

APOLOGETICS

REASONS FOR HOPE

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Christendom College Press
18825 Fuller Heights Road
Triangle, Virginia 22172

ISBN: 0-931888-01-8

NIHIL OBSTAT:

Rev. Cornelius O'Brien, *Censor Deputatus*
July 12, 1978

IMPRIMATUR:

✠ Most Rev. Thomas J. Welsh
Bishop of Arlington
July 12, 1978

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The Development of Doctrine

That which is enunciated by God and that which is proposed by the Church: dogma is both. As enunciated by God, dogma is the outcome of revelation in the strict sense; as proposed by the Church, dogma is the outcome of doctrinal development. 'Doctrinal development' is just the name for the process by which the Church reaches certitude that a given proposition, *p*, states exactly what God has said and hence may be proposed to the faithful as obligatory for belief. Thus a theory of doctrinal development is the obverse of a theory of revelation.(1)

When this relation is grasped, it becomes clear why a defective theory of revelation (such as the one examined in the previous chapter) is inevitably accompanied by a new and defective theory of doctrinal development. We shall analyze the defective views in due time. First, it might be wise to fortify ourselves with a sound one.

The place to begin is with the notorious fact that "ideas have consequences," and that people often do not wish to face the consequences of their own ideas. Even a person resolved to be consistent may be in for surprises, because he probably does not

know all the consequences of his ideas.

This fact of ordinary experience is studied rigorously today in new branches of modal logic called epistemic and doxastic logic, that is, logics which formalize the notions of knowledge and belief.(2) One of the key axioms is this: from "I know or believe that p ," and " p implies q ," it is not possible to infer, "I know or believe that q ." Nonetheless there is a certain sense in which I *ought* to know or believe that q . If I admit p and express doubt about q , I lay myself open to an attack by anyone who knows that p implies q . If the attack comes, my position is indefensible. Now the connection between q and what I admit may be very remote or very hard to see. I may be able to plead that no normal person would have grasped the connection, and I may be right. But all of that is beside the point; objectively speaking, my position is indefensible until I admit q .

We now have before us all the makings of the technical concept of epistemic indefensibility (or epistemic inconsistency, as it is also called). Take a set of expressions such as "I know that p ," "I don't know whether q ," (*etc.*): we say that such a set of expressions is "epistemically indefensible" when they could not all be true of a person who approaches epistemic perfection—that is, a person who at least carries out correctly and accepts all logical consequences of every proposition that he knows or believes.(3)

The analogy to the situation of the Catholic Church is quite striking. A finite body of revelation (the deposit of Faith) has been committed to her by an Entity who is epistemically perfect, who knows all the consequences of what He has revealed. But the Church, human, does not know all the consequences of what she believes. Yet she strives ceaselessly to overcome the "epistemic indefensibility" of her position. Because the Catholic Church is resolved to be consistent, she is prepared to believe new truths whenever their logical connection with what she already believes has been discovered. And should a heretic arise to deny the new consequence, she will more than likely dogmatize it solemnly. Thus the Church is committed by nature to doctrinal development.

Protestantism, by contrast, is epistemically inconsistent on purpose. With its *sola Scriptura*, Protestantism is essentially an

anti-developmental position. It is an attempt to declare dogmatically that the set of dogmas is closed. "I know that p ," says the Fundamentalist, "because Scripture says p ." But even if p implies q , he will deny knowing that q , because q is not in Scripture; and for good measure, he will throw in an attack on the pretensions of "human logic".

Let us pause to study this attitude a little further, because besides being epistemically indefensible it also turns out to be logically inconsistent and historically illuminating.

The Reformation Protestant said that the set of dogmas is closed: "It is all in Scripture, and no Pope can make me believe any more." Suppose the set of dogmas is the set $[a, b, c, \dots o]$. Now it cannot be dogmatically certain that the set $[a, b, c, \dots o]$ are "all the dogmas there are", unless there is a further dogma, P , stating that " $a, b, \dots o$ are all the dogmas there are." But thus formulated, P would contradict its own dogmatic status. To be itself a dogma, P would have to read, " $a, b, \dots o$ are all the dogmas there are, except for this proposition."

Now, the question is: how can P 's dogmatic status be justified? Is it in the text of Scripture? Certainly not. Was it taught *semper, ubique, ab omnibus*? Hardly. Does the practice of the ancient Church evince it? Just the opposite. Then by what definition of "dogma" will P qualify as a dogma? And to this there is no answer.

Protestantism's apologetical embarrassment proceeds from a logical mistake. As formulated above, P presupposes that the set of dogmas is known and counted in advance. If I know that there are 15 dogmas apart from P , it is obvious that "those 15 are all the dogmas there are, except for this proposition," where P is this very proposition, and where the 15 are $[a, b, \dots o]$. But on this reading, it is clear that P is merely an entailment of the different proposition, Q , which reads: "There are 15 dogmas, such that $a, b, \dots o$ plus P equals 15." Here one confronts a problem. What is the dogmatic status of Q ? If Q is a dogma, P is false, because now there is another dogma besides $a, b, \dots o$ and P . So, since it will hardly do admit dogmas whose entailments are false, Q must not be a dogma. But then, if P is a dogma, it will follow that this

dogma is merely an entailment of a non-dogma. Well, it can hardly be the case that every entailment of a non-dogma is a dogma, for then billions of purely secular propositions will be dogmas. Hence, if *P* is a dogma, it must owe its dogmatic status to something other than the mere fact that it is entailed by *Q*. But what can this other factor be? It is admitted that *P* is not explicitly in Scripture. So what remains?

The only remaining possibility is that *P* is a dogma by virtue of the fact that it is implied by some member or members of [*a, b...o*]. But if so, why are not all the implications of [*a, b...o*] dogmas? Why only *p*? To this there is no answer, since no one has ever maintained that the entire set of Scriptural statements, taken singly, collectively, and in all possible subsets, has one and only one implication, namely *P*.

But suppose it is admitted that the implications of dogmas are all dogmas themselves. What then becomes of *P*? It must be reinterpreted, since it no longer presupposes a precise number of dogmas already counted. No one knows how many sound implications of the original [*a, b...o*] must now be included in the set with them. The dogma *P* now means only that the number of dogmas is unknown but that since *P* is a dogma, the others, however many they are, are "all but one." But on this interpretation, too, the anti-developmentalists are in a quandary. He can surely enumerate the dogmas he is presently prepared to maintain. Say he counts 15. But if he admits that the total number of dogmas is unknown, he is admitting that there are, or may be, dogmas of which he is presently unaware. But if so, why may not those presently unknown come gradually to light, as the Catholic Church maintains? Clearly, this interpretation robs *P* of all its intended force.

In short, any definition of "dogma" which would allow *P* to be a dogma would also have to allow for dogmatic developments—and thus reduce *P* itself to triviality. Development is therefore an epistemological and theological necessity.

The only way out of these strictly logical difficulties would be to maintain that *P* is true but not a dogma. One might maintain, for example, that *P* is implied by one or more dogmas, hence true, but

that all the implications of dogmas are, though true, not dogmas. On this theory, *P* would be something like what Catholics call a "theological conclusion", but not exactly. For Catholics consider those propositions which are implied by dogmas alone to be dogmas also, reserving the term "theological conclusion" for those propositions which can be derived only by the aid of a premise drawn from natural knowledge. Protestantism, historically suspicious of natural reason and its results, has resisted the idea that a proposition like *P* could be certainly true and religiously significant without having been itself directly revealed. Hence the Protestant's historical and logical inconsistency in trying, despite everything, to maintain *P* as religiously central. But matters of history aside, what position would one be in, theoretically, if one were to maintain that *P* is implied by dogmas, is true, but like all such implications is non-dogmatic? Well, one is simply in the position of the Arians and modern Fundamentalists, who hold that nothing can be affirmed dogmatically except the *ipsissima verba* of Scripture. Now suppose there are two sentences, *S* and *T*, mutually inconsistent and both purporting to be authentic re-statements of the meaning of some sentence contained in Scripture. It becomes impossible to bind the religious community to accept either one, since no such decision can be dogmatic. The same will be true of rival theories as to what a given Scripture text or set of texts implies. And thus the claim, at first sight satisfactory, that the implications of dogmas are true but not dogmas, turns out to be pastorally vicious, a cause of constant schisms. Moreover, only one's private opinion of one's own skill as a reasoner will provide "certitude" as to which alleged meanings and implications are really such and hence true. In other words, the sole remaining option—that of holding *P* as true but not a dogma—results in the overthrow of the dogmatic principle itself, and the exaltation of private opinion. Perhaps this is why Protestantism has evolved historically from a closed-ended dogmatism into a liberal anti-dogmatism.

Let us now return to our theme, the nature of doctrinal development. It would be clear and simple if the process could begin with a fixed set of definite claims (definite *p*'s and *q*'s) as we

seem to have been assuming so far. In other words, if the deposit of faith were just a set of propositions, then all the Church would need to do would be to discover in various ways their entailments. A few discoveries might come by the deliberate exercise of reasoning, but most would require some historical stimulus. In evaluating a new popular devotion, or in facing a new pastoral challenge, or in wrestling with the ramifications of a new heresy, the Church would discover just new entailments of the propositions she already holds. In many theological textbooks, this scheme is actually presented as the sum total of the problem. Unfortunately, there is more to it.

The deposit of faith is not merely a set of well-understood propositions. In an integral sense, it is the set of sentences in canonical Scripture (some understood, some not) plus the sentences in Divino-Apostolic oral tradition, plus the rites and practices of the Apostles plus some, at least, of the supernatural realities manifested by God and which we still experience directly (the Sacraments, the hierarchy, the Church itself).⁽⁴⁾ All of this is committed to the subsequent generations of the Church as an abiding source of knowledge. Many dogmatic truths about the Church, for example, became clear in Christian consciousness only through a long experience of living with and in this supernatural institution. Therefore, one must reckon with the possibility that a new dogma may arise not only from logical explication of previously known propositions but also from a noetic act of bringing-to-judgment for the first time something which previously had been grasped only in a sensorial or connatural or non-propositional way.

Some commonplace examples may help. Perhaps as a child one learned a poem by rote. Thirty years later it suddenly strikes one what a line of that poem means. The language has been in one's head all along, but not as understood language; when the understanding comes, one can think that line of poetry for the first time *as a judgment*. Or perhaps for years one has known George. Good old George. And then one day George does something which triggers one to put into words, for the first time, something which one has always vaguely known or "felt" about George. (The

person of Jesus was available, for just this kind of insight, to the Apostles, but not, of course, to us; we depend on their judgments.)

Here we are no longer discovering entailments but new aspects of linguistic or extra-linguistic *objects* which we already knew. To go back to epistemic logic, it is no longer a question of knowing that *p* and coming to admit its entailment *q*; it is now a question of knowing *a* and coming to know that *p*, where *p* is true of the object, *a*. It is the transition from "accusative knowing" to "propositional knowing." Unlike the case with entailments, there are no rules for this transition (which is usually called "discovery"). It is not a matter of logic or method, but of psychology.(5)

Does this mean that a *theory* of doctrinal development is just as impossible as a general theory of discovery or creativity would be? A number of recent theologians have drawn this conclusion,(6) but their position rests upon a confusion. Theology does not need a theory of how dogmatic insights happen. The mind is various, history is full of surprises, the touch of the Spirit is mysterious on the Church. But these facts are neither here nor there. For the integral event of a dogma's development is the outcome not of one process but of two. Alongside the mysterious and unpredictable process of discovery, there is the process of *certification*. The fashionable new "insight" has to be tested before it can be accepted. A new notion or tendency has to be digested, reduced to one or more explicit theses, and these in turn have to be judged almost certainly true (or else false) *before* the Magisterium intervenes to speak a word guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. New insights of whatever kind, from whatever origin, *end up* as crisp propositions; they do not begin that way. In the usual course of events, bishop will have quarrelled with bishop, and scholar with scholar, before it is even clear what the quarrel is about. In other words, it is only *after* the "discovery" and *after* the certification process has been underway, that the theologically relevant verifiability conditions and falsifiability conditions of the new idea are finally in hand. This second process clarifies what has been discovered and tests what has been clarified. Irreducible to history, it is the rational deployment, regulated by faith, of tools both logical and exegetical. It is theological method applied to one

of its tasks. There is nothing mysterious about it.

Now, it is of this *second* process that the Church needs a theory. She needs criteria—not for discovering developments—but for testing *alleged* developments. Just think of what is going on today. Various “teachings of Vatican II”, real or alleged—some attested only in the Council’s “spirit”—are being announced as authentic “developments of doctrine”.(7) Theological initiatives of widely different kinds—some claiming a basis in the Council, some only a sort of *licet*—are hailed as signs and portents of “developments” to come.(8) So brisk, indeed, has the trade in development-futures become, that many contemporary catechisms, in presenting the Church’s moral demands, invite mere schoolchildren to speculate that “future developments” may sweep aside unpopular prohibitions.

