

THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMMUTABILITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE

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THE PUBLICATION of Dr. Owen Chadwick's *From Bossuet to Newman: The Idea of Doctrinal Development*,¹ is timely at a moment when a remarkable awakening of Protestant interest in tradition is surpassed in enthusiasm only by the Catholic biblical revival. As we shall have occasion to disagree rather profoundly with some of the main contentions of this distinguished Cambridge scholar, let us first pay a due meed of praise. Tasteful, even chastely luxurious in style and format, *From Bossuet to Newman* makes delightful, often exhilarating, reading. Learned and in intention fair, the Master of Selwyn has done a great deal of research round and about his subject. There are excellent passages on the rise of the age of pure scholarship, on W. G. Ward, and on the seventeenth-century Spanish theologians. The author has studied unpublished notes of Newman at the Edgibaston Oratory and appears even to have penetrated into the Scots' College, Rome.

The book's title sufficiently proclaims its intention, namely, to establish a contrast, even a contradiction, between Newman's theory of doctrinal growth and Bossuet's insistence on unchanging tradition, the immutable nature of the revelation once made, the identity of the gospel preached in every age. The history of Christian dogma, it is implied, incontestably shows the emergence of new and strange doctrines side by side with the primitive revelation, and the Catholic Church, guiltily conscious of teaching doctrines unknown to the Apostles, clutched gratefully at the theoretical justification of her practice offered by Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

Undoubtedly Bossuet (1627-1704), "the last of the Fathers of the Church" and one of the greatest of Christian orators, was of the school of St. Vincent of Lérins, who in the fifth century laid down the famous canon of Christian truth: "quod ubique, quod semper, quod ab omni-

¹ Cambridge University Press, 1957.

bus creditum est”² (“what all Christians have everywhere and at all times believed”). In the same vein Bossuet, in his great polemic against the Protestants, insisted that change of doctrine is necessarily a corruption of primitive Christianity, a betrayal of the immutability of the God-given revelation. In his *History of the Variations of the Protestant Churches* he drove home the argument, with unsurpassed felicity and eloquence, in a hundred forms and instances. This appeal to unchanging tradition was, as Dr. Chadwick says, a key apologetic weapon in the hands of the controversialists of the Counter Reformation: “Protestants have varied in the faith: you have changed the doctrine and practice of a thousand years. You are a new religion. Where was your Church before Luther?”³ (In this citation of the argument, however, there is some confusion between two distinct indictments: the novelty of Protestant doctrines and the late origin of Protestantism as an institution.)

Dr. Chadwick illustrates the point by an amusing account of one of the more famous theological jousts, that between the Anglican Dr. Featley and the Jesuits, Frs. Sweet and Fisher, in a London dining room in 1623,

the prize being the allegiance of Edward Bugges Esquire. Fisher urged Featley to show (‘from good authors’) persons through the centuries who believed as Featley did. . . . Featley, who was no historian, desired at all costs to refrain from producing a list of names, and replied by asking for a list of persons (‘from good authors’) who in all ages had believed the doctrines of the Council of Trent. Fisher refused to be drawn. He would produce his list *after* Dr Featley had produced the Protestant list. . . . ‘Names, Names, Names’ chanted a chorus of Fisher’s sympathizers. ‘Name visible Protestants in all ages.’ ‘What!’ said Dr Featley, ‘will nothing content you but a Buttery-book? You shall have a Buttery-book of names if you will stay awhile.’⁴

Against Newman’s *Essay on Development* Dr. Chadwick sets the well-known passage from Bossuet: “The Church’s doctrine is always

² *Commonitorium* 2 (PL 50, 640); p. 10 in the critical edition of R. S. Moxon (Cambridge University Press, 1915), which has the best text. Vincent, who probably died before 450, discusses and allows development in chap. 23 (PL 50, 667–69), anticipating Newman’s analogies of the organic growth of the seed and the human infant. In chap. 23 occurs the sentence, later adopted by the Vatican Council (DB 1800), which affirms immutability and development together: “Crescat igitur . . . intelligentia scientia sapientia, sed in suo dumtaxat genere, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententia.”

³ Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 13.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 3.

the same. . . . The Gospel is never different from what it was before. Hence, if at any time someone says that the faith includes something which yesterday was not said to be of the faith, it is always *heterodoxy*, which is any doctrine different from *orthodoxy*. There is no difficulty about recognizing false doctrine: there is no argument about it: it is recognized at once, whenever it appears, merely because it is new. . . ."⁵ By contrast, it is suggested, Newman, being an historian, knew that in the course of the centuries the Church's doctrine had in fact undergone changes and additions, a development more drastic than could be accounted for by the formula of the "explication," according to the rules of formal logic, of what was implicit in the original revelation. Newman, the suggestion is, provided new analogies—the growth of the child into the adult or the overtones of poetic expression—to justify what were in effect new doctrines; and the Church accepted both the defense and the assumption that provoked it. Thus the mind of the contemporary Church becomes the only criterion of the faith, in such wise that Scripture and apostolic tradition cease even to be a norm of doctrine, and the way lies open for advance to what is in effect a new religion.

At this point we shall offer but three brief comments. First, the objection just cited overlooks the infallibility of the Church.⁶ Second, it is a mistake to suppose that the relation between immutability and development is one of sheer contrast; a living organism *must* grow after birth *in order* to retain its identity; by growing it becomes more completely itself. Third, Dr. Chadwick has been badly briefed on the facts. He is confident that the history of dogma has demonstrated that contemporary Catholicism differs, substantially and over a wide range of doctrines, from primitive Christian belief, and he rashly cites even so eminent an historian as Batiffol as an instance of a scholar whose theological presuppositions led him unconsciously to misrepresent or dilute the findings of history. Catholic historians, he thinks, are driven to "impose a pattern" on history to avoid the admission that the Church has made additions to the original revelation. But is the truth

⁵ *Première instruction pastorale sur les promesses de l'église*, chap. 28 (*Oeuvres* 22 [Versailles, 1816] 418–19), as given by Chadwick, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁶ It is a corollary of the infallibility of the Church that a *consensus fidei* upon any point at any moment in the Church's history is an absolute guarantee of the truth (and the revealed truth) of the doctrine in question.

not rather that, given a reasonable theory of development, Catholics can *discern* a pattern in history? To take one example: While no historian can be blind to the later explicit acceptance of the Roman primacy, only a study of history that is initially oriented by an understanding of Mt 16: 15–19 and of the fully developed doctrine will assess aright the implicit and indirect evidence of the first four centuries: the practical acceptance from the first of the Roman See as the center of unity, the sole sufficient witness of tradition and the norm of orthodoxy; St. Clement's letter, as early as the nineties, to the Church in Corinth;⁷ the authoritative statement on Trinitarian doctrine by Denis of Rome (259–268) in a letter to Denis of Alexandria; the way early heresiarchs flocked to Rome to influence doctrine at its source, and on account of the unrivaled prestige of the Roman See; the iconographical evidence;⁸ the importance attached by bishops all over the Christian world to the possession of certificates of communion with the Roman Church, as a guarantee of orthodoxy; the key role played by Hosius, the Pope's representative, at Nicaea, and the Eastern appeals and deputations to Rome during the Arian controversy.⁹

Dr. Chadwick, however, is not concerned solely, or even primarily, with specifically Catholic doctrines. The challenge so urbanely issued, the problem posed so lucidly, concerns the whole history of Christian dogma from Nicaea—for even Trinitarian doctrine is not spared¹⁰—to the Vatican and *Munificentissimus Deus*. What exactly happens, he asks, when there is a new definition of doctrine? Does the Church simply declare her mind or does she have to “make up” her mind? If the doctrine defined was already the object of the Church's conscious

⁷ Crehan has shown that Van Cauwelaert's belittling of the evidence of Clement's famous letter is largely based on a misunderstanding; cf. R. Van Cauwelaert, O.S.B., “L'Intervention de l'église de Rome à Corinthe vers l'an 96,” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 31 (1935) 267–306; J. H. Crehan, S.J., “Scripture, Tradition and the Papacy,” *Scripture* 7 (1955) 6–13.

⁸ As illustrated in G. Stommel's *Beiträge zur Ikonographie der konstantinischen Sarkophagplastik* (Bonn, 1954).

⁹ In 338 both St. Athanasius and the Arianizing Eusebians appealed to Pope Julius; cf. Athanasius, *Apologia contra Arianos* 19–20 (PG 25, 277–81). Other groups appealed to Pope Liberius in 365 or 366; cf. Socrates, *Historia ecclesiastica* 4, 12 (PG 67, 484–96); Sozomen, *Historia ecