be a list of conferences attended, talks heard and delivered, conversations participated in, notes taken, and people with whom we had had contact. And even after we had done all this we could not be sure that we had arrived at the full history of that idea and its life story in our mind.

The preceding paragraph might be termed a parable showing how easy it is to overlook all the elements that enter into the development of any doctrine. For it is easy enough to say that the development of a doctrine is only its passage from the implicit to the explicit, or that true doctrinal development is only subjective and implies no more than growth in understanding. But such expressions, while true, do tend to glibness. In fact one might call such expressions misleading because in themselves they do not give a full appreciation of all the elements that enter into the development of doctrine, nor do they convey all that growth in understanding necessarily implies. We must, of course, begin with an unchangeable body of supernatural truths and constant care must be exercised that their objective character is not lost sight of. On the other hand the effort and work of the minds to which these truths are committed must also be given due consideration. Over-emphasis or over-simplification are equally destructive of full appreciation.

The framework of every doctrinal development may be reduced to three essential factors: (a) the deposit of revelation; (b) the work of the Fathers and theologians; (c) the action of the infallible magisterium. The first of these, the deposit of revelation, is the body of revealed truth which is the sole foundation of all

doctrinal development. Nothing may be added to it, nothing may be jettisoned. Any valid doctrinal development can be no more than a growth in the understanding of those truths it contains. The second element, the work of the Fathers and theologians, is the vital contact that takes place between the objective realities of revelation and the reflective intelligence of these men. Illumined and guided by faith, these teachers relate, compare, weigh, scrutinize, and organize these truths and their consequences, thus laying the foundation and groundwork for the development of a doctrine. The third element, the action of the infallible magisterium, is the constitutive factor in all doctrinal development. For this magisterium is the one authentic voice that can declare and expound doctrine. The work of the Fathers and theologians has weight, value, and importance but only the judgment of the magisterium can authentically decide whether their contribution is a valid development, and has rendered explicit what was implicit. Each of these factors, therefore, plays a real part in doctrinal development and hence it will be the concern of this article to analyze each of them in a somewhat detailed fashion.

THE DEPOSIT OF REVELATION

Catholic Christianity is a revealed religion. The body of truths which it preserves and teaches is from God. These truths are not preserved and taught by the consent of mankind or because history attests to their value. The Catholic Church teaches what it does teach because it is the will of God. It is God speaking in these last days through His Son Jesus Christ who has given to Catholic Christianity the body of truth which it makes known to men. When it calls for the full acceptance of its teaching it is calling for faith in the gospel it has received from Jesus Christ so that if an angel from heaven preach any other gospel let him be anathema.¹ Thus when the Church defines that the Immaculate Conception of Mary is of faith it is stating that this truth is contained in the original deposit of revelation. The Vatican Council affirms this when it states: "All those things must be believed as of divine and Catholic faith which are contained *in the word of God either written or handed down* and which either by solemn

¹ Gal. 1-8.

judgment or by its ordinary and universal teaching office the Church proposes for belief as *divinely revealed*."² The object of divine and Catholic faith therefore is the revealed word of God. Until this is clearly realized neither the struggle with heresy nor the importance and place of a definition can be appreciated. For the first note of the deposit of revelation is that it is a *divine* deposit. It is the word of God given to men through Jesus Christ.

Now these truths that it has pleased God to reveal are of two kinds. Some could be attained by the use of reason but only with difficulty and as far as the majority of men are concerned their attainment would be a moral impossibility. None the less, such truths are still divine because they have been revealed; they are, in the technical theological phrase, *supernaturale quoad modum*. There are other truths, though, that are mysteries hidden in God which, unless divinely revealed, cannot be known.³ They so exceed the created intellect that even when delivered by revelation and received by faith they remain covered by the veil of faith as long as we walk in this mortal life.⁴ Such truths fall under the technical heading *supernaturale quoad substantiam*. In either case, however, these truths are divine because of their source.

The second decisive characteristic of the deposit of revelation, and one of its specific notes, is that it is *apostolic*. The whole of this divine revelation was committed to the apostles. They and they alone were authorized to teach all things that Christ had commanded.⁵ Their position is exclusive and unique for, in the words of the Council of Trent, they "are the fount of all saving truth and moral discipline."⁶ The whole of the deposit of revelation was to be promulgated by them or, as in the case of St. Paul, was to be confirmed by them as authentic. From the death of the last apostle nothing is added to or taken away from that divine treasure. In view of this it is completely accurate to say that if a doctrine is revealed it is also apostolic.

Lest there be any danger of misapprehension here, the exact character of the apostolic office should be taken into account. They are the authorized *witnesses* of the revelation made through Jesus Christ. They are such by the commission of Christ Himself; "you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you

² DB, 1792.

Cf. DB, 1795.

³ Cf. DB, 1796.

⁴ Matt. 28:20.

⁵ DB, 1783.

and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth."⁷ The apostles are the first and the authorized teachers of the revelation of Christ. Whatever truth Christ revealed for men has been committed to them. All things that Christ has heard from His Father He has made known to the apostles.⁸ As the Father has sent Jesus Christ so He sends the apostles.⁹ Who hears the apostles hears Christ Himself.¹⁰ It is in this sense that we can speak of the apostles as being a source of revelation in contradistinction to all other tradition which is an organ or channel of revelation.

Because they are a source or font of revelation the apostles are guarded by a personal infallibility. The Spirit of Truth, the Advocate, was to dwell with them and be in them.¹¹ This same Spirit of Truth was to teach them all things and to bring to their minds all that Christ had said to them,¹² making known to them all truth and the things that were to come.¹³ This gives to their personal preaching its unique character, so that "when you heard and received from us the word of God you welcomed it not as the word of men but, as it truly is, the word of God."¹⁴ In consequence, it is not their word or their doctrine they proclaim but God's. Obedience and faith are demanded but not for themselves. Men must accept because they are the envoys, the witnesses, the apostles of the word of God and appointed so by Christ. Once this notion of apostolicity is recognized, it becomes clear that the Catholic Church's insistence on the apostolic character of her doctrine is no mere cherishing of the antique but is absolutely essential to its status as the revealed religion of Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

Up to this point the apostolic character of the deposit of revelation has been treated from a passive aspect, *i.e.* the commitment of divine truth to the apostles. But there is another and equally important facet of this apostolicity which is implicit in all we have seen. The apostles are also the primary promulgators of this revelation. They are the sole authentic *preachers* of this word of God. And it is their preaching that is the true and valid source of all doctrine. It is their preaching that the Church looks to as the

⁷ Acts 1:8.⁸ John 15:15.⁹ John 20:22; 17:18.¹⁰ Luke 10:16.¹¹ John 14:17.¹² John 14:16.¹³ John 16:14.¹⁴ I Thess. 2:18.

source of its rule of faith. The Church's role is to transmit and to interpret, it was the apostolic office to promulgate. This they did by their preaching and it is their preaching that the Church proclaims and interprets infallibly. Tertullian makes this very clear when he writes that all heretics are self-condemned because they do not submit to the divine authority, whereas the true Christian attitude is this:

It is not lawful for us to introduce anything simply because it suits us, nor may we choose what someone else has preferred. For we have as our authorities the Apostles of the Lord and not even they sought to introduce anything because of their personal preference but faithfully delivered to the nations the doctrine they had received from Christ.¹⁵

This promulgation of the doctrine of Christ is by preaching, since the gospel faith is *ex auditu*.¹⁶ And the apostles are *the* preachers and divinely commissioned as such. As Tertullian also points out, the apostles are sent by Jesus Christ to preach, and no Christian may accept any others save those whom Christ has authorized as preachers, "for no one knows the Father but the Son and him to whom the Son reveals Him and as we see the Son revealed Him to the apostles whom He sent to preach what he had revealed to them."¹⁷ It is this fact of preaching that is of cardinal importance to the whole notion of the rule of faith and it marks a fundamental division between the Catholic and Protestant conception of the role of scripture in the transmission of faith. For we find that first in the order of time and importance is the oral promulgation of revelation by the apostles. The teaching office is, therefore, a living thing because it resides in living men appointed by Christ for that very office. And the original source of all tradition of the divine doctrine transmitted to us is the oral tradition and promulgation of the apostolic preaching. This is the point of Père Huby's remark that the gospels might disappear and the Church would still remain the Church.¹⁸ The apostles are specifically authorities rather than authors. They

¹⁵ Tertullian, *De praescriptione*, 6 (FLP, IV, 7).¹⁶ Rom. 10:17.¹⁷ Tertullian, *op. cit.*, 21.¹⁸ *The Church and the Gospels* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1938).

witness authoritatively to Christ and His teaching. By their authentic preaching the apostles bring men to belief and so actualize the Church of Christ "built on the foundation of the apostles with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone."¹⁹

St. Peter and the apostolic college had to be the sole depositaries and interpreters of this doctrine; they had to be able to say: "We and we alone possess the true and authentic Christ." People had to feel that without them one would not reach Christ, that to depart from them was to lose Christ. Once the Church had been organized under a universally accepted hierarchy, once the principle of authority had not only been proclaimed but made integral in morality, a part of the practice of the Christian life then they could write, for the Church coming before the scriptures would have the right to judge them . . .²⁰

Without the recognition of the primacy of this apostolic and oral preaching, it is impossible to understand the Catholic conception of the deposit of revelation. Without such recognition it is equally impossible to give scripture its proper and its logical place in the deposit of revelation. Only when it is realized that by divine intention (as well as historically) the apostolic preaching precedes and embraces the written word as its offspring, only then can the written gospel be properly evaluated. It is only gradually that memory notes, instructions for missionaries, partial accounts of the teachings and acts of Christ come into existence. It is only towards the end of this process that the synoptic gospels result from the apostolic catechesis. Thus Clement of Alexandria records that St. Peter preached in Rome and his hearers besought Mark to put into writing what they had received by hearing. It is to their persistence that we owe the gospel according to St. Mark.²¹ In fact, as even a cursory reading of the gospels indicates, they are writings of circumstance and do not attempt to encompass the whole of the deposit of revelation given to the apostles. St. John explicitly witnesses to this fact when he writes that "there are many other things that Jesus did but if all these should be written not even the world itself could hold the books that would have to be written."²² The whole point may be

¹⁹ *Ephes.* 2:20.

²⁰ Huby, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

²¹ Eusebius, *Historia ecclesiastica*, II, 15, 2 (Loeb Classics 143).

²² *John* 21:25.

summed up in the words of the Council of the Vatican: "As the Council of Trent declared in harmony with the universal faith of the Church this supernatural revelation is contained in the written books and the unwritten tradition which being received from the mouth of Christ or from the apostles under the dictation of the Holy Spirit have come down even to us being transmitted as it were from hand to hand."²³

This apostolic doctrine therefore is what the Church guards and hands down to men in every age. It is protected by her indefectibility. It is interpreted without error by her infallibility. It is to this apostolic deposit that the Fathers and theologians stand as witnesses through the centuries. It is this deposit that the Church proclaims through the living magisterium of Pope and bishops in whom that apostolic authority resides. And it is this oral tradition given to men that is preserved in the creeds and definitions, in the acts of Popes and councils, in liturgical books and acts of martyrs, in the writings of the Fathers and theologians, in historical documents and the monuments of Christian art.²⁴ All these are subordinate and subsidiary to the living magisterium, but arise and have their natural and even necessary place in the life of a visible, historical, and living society.

THE WORK OF THE FATHERS AND THEOLOGIAN

The work of the Fathers and theologians is one of the most fascinating aspects of doctrinal development. For it involves historical, intellectual, and psychological factors that have played no small part in the development of a specifically Christian culture. Indeed, the interest of the modern mind in the phenomena of the inner life of man could find a rich supply of material in the history of this vital contact between the reflective intelligence of men, illumined by faith, and the objective realities of God's revealed truth. One need only cite St. Augustine's magnificent contributions to theology as evidence for this. At the root of much of his contribution lies his penetrating psychological insight. Truth for him was absolute and knowledge valid, but much of their fruitfulness and life stemmed from the fact that he saw them in relation to himself and the life of his own spirit. In this same connection one might also note how the pressure of heretics

²³ *DB*, 1787.

²⁴ Cf. Van Noort *De fontibus revelationis*, p. 126.

has caused the Fathers and theologians to clarify and make precise terms, concepts, and ideas. Very often, too, the religious principles of these heretics have been fraught with destruction for the social order and the natural order, and in combatting them there has been produced those natural, ethical, and social principles that are the foundation of a good society. Any number of kindred things might be elaborated upon, but our interest here is the actual contributions that the Fathers and theologians make to the development of a doctrine. Hence our first step will be the delineation of their exact status and function in the Church and its teaching work.

It is the connection of the Fathers and theologians with the *Ecclesia docens* that gives them a share in the development of a doctrine. They stand as witnesses to revelation and play a part only in view of this fact. They are also private doctors or teachers. As such they possess a great deal of human authority that rests on their knowledge and zeal for the truth, but their authority as far as doctrine is concerned lies in the fact that they are witnesses of the truth committed to the Apostles by Christ. To understand this we must first of all understand exactly what makes a Father or theologian and makes his witness of importance to the teaching Church.

For a man to be considered a Father of the Church he must possess four distinctive qualities: *eminent orthodoxy; sanctity of life; antiquity; approval of the Church*. The first two look directly to the personal character of the Father as a witness, *i.e.* his knowledge and veracity. The third, antiquity, is the note that distinguishes the Father from the theologian. The last testifies to his public character as a witness in the divinely guarded society of salvation established by Christ.

Since he is a witness to revelation, orthodoxy is of the essence of the Father's status. Genius, scholarship, zeal, and erudition have their part; but here it is a matter of witnessing to the Word of God which alone is the norm of truth in revelation. Neither piety nor brilliance may supply for orthodoxy or conformity with revealed truth. Material errors are, of course, possible, but no formal heresy may infect or taint his teaching because it is not his word but Christ's revelation that he must know and affirm. Sanctity of life is another immediate criterion of the Father's character as witness to revealed truth. A witness is acceptable

and accepted because of his veracity. Personal holiness is eloquent testimony to the veracity of one who speaks of what concerns the revealed will of the All Holy. Also it might be remarked that in matters divine there is no surer path to understanding than the way of holiness. Vincent of Lerins testifies to this when he writes: "We ought likewise consult the teachings of those Fathers who lived, taught and persevered in the faith and Catholic communion with sanctity wisdom and constancy and who merited to die faithfully in Christ or happily to be slain for him."²⁵

In the matter of antiquity the elements are not so clearly determinable. First of all, this note makes clear that the Fathers by their witness to revelation are the progenitors of the faith of the infant Church. They are, in contradistinction to the theologians, the immediate and direct witnesses of the apostolic tradition, *i.e.* by reason of their historical position they stand in an immediate relation to the apostles and can bear witness directly to the apostolic faith. In fact, since most of them are bishops, they are the very depositaries of that oral tradition. The theologian, on the other hand, takes the doctrine they hand down and formulate, and explains and defends it methodically. The real problem, however, is where this patristic line ends. Commonly it is held that St. John Damascene (†749) is the last of the Fathers, but some would end the line with St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Without derogating from St. Bernard's importance it would seem that if he is to be counted among the Fathers then there is no hard and fast reason for excluding many of his disciples and successors. In any case, the authority of a Father would remain intact as long as his antiquity were recognized in terms of his direct and immediate witness to the apostolic tradition.

The last distinctive characteristic of a Father, approbation by the Church, is necessitated by the very nature of the Church, as a divinely instituted teaching society. Only the voice of the Church can determine authentically the content of revelation and what is in conformity with it. Likewise only the Church can judge whether or not a man is an acceptable witness to this revealed truth because only the Church is able to guarantee that fact infallibly. This approbation, however, may be general or special.

²⁵ *Commonitorium* 28 (MPL 50, 675).

It is a general approbation when the Church gives to a particular Father and his works an honored place in her teaching or liturgical life, or explicitly commends him in the decrees of a general council or of a Pope. Special approbation is conferred when some specific teaching is singled out for commendation, such as Pope St. Celestine's approbation of St. Augustine's teaching on grace²⁸ or the acclamation of St. Leo's tome by the Council of Chalcedon.²⁷

The primary work of the Fathers in the development of doctrine, then, is their witness to the apostolic teaching. But this witness is authoritative only when they unanimously agree that a certain doctrine is of faith. This unanimity need not be mathematical but only moral, possessing universality as to time, place or a particular era. Moreover, the requirements of unanimity are satisfied if the more learned preach it or if a few of the more important teach it during the course of the centuries. Lastly, the doctrine concerned must pertain to the deposit of faith or to truths necessarily connected with revelation and be affirmed as belonging to revealed truth and Catholic doctrine. It is in this sense that the consent of the Fathers is a witness to revealed truth, for, as the Council of Constantinople states: "We confess that we hold and preach the faith given to the apostles in the beginning by our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ and preached by them in the whole world and which the holy Fathers also affirmed and explained and delivered to the holy churches."²⁸

Playing a somewhat similar role in the life of the Church, after the patristic age, are the theologians. They differ from the Fathers in that their witness is mediate and indirect. It is their function to take the sacred doctrine handed down by the Fathers and organize, analyze, and defend it scientifically. Hence the mediate character of their witness. One might say that the specific note of the theologian is the scientific character of his work, which takes what has been handed down as the starting point for scientific development. The other note is the approbation of the Church. Once again it is because they are taking a part in the

²⁸ DB, 128, 173.

²⁷ Cf. Schwartz *Acta conciliorum oecumenicorum*. II, 1^a, 276.

²⁸ DB, 212.

teaching work of the Church that this approbation is essential. This approbation may be explicit or tacit.²⁹

With regard to the theologians, it is the common opinion that their morally unanimous agreement concerning a particular doctrine as a part of the original deposit of revelation is a certain sign of its revealed character. This opinion rests on the connection between the theologians and the infallible magisterium of the Church. If the unanimous consent of theologians approved by the Church should be erroneous then the Church itself would be open to error. It would mean that the doctrines taught by the pastors to their faithful would be derived from an erroneous source and thus the integral deposit of revelation would not be transmitted by the Church.

The Manner in which the Fathers and Theologians Work

The actual work of the Fathers and theologians falls under three main headings: heresy; theological controversy; and special studies on particular subjects. This is not to say that these three form an absolutely necessary part of doctrinal development but only that they are the ordinary courses by which the Fathers and theologians make their contribution to development.