Does such a theory of dogmatic certification, or criteriology for doctrinal development, exist? It does, but only in germ. Everybody agrees, for example, that a new development, in order to be taken seriously, cannot flatly contradict what is already assured. But flat contradiction is often hard to prove and is often seen only at the end of a careful reflection, which in turn must have begun with something less than visible contradiction—perhaps, the symptoms of hidden contradiction. What are those symptoms? Besides, contradiction is only one of many logical relations between propositions, and by far the least interesting.

To illustrate very briefly the rich possibilities which await exploration, one might glance at the logical relations which Newman envisioned in just one of his “Notes” of a true development, the sixth one, entitled “Conservative Action Upon Its Past.”(9)

Newman says that alleged developments “which do but contradict and reverse the course of doctrine which has been developed before them, and out of which they spring, are certainly corrupt; for a corruption is a development in that very stage in which it ceases to illustrate, and begins to disturb, the acquisitions gained in its previous history.”(10) A true development, by way of contrast, “may be described as one which is conservative of the course of antecedent developments, being really those antece-

dents and something besides them: it is an addition which illustrates, not obscures, corroborates, not corrects, the body of thought from which it proceeds..."(11)

We are dealing, then, not only with various relations between a new sentence and a pre-given set of sentences but also with something a little deeper: a relation between the new sentence and the very "line" of thinking which made possible the generation of the pre-given set. This "line" (or attitude, bent, hidden, assumption, "climate of opinion", whatever) may have done its work without being put into words, much less defined; indeed, it may come to the surface only after an alleged development has begun to "contradict" or "reverse" it. Does Newman mean, then, that theology can never change course? That the Church can never somehow qualify a previous line of development by defining a dogma which brings out a neglected aspect and so restores balance? Certainly not. What Newman requires is simply this: the generation of the pre-given set must still have been possible, intelligible, and legitimate, if the new sentence is true.

In fact, at least six rather formal requirements are established by Newman's sixth "Note". If we let the letter A stand for the pre-existing set (which may be as small as a single dogma or as large as a whole tract) and let s stand for the new sentence, we can make this list:

1) Every member of A must still be true if s is true.

This is the standard requirement of non-contradiction within the object-language set [A plus s].

2) Every member of A must still have its truth-value if s is true.

Suppose one of the member-sentences of A says, "Christ replaces the whole substance of the bread," and suppose s states or entails that there are no such things as substances. Then the problem is not contradiction but loss of "reference" or "denotation". The member of A does not become false but moot; it ceases to make any statement at all, because it has been deprived of a necessary *presupposition* (the existence of substances) for its being either true or false. Does Fr. Avery Dulles, for example, appreciate the gravity of this situation? He writes: "As a case in point, one might cite the recent dispute about

the term 'transubstantiation'. In terms of a commonsense substance philosophy, it is meaningful to say that Christ takes the place of the 'whole substance' of the bread. But if one denies that there ever was such a thing as the 'substance of the bread' or that physical realities are made up of substance and accident, it becomes almost necessary to speak of the 'real presence' in a new way." (12) Well, there is no "almost" about it; it becomes absolutely necessary. Fr. Dulles continues: "To find satisfactory equivalents [for the term 'substance'] in other philosophical systems is a task of creative theology." (13) If so, creative theology is deliberate nonsense, because the "satisfactory equivalent" of an empty term would have to be another empty term. In other words, it is self-contradictory to say: (1) there is no such thing as an *A*; (2) the modern equivalent for "*A*" is "*B*"; (3) and there is such a thing as a *B*. Hence it is impossible to find much consolation in Fr. Dulles's further remark: "For example, the term 'transubstantiation', even though it may be unassimilable into modern metaphysics, remains valid as a testimony to the ancient faith of the Church." (14) In *exactly* the same way (for how is it different?) the terms, "ether," "centaur," and "vampire" remain valid as testimonies to the ancient faiths of physicists, Greeks, and Transylvanians, respectively. (15)

3) Every member of *A* must still be non-trivial if *s* is true.

Triviality means different things, depending on the sort of sentence trivialized. A standard case would be the reduction of a proposition previously taken as synthetic to analyticity. Thus one could argue that John Courtney Murray's theory of Church and State reduces the synthetic teaching that error cannot be the object of rights to the trivial truth that error ought to be avoided (a tautology of practical reason).

Very widespread in current moral theology is what might be called deontic trivialization. It may be defined as follows. (1) *O* is an obligation if and only if there is a situation in which someone is obliged to perform *O*. (2) *O* is a non-trivial obligation if and only if the situation in which someone is obliged to perform *O* occurs frequently or regularly in human affairs. (2) Then a new sentence which defines *O* or the situation(s) in which *O* is obligatory in such

a way as to make it virtually certain that such situation(s) will never occur, reduces *O* to triviality. Such a new sentence is, in Newman's terms, a "corruption". It is to be distinguished sharply from the historical contingency that the situation(s) in which *O* is obligatory no longer (or now hardly ever) happen to occur—*e.g.*, the duel.

4) No member of *A* may lose a logical connection to other dogma(s) if *s* is true.

The dogma of the Immaculate Conception has important and obvious logical connections with the tridentine dogma of original sin as a set of privations acquired by human persons by virtue of their biological descent from Adam and from parents subject to the same privations. But if Protology (as the tract on creation is now sometimes called) accepts a new sentence which redefines original sin as something environmental (the "sin of the world"), the Immaculate Conception loses all connection with the dogma of original sin (unless one proposes to say that Mary was not born into our world or, perhaps, managed never to encounter sin in her own environment). Hence the new sentence is seen to be a corruption of Protology on the evidence of the destroyed logical connection of Mariology.

5) The reasoning needed to generate *A* must still be tenable if *s* is true.

The reasoning *needed* to generate *a* is not necessarily identical in all points to the reasoning historically *used* to generate it, though it would be strange if the two were different in all points. Hence this criterion needs to be applied with care.

6) Every member of *A* must retain its previously assigned referent, verifiability conditions, and falsifiability conditions, if *s* is true.

This is the requirement of metalinguistic consistency which was defined at Vatican I (Denz.-Sch. 3043) and discussed at length in the last chapter.

7) No aspect of the Church's liturgy or devotional practice may lose a contextual implication to a member of *A* if *s* is true.

A contextual implication from *p* to *q* obtains if the act of uttering *p* (uttering it in a certain way) is pointless, *i.e.*, fails to

serve its purpose, unless q is true.(16) Suppose, for example, that p is a prayer to St. Michael the Archangel, and q is the dogma that angels exist (a member of A). Then a new sentence, s , claiming that angels are just Babylonian decor, falsifies q and thus destroys a contextual implication of the prayer.

These negative criteria need to be supplemented by some positive ones. Traditionally, in order for an alleged development to be taken seriously, it must be possible to show that it is 'contained' in the deposit of faith—that is, that the new statement either conveys the meaning or states one of the entailments of something present *prima facie* in the deposit of faith. To formulate these positive criteria rigorously requires a number of technicalities which cannot be presented here without leading us far afield.(17)

This list of criteria is not intended to be exhaustive, but it shows the significance to the faith of a proper theory of the development of doctrine into dogma, and it is already suggestive of the sharp tools which modern logic and linguistic philosophy can put into the Church's hands in order to meet the menace of new "developments" which are really corruptions. For with a right understanding of development, we can face a very modern crisis: the sudden flood of doctrinal corruptions of every kind.

What accounts for this flood? Why does it seem suddenly, within the last 10 or 15 years, as though nothing is secure, as though nothing previously defined can be used as a test to judge corrupt developments? Why has there been so much agony and indecision about applying even those of the just-discussed criteria which are a matter of common sense?

An answer to this question brings us back to a point made at the outset of this chapter. It was observed there that a tight relation exists between the theory of revelation which a theologian adopts and the theory of doctrinal development which he must adopt. If the revealed data are, so to speak, God's input into the Church, solemnly defined or universally taught formulas are the output of the Church—her confessional response to God, offering back to Him in praise the truths which He gave her.

But suppose the revealed data are not sentences but "realities" or "meanings", and suppose that therefore all the

Church's sentences (her dogmatic output) are the product of human attempts to "express" those data. Then there is no longer a common language between God and man. There is only God's mysterious act, on the one hand, and man's faltering words, on the other, and it becomes very difficult to see how the latter can perfectly grasp or express the former. The difficulty will be deepened by the fact that man's expressions are conditioned by his culture, so that as culture changes and philosophical systems replace one another, old expressions become outworn and must be replaced by "currently relevant" ones, if the Church is to continue to speak to modern man. Thereupon this replacement of new expressions for old (pompously called "reconceptualization") *becomes* the new theory of doctrinal development.