Heresy. As has already been noted, heresy as such does not make any direct contribution to development. It serves as a catalyst which brings the witnesses of revelation into reaction against it. For heresy sacrifices the whole to the part. Its ordinary force lies in the fact that it concentrates its efforts upon some immediate problem. To this difficulty it gives what, at first appearance, seems a simple and practical solution. Concentrating on one point of revelation, the heresy so distorts it that it becomes the sole norm of all the rest and what does not conform to it is changed, discarded, or destroyed. So for example Luther's simple and "practical" solution of the relation between the merits of Christ and their reception by the individual is "faith alone justifies." Luther's understanding of this principle is wrong since it ignores all the rest of revelation on the nature and place of faith. Like all heresy it moves with its own inexorable logic. Thus by

²⁹ For the statements of the Popes on this see DB, 609, 1620, 1652; also 1576 ff. and 1690.

the Lutheran principle the actual, historical society founded by Christ has no right to exist; the sacraments are reduced to "acted sermons stirring up faith"; the nature of man must be totally corrupt; dogma is divorced from intelligence; faith in turn cancels dogma; and at last "religion loses its contact with absolute truth and becomes merely an emotional justification for a certain standard of behaviour."³⁰

It is the above picture of heresy that gives rise to a whole set of reactions on the part of the Fathers and theologians. Faced with a novelty that very often springs from a specious and profoundly emotional judgment they, as Catholic minded teachers, must meet it from the central point of all Catholic thinking. Their first question must be: is this teaching contained in the deposit of revelation preserved and preached by the Church? Their concern is not with its attractiveness, nor its simplicity nor the enthusiasm which it generates. As the servants of the divine society of Christ they have but one major principle: is this teaching in conformity with the apostolic teaching committed to the infallible Church and taught by her through the centuries? Because of this fundamental concern these witnesses to the truth must go back over what they have received and what has been taught by the Church. They must investigate and weigh relationships and implications in the light of that teaching. They must review, scrutinize, and analyze scripture and tradition carefully, accurately, and even minutely. And when they have done all this then they are in a position to criticize and pass judgment on the new opinions. Discussion, polemics, controversy may all enter into this arena and may well serve to crystallize and direct the tenor of their investigations. Sometimes the power of the state may be behind these innovations and thus impede and hamper their work, but, throughout, their rule and guide is the dictum of Pope St. Stephen: *nihil innovetur nisi quod traditum est*.³¹

So much then for the general relationship between heresy and development. But specifically, because the very novelty of heresy causes the Fathers and theologians to re-study the deposit of

³⁰ Christopher Dawson, "Christianity and the New Age," *Essays in Order* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1940), p. 211.

³¹ *DB*, 46.

faith, implications in it become clear to them for the first time.³² St. Augustine's struggle with the Donatists is a case in point. One of the major points at issue was the repetition of baptism. Two centuries before, Pope St. Stephen had given voice to the immemorial practice of the Church that a valid baptism was not to be repeated.³³ Correlative with this had been the development of the teaching on the *σφραγίς* or seal imprinted by the sacrament of baptism, a teaching which appears to have its echo in St. Paul's epistles.³⁴ St. Augustine's teaching on sacramental character makes explicit what the fact of non-repetition and the teaching on the *σφραγίς* had implied. Likewise illustrative is the dogmatic letter of Pope St. Leo to Archbishop Flavian of Constantinople. In this case, Eutyches, a not particularly trained or well-informed monk, had attempted to solve the relation between the two natures of Christ in what he deemed was a simple fashion. His condemnation by Flavian had served as an excuse for igniting highly inflammable political tinder in the Eastern empire and had given to his error a greater currency than it merited. In the midst of all this, St. Leo carefully reviewed the faith of the Church, of scripture, and the teaching of the Fathers and made explicit what had been implicit in all the Christological teaching since the beginning: two natures each complete and perfect in itself and joined in a single person, the Person of the Word.³⁵ The letter itself is a perfect illustration of how heresy, with all of its historical implications, serves indirectly to bring about a growth in understanding.

Theological Controversy. The effect of theological controversy upon doctrinal development is not so easily isolated as that of heresy. Such controversy takes place within the Church, and throughout it both sides remain members and true sons of the

³² It should be noted here that the doctors of the Church have a less perfect idea of the content of faith than the apostles. It is the common teaching of the theologians that the apostles had a divinely infused knowledge of the intrinsic sense of all dogmas but did not propose them in all those forms that would be explicitly opposed to future errors. Cf. Franzelin, *Tractatus de divina traditione et Scriptura* (Rome: Marietti, 1870).

³³ Cf. Cyprian, *epist.* 74 (CSEL, III, 2, 799 and 822).

³⁴ On this whole matter cf. Pouratt, *Theology of the Sacraments* (St. Louis: Herder, 1910), pp. 215-34.

³⁵ Cf. *DB*, 143, 144, 148.