For the background of this theory, and the crisis it has produced, one must look to the French *nouvelle theologie* of the 1940's. Here is how Avery Dulles approvingly describes it:

In the 1940s the *nouvelle theologie* of Henri de Lubac, Henri Bouillard, and others pointed out that man's religious knowledge is necessarily imbedded in contingent notions that depend upon particular cultural circumstances. From this it followed quite logically that the dogmas of the faith are subject to reconceptualization. The permanent validity of the dogmas—which these theologians did not contest—ought not be identified, they maintained, with the contingent representations involved in any given formulation. The *nouvelle theologie*, of course, was vigorously attacked by conservative theologians and met with some disfavor in the encyclical *Humani generis*. Even in our own day, some theologians continue to insist on the immutability of the concepts and terms employed in dogmatic formulations.

John XXIII, however, opened the door to the more liberal position when he declared that Vatican II should study and expound authentic doctrine "through the methods of research and through the literary forms of modern thought. The substance of the ancient doctrine is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another." (18)

So: the Pope called for new ways of "presenting" the perduring Gospel, and his remark was interpreted by the *periti* as

an endorsement of Henri Bouillard's theory of theological discourse, which in turn had been interpreted as a theory of dogmatic formulas and held the field as "the" more liberal position. Hence arose what may safely be called the dominant and central problematic of post-Conciliar theology: to advance doctrinal development (in the broad sense of deepening, expanding, refining, or qualifying Christian understanding) by means of this "reconceptualization".

A stunning task; but what is its instrument? What exactly is "reconceptualization"? There seems to be but one source to interrogate on the question; for practically every recent theologian who has spoken on the subject has echoed, with or without explicit acknowledgment, the words of Bouillard. Let us examine what that theologian said, asking questions as we go along.

The place to begin is with the fact that "truth resides in the judgment and not in the concept." From this Bouillard reasons that Ecumenical Councils, in their dogmatic formulations, "do not sanction notions but propositions. The notions can only be consecrated by Councils indirectly and in the measure in which they are necessary to express judgments." (19) But what is a "notion"? Is it image? phantasm? technical term? concept? We are told only that "notion" is that which is necessary, to one degree or another, to express a judgment. This is not much information. Elsewhere Bouillard gives this clue: "In renouncing Aristotelian physics, modern thought has abandoned the notions, the patterns, the dialectical oppositions which make sense only in function of that physics. In order for theology to continue to offer a meaning to the [contemporary] mind, to be able to fructify it and progress with it, theology must also renounce these notions." (20) But this exchange of old notions for new does not destroy the underlying affirmations: "If the notions, the methods, the systems change with time, the affirmations which they *contain* remain, even though expressed in other categories." (21) We may now add "category", whatever that means, to the list of things a "notion" might be. We have also learned that expressions and whole systems of expressions are "containers" for affirmations, which are apparently the same as judgments. Bouillard expands on this

container-theory:

Christian truth never subsists in a pure state. By this we do not mean that it must inevitably be presented mingled with error, but that it is always imbedded in contingent notions and schemes which determine its rational structure. It cannot be isolated from these. It can be liberated from one system only by passing into another... Thus the divine truth is never accessible prior to all contingent notions. Such is the law of incarnation.(22)

We now know that "affirmations" become incarnate in "notions" like souls in metempsychosis. But apparently this passage from body to notional body is not entirely free. The new body must be "analogous" to the old, if the same affirmation is to perdure. Bouillard writes: "When one and the same revealed truth is expressed in different systems (Augustinian, Thomist, Suarezian, *etc.*), the diverse notions which one uses to translate it are neither 'equivocal' (otherwise one would no longer be speaking of the same thing) nor 'univocal' (otherwise, all the systems would be identical) but 'analogous,' that is, they express the same reality in different ways."(23)

This last is hopelessly confused. Analogy arises when the same term is used to express different things. What arises when different terms are used to express the same thing is either equivalence or partial synonymy; in terms of sense and reference, one would have to speak of non-empty intersections in the extensions of the several "concepts". But if we assume that Bouillard meant to speak of partial synonymy rather than analogy, it follows either that the terms of modern physics are partially synonymous with those of Aristotelian physics or else that theology cannot express its message in the terms of modern physics. The latter Bouillard denies; hence the two physics must employ partially synonymous terms. But this Bouillard seems also to deny, for why should it be necessary for theology to "renounce" the old terms, if all that is needed is a mapping of their partial synonymies in order to restore communication with the modern mind?

Moreover, we still have not been told what a "notion" is; hence we do not know what exact role it plays in the "expression"

of a judgment; hence we have no idea of exactly what can change and what can't in the career of a revealed truth.

In other words, the theory of "reconceptualization" turns out to be no theory at all. We are not given the minimum information needed to judge the thing from the perspective of an up-to-date philosophy of language. Bouillard's position turns out to be a tissue of confusions and bad metaphors (as though "translation" were removal from one container to another; as though "affirmations" were ghostly entities which haunt successive "representations" like Cartesian souls). It is disconcerting, therefore, that theologians of the stature of Fr. Avery Dulles have been able to repeat Bouillard's metaphors with a straight face as serious contributions to the hermeneutics of dogmatic statements.(24) For they are useless to faithful doctrinal development.

Thus the central problematic of post-conciliar theology—the penetration of old truths with new insights and their restatement in new terms—has been guided by a theory which is no theory. Because the operative terms "notion", "scheme", and "category" were never defined, nothing prevented "notion" from being understood as "concept" (whereupon the sense of a dogma's predicate-term became alterable matter) and nothing prevented "category" from meaning "historical representation" as opposed to "theological sense" (whereupon the referent of the subject term became expendable). A sloppy theory of partial synonymy between school jargons became a sloppier theory of mutable and immutable in dogmatic formulas, which in turn became an inadvertent revival of the Modernist metalanguage (see the previous chapter). The indispensable conditions for a proposition's functioning as linguistic sign, having never been clarified in the first place, were tossed aside in a ferment of object-language reformulation. But it quickly became obvious that there was no rational way to decide which "reformulations" were acceptable and which were not.(25) Hence all criteriology for doctrinal development had to be abandoned, and a hundred mutually unintelligible "theologies" were free to bloom.

This nightmare situation is no accident and, once a fundamental mistake was made, became inevitable. The mistake

was the claim that the revealed data are not linguistic entities (true sentences). If they are not linguistic entities, it doesn't much matter what you make them or what you call them ('mysteries', 'affirmations', 'meanings', *etc.*) because, whatever they are, we have no criteria for handling them. With sentences, it is different. We know the language in which they are formulated; we know what they mean and how they mean; we can paraphrase them and translate them; we can substitute vocabulary in them; we can replace ordinary words with philosophical terms and *vice-versa*; we can substitute the jargon of one philosophy for that of another—and in all these operations we have criteria for synonymy, that is, criteria for keeping the same referent of the subject and the same sense of the predicate. But if revealed data are mysterious entities, of which we know only a contingent "expression" or two, the rules of linguistic synonymy cease to be applicable. The revealed data become for theology something rather like what Kant's unknowable "things-in-themselves" become for German philosophy: an embarrassment to be eliminated by the denial of transcendence itself. Revelation is reduced to an immanent phenomenon of consciousness.

By the simple step of restoring to dogmas their true character as the common *language* of God and man, true criteria for authentic doctrinal development are also restored, and the nightmare dissolves. Catholic truth can once again shine forth in its splendor, the gift of God and the joy of all the faithful.

NOTES AND SUGGESTED READING

- 1 It is a common misunderstanding that the phrase "development of doctrine" means that there is a process which dogmas themselves "undergo"—something like an on-going interpretation or refinement. The phrase means nothing of the sort. What develops is the vague and unfocused understanding which **precedes** the dogmatic definition. The dogma itself, once defined, undergoes no further de-

- velopment.
- 2 The pioneering work in this field is Jaakko Hintikka, **Knowledge and Belief** (Cornell, 1962).
 - 3 Marshall Swain, "An Alternative Analysis of Knowing" in *Synthese* 23 (1972) 425; cf. Hintikka, *op. cit.* 32.
 - 4 A lengthy and rather technical analysis of the deposit of faith appears in my article, "Criteria for Doctrinal Development in the Marian Dogmas: An Essay in Metatheology" in *Marian Studies* 28 (1977) 47-97.
 - 5 Still, there is an analogy between the two sorts of knowing (if they really **are** two different sorts in the last analysis; some philosophers have doubted it). The notion of epistemic indefensibility has some application, at least, in the accusative situation. Take this dialogue for instance.

"Do you know Latin?"

"Sure."

"Well, here—could you translate this sentence for me?" He shows you a thorny one.

"Oh dear, uh, well, I'm a little rusty...I'd need a dictionary." You are embarrassed. If you claim to "know" Latin, you **ought** to be able to translate.