Church. Moreover much of their divergency is not concerned with the content of revelation but rather with material deduced from it through the application of human intelligence to revealed truth. Hence revelation itself is not immediately concerned. All the first principles of the theologian are derived from revelation and Catholic doctrine, however, and so it does have a bearing on the discussion. For the theologian takes his first principles and then, illumined by faith, uses intelligence. In doing this, philosophical techniques are employed, metaphysical concepts representing the highest achievements of the unaided speculative intelligence are brought into play. Both are corrected and amplified in the light of faith. Then, in turn, these are employed as instruments to arrive at a deeper and fuller understanding of the content of revelation. It is *fides quaerens intellectum*. And, in the light of this understanding, and making use of these same tools, the theologian goes on to explain or defend the sacred doctrine or to deduce more specific and detailed applications of the revealed truths.

Such, then, is the work of theology, but since the tools are fashioned by human minds and used by human minds, uncertainty is always possible. For the object of this science is divine truth, the life and truth of the transcendent God. Because it is a case of a finite human mind grappling with the infinite, then even with revelation much will elude its grasp and remain obscure. And it is just this uncertainty that gives rise to difficulties and controversies. For though the theologian will always accept his first principles from revealed truth and be guided by it, still, in using intelligence, diversity of deduction remains possible. If no expression of the infallible Church has intervened, the exact understanding may be a matter of debate. Lacking such formal declaration by the Church (either solemn or ordinary) we can and do have difference of opinion, divergency of view, controversy, and opposing schools of thought on the same subject. It is precisely this struggle in the intellectual arena that aids, very often, in laying the groundwork for the development of a doctrine; because such controversy means that each opponent must return again and again to scrutinize and relate the dogmatic facts and check his conclusions in the light of them. Truth is made to bear upon truth and in the resulting reflection each becomes clearer, more explicit, more definitive. Accidental issues are

sloughed off and the crux of the controversy becomes apparent. The power of men's minds is made to bear upon this central issue, seeking to resolve it and to show its correct relation to explicitly formulated truths. Clarification comes and the whole process has served as an anvil upon which the explicit formulation will be hammered out by the Church.

The preceding paragraphs give only a general picture of the effect of theological controversy upon doctrinal development, but perhaps a single illustration will specify it sufficiently. During the period from the twelfth to the fourteenth centuries (in the West) there was much controversy over the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception. Discussion and debate had resolved the difficulty down to three major points: the universality of original sin; the universality of redemption; and the exact time when the human soul is infused into the body (this point rested upon imperfect notions of active and passive conception). The universality of original sin is explicit in revelation; how then except Mary? At the same time, to set her outside Christ's redemptive work obviously detracts from its universality and dignity. Discussion clarified the points at issue and then Scotus pointed out that the merits of Christ could be preservative and thus obtain that Mary be born free of original sin. Once this conception of preservative redemption was accepted the foundation for an explicit understanding of the truth was laid. And this was the truth defined by Pius IX.

Special Studies by Individuals or Groups of Individuals. The third way in which the Fathers and theologians contribute to the development of doctrine is by means of special studies and works on Catholic truths. This may entail a carefully organized synthesis of past teaching or some almost inspired insight into a specific doctrine. Time and again a Father or a theologian has produced a study or a work that gathered together the teaching that had preceded him and then in a moment of intellectual intuition has put the finger of his mind on some facet or truth or deduction that becomes for him a key opening the door to an explicit understanding of what had been heretofore implicit. Perhaps the best over-all illustration of this is the *Summa* of St. Thomas. This work by its very organization and method opens a whole series of vistas and in almost every section its author's genius has seen a relationship or a series of relationships that

have led to a much fuller and more comprehensive knowledge of revealed truth. Equally significant but on a much smaller scale is St. Anselm's *Cur Deus Homo?* This clearly shows the place of satisfaction in Christ's redeeming work and death, and in doing so furnishes the keystone that brings into their full relationship all the elements of redemption that had been treated by the Fathers. Not that the idea of a satisfactory death is new to the Fathers but the full part that it plays in the redemptive death of Christ is first treated by St. Anselm.

Besides these individual works there are, as it were, lines of study involving theologians over a period of centuries, during which each writer contributes his share to the groundwork of development. As a type of this we have the theological formulation of the doctrine of transubstantiation. Controversy and the Berengarian heresy enter in here but the writings themselves coalesce to furnish an ever cleaner formulation of the dogmatic fact itself. Paschasius Radbertus begins the work, drawing his information from scripture and tradition and formulating it. It is clarified and rendered more exact and precise by Lanfranc and Guitmond. Alger of Liège enlarges upon their work. The essence of their teaching is embodied in Peter Lombard's *Liber sententiarum*. This in turn is developed, clarified, and deepened by the great scholastics, until, the spade work being done, it was ready for the action of the infallible magisterium at the Council of Trent.

The above are but a few of the many illustrations that might be adduced. Others might be drawn from our own times. Historical and speculative works, scientific research, critical studies, dissertations and articles all can play a part and make their contribution to the development of doctrine. But however much of genius, talent, zeal, and insight they may show, their work is only preparatory. Only the *Ecclesia docens*, through its official magisterium, can formally and authentically establish a true development of doctrine. And it is this magisterium that is our next and last concern in this article.

THE ACTION OF THE INFALLIBLE MAGISTERIUM

Throughout this article constant reference has been made to the magisterium of the Church as the constitutive factor in all

development. The necessity for these references is twofold. On the one hand, it is easy to become so interested in the work of the Fathers and theologians that one forgets that they are witnesses to the divine tradition and not the official teachers of it. The second reason is that for the Catholic there can be only one formal principle of development because there can be only one teacher of revealed truth, the infallible Church. Remove or ignore this essential factor and the very thing that makes possible the true development of unchangeable divine truth is cast aside. Without it you do not have doctrinal development or growth in understanding but substantial change, distortion, and error that finally do away with the whole deposit. Proof of this may be found in the history of any error or heresy. For the Church was founded by Christ to teach *His* truth to men, and in order that it might do so it was divinely guaranteed against error. The truths the Church teaches lead to a supernatural end and in themselves transcend the knowledge and natural powers of men. Without the Church there is no means whereby men may know these supernatural truths without fear of error, with absolute security, in their entirety. The Catholic Church and it alone is the authentic teacher and interpreter of revelation and without it men do not have the very means set up by Christ to give them in every age His truth. And it is this right and office to preach the Christian revelation that is technically described by the term "magisterium."

The authority of this magisterium arises from its connection with the charism of infallibility bestowed upon the teaching Church. Hence when it is a question of defining a truth as divinely revealed or of giving an irreformable interpretation of it, the assistance of the Holy Spirit accompanies each such act and the magisterium is acting with the immediate "authority of infallibility" whereby the gates of hell will not prevail against her. On the other hand, in her teaching work the Church may not be concerned with an irreformable definition nor intend to use its infallible authority in its whole intensity. In such cases its concern is only with the security of doctrine rather than a formal and constitutive activity. The authority of the magisterium in this case, while intimately connected with infallibility, yet is not definitive; and in this case is *auctoritas providentiae doctrinalis*. In either case this authoritative magisterium is exercised either

solemnly or ordinarily. *Solemnly* by the solemn judgments of the Supreme Pontiff or by General Councils in union with the Pope. *Ordinarily* by the Pope or the bishops. Thus the depositaries of this magisterial authority are the Pope and the bishops.

The Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff

As already indicated, the Roman Pontiff exercises his magisterial authority either solemnly or ordinarily. It is exercised solemnly when the Pope as the chief pastor of the Church pronounces an *ex cathedra* definition of revealed truth. Such an exercise of his authority is always infallible.³⁶ The ordinary magisterium of the Holy Father is exercised either explicitly or implicitly. It is found explicitly in allocutions and encyclicals. Implicitly it appears when the Pope, as legislator for the universal Church, deals with matters of liturgy and discipline. In general it may be said that this ordinary papal magisterium means that while he does not pass solemn judgement in these cases yet he is speaking as the supreme teacher of the faithful about what is contained in the preaching of the Church. Hence it is certain that some of these acts are infallible but many will fall under the *auctoritas providentiae doctrinalis*. Under this last heading are also found the acts of the various congregations of Cardinals. These congregations do not possess infallibility nor can it be communicated to them, but their dependence on the Holy Father is of such kind that their decisions call for a religious obedience. This obedience, however, is not the assent of faith (unless personally made so by the Pope) but an assent to the opinion of the Congregation that a doctrine or an opinion is *Tuta vel non tuta*.

The Magisterium of the Bishop

The individual bishop is also an official part of the magisterium of the Church. In himself the bishop is not infallible, but in his own diocese he is the authentic voice of the magisterium. In his own jurisdiction the bishop is the official spokesman for the teaching Church and therefore is the reliable public authority on faith and morals. He exercises this office through his care for the preservation of the purity of faith and morals in his clergy and

³⁶ DB, 1839.

people; by supplying the food of Christian doctrine for the faithful; by insuring that education according to Catholic principles is given to children and to the young in the schools.³⁷ These he may accomplish by preaching, pastoral letters, periodicals and publications, by diocesan synods, and the condemnation of errors in and for his diocese. He may also work by authorizing others to carry out some of these tasks.

The Organs of the Magisterium

The Pope and bishops form the official magisterium of the Church. They are the authoritative and authentic spokesmen for the *Ecclesia docens*. How then do they transmit revealed truth which is the source and foundation of all development of doctrine? To put it in a more technical way, what are the organs by which the magisterium, either solemn or ordinary, transmits and preserves the tradition committed to the Church by the apostles? In answer to this the theologians³⁸ teach that there are organs for the transmission of the teaching of the solemn magisterium and still other organs which contain the teaching of the ordinary magisterium.