Even worse is this case: "Do you know George?"

"Yes, very well."

"Then I guess you'll be going to the wedding."

"Wedding? I didn't even know he had a girl!" If you claim to **know** someone, it is embarrassing to be caught in ignorance of some truth about him. In other words, accusative knowing also involves an immanent dynamism: it demands to be expanded into the full set of propositions which are true of the object known. This is the fact which Newman had in mind, when he wrote about the overall "impression" or "idea" of Christianity, which the mind proceeds to draw forth in successive and distinct sentences (Oxford University Sermons, Sermon Number 15).
 - 6 See, for example, Bernard Lonergan, S.J., **Method in Theology** (New York, 1972) 319, and Karl Rahner, "The Development of Dogma" in **Theological Investigations I** (Baltimore, 1961) 63ff. Rahner's views are subjected to a severe critique in my above-cited article, *Marian Studies* 28 (1977) 58ff.
 - 7 A long list of examples could be given: the so-called "new definition" of marriage as **communio vitae et amoris**; the "new definition" of the Church as people of God; the alteration of the exercise of jurisdiction through collegiality; the "historical" (as opposed to "propositional") character of revelation; the ecclesio-typical approach to Our Lady's mediation; etc.

- 8 Thus, for example, Avery Dulles: "Thinkers of the stature of Paul Tillich and Teilhard de Chardin have pointed the way. From such a creative theology new doctrinal insights will emerge and they, in turn, may crystallize into new dogmas," *The Survival of Dogma* (Garden City 1971) 184.
- 9 Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, 199f. It is a pity that all seven of Newman's "Notes" cannot be analyzed here, because they are the best sketch of a development criteriology ever proposed by a theologian. The seven "Notes" have been gathering dust since 1846 because Newman's belletristic commentators have had little idea what to do with them.
- 10 **Loc. cit.**
- 11 **Ibid.**, 200.
- 12 Avery Dulles, S.J. **op.cit.**, 178.
- 13 **Loc. cit.**
- 14 **Ibid.**, 183.
- 15 On the superficiality of the widespread assumption that contemporary accounts of physical reality have dispensed with substances, see William A. Wallace, O.P., *Causality and Scientific Explanation*, II (Ann Arbor 1974) 249f. and 269.
- For the several theories of denotation (none of which would salvage Dulles' position, by the way) see P.F. Strawson, *On Referring*, reprinted in A.G.N. Flew, ed., *Essays in Conceptual Analysis* (London 1956) 21-52; a fuller bibliography can be found in Leonard Linsky's article, *Referring* in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* 7 (N.Y.: 1967) s.v.
- 16 Isabel Hungerland, "Contextual Implication" in *Inquiry* 3 (1960) 211-258, cited by Jaakko Hintikka, *Models for Modalities* (Dordrecht, 1969) 17, footnote 14.
- 17 See a provisional attempt in my above-cited article, *Marian Studies* 28 (1977) footnote 27, especially p. 72.
- 18 Dulles, *The Survival of Dogma*, 117-118. The quotation from Pope John's opening speech is in Walter M. Abbott, ed., *The Documents of Vatican II*, 715.
- 19 Henri Bouillard, S.J., *Notions conciliares et analogie de la verite in Recherches de sciences religieuses* 35 (1948) 258.
- 20 Bouillard, *Conversion et grace chez saint Thomas d'Aquin* (Paris, 1944) 224. This statement, among others, was subjected to a thoroughly incompetent attack by R. Garrigou-Lagrange, O.P., in *Angelicum* 23 (1946) 126ff.
- 21 **Ibid.**, 220, emphasis added.
- 22 **Loc. cit.** It is not hard to see that Bouillard's mysterious and migratory "affirmations" are a survival of the old conceptualist "propositions" in the sense of non-linguistic nexus of concepts. This con-

ceptualist theory of declarative sentences (namely, that they incarnate such a nexus) has been the common doctrine of the Jesuit Order since Suarez and, interestingly enough, is also the doctrine of Antoine Arnould in the **Port Royal Logic**. It is perhaps the only point on which the Jesuits and the Jansenists ever agreed; it was one point too many.

23 Bouillard, **Notions Conciliaires**, 254.

24 Dulles, **op. cit.**, 187.

25 Dulles admits this point candidly, **op. cit.**, 202. For a critique of Dulles' attempt to avoid the chaos thus threatened, see my above-cited article in **Marian Studies** 28 (1977), pp. 95f.