With regard to the organs through which the solemn magisterium expresses itself there are three: dogmatic definitions; creeds; professions of faith. *Dogmatic definitions* explicitly proclaim some truth as divinely revealed and therefore call for the assent of divine and Catholic faith. These may be made by the Pope speaking *ex cathedra*, by ecumenical councils, or by particular councils whose teaching has been accepted by the universal Church or approved by the Pope in solemn form.³⁹ *Creeds* are those general statements of faith edited and approved by the Church, such as that of Nicea-Constantinople. *Professions of faith* represent more detailed and more lengthy expositions of doctrine in view of a particular heresy or heresies.⁴⁰

The organs of the ordinary magisterium are also threefold: the

³⁷ Cf. *Code of Canon Law*, can. 336, §2.

³⁸ E.g. Billot, *De sacra traditione*; Murray, *De ecclesia*; Bainvel, *De magisterio vivo et traditione*; Fenton, *The Concept of Sacred Theology*.

³⁹ Cf. DB, 200a for an example of this where Boniface II confirms the Second Council of Orange.

⁴⁰ E.g. the profession of faith signed at the Council of Chalcedon in 450.

acts of the Roman Pontiff; the universal consent of bishops united with the Pope; liturgy and liturgical practice. *The acts of the Roman Pontiff* appear in encyclicals, allocutions and letters or in the work of those congregations whose chief office is the protection of revealed truth and whose acts the Holy Father has made his own. *The universal consent of the bishops* may be found in a number of ways: their acceptance of the teaching of a particular council; their responses to the Pope when he calls for them on some matter of faith; or their preaching of a determined doctrine when some heresy or error comes to the fore. Tacitly this consent may be given when, knowingly and willingly, they do not oppose the spread of a particular doctrine in their dioceses. Throughout, though, this consent, in order to be guarded by infallibility, must be morally unanimous and must concern material that is witnessed to as a part of the deposit of revelation. *The liturgy and liturgical practice* constitutes the last of these organs of ordinary teaching. Two things are required here. First, that the practice be necessarily connected with a dogmatic truth. Second, that the practice must be universal or at least tacitly approved by infallible authority. Only under these conditions does the axiom hold: *lex supplicandi statuit legem credendi*.

This completes our study of the elements and instruments of doctrinal development. Much of this might be elaborated upon but since the aim here is only to set down the principles that will guide the study of the development of the doctrine of the Assumption, this will suffice. Forthcoming articles will take each of these elements and in their light review the dogmatic material concerning the Assumption. For, it seems to the writer, that only if one is completely clear concerning the technical side of any development, is it possible to understand and appreciate the definability of the Assumption.

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MISSION INTENTION

"Frequent Public Prayer, for the Missions" is the Mission Intention for the month of December, 1946.

THE NECESSITY FOR THE DEFINITION OF PAPAL INFALLIBILITY BY THE VATICAN COUNCIL

"There are two reasons," wrote the great Cardinal Manning, "for which the Church from the beginning has defined the doctrines of faith: the one to make them clear, definite and precise; the other to defend them and to put them beyond doubt when they have been called in question."¹ The definition by Pope Pius IX of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception was obviously motivated by the first of these two reasons. The second influenced the Vatican Council to utter its solemn judgment on papal infallibility. Furthermore, the Council considered this definition *necessary*. Since contemporary interest in the doctrine of Our Lady's Assumption has focused the attention of Catholics upon the process of an infallible doctrinal definition, and since some recent writings have contrived to misrepresent the effects of the Vatican formula, it should be useful for us to look into the background and the nature of that necessity which the Council claimed for its pronouncement on the infallible magisterium of the Roman Pontiff.

THE NATURE OF AN INFALLIBLE DOGMATIC DEFINITION

An *ex cathedra* definition by the Roman Pontiff or a solemn judgment of an Oecumenical Council is always essentially the infallible proposition of a definite statement as the expression of a truth communicated by God as a part of supernatural divine public revelation. Thus, in the *Ineffabilis Deus*, Pope Pius IX says of the doctrine of Our Lady's Immaculate Conception that it "has been revealed by God and is therefore something which all of the faithful must believe firmly and constantly."² In proclaiming the divine truth of papal infallibility, the Vatican Council used the words "we teach and we define it to be a divinely revealed dogma."³

The defined dogma is a statement of the actual reality, an objective truth. The pronouncement on the Immaculate Conception meant that Our Lady had really been privileged above her fellow

¹ *The True Story of the Vatican Council* (London, 1877), p. 109.

² Denzinger, *Enchiridion symbolorum* (hereafter cited as *DB*), 1641.

³ *DB*, 1839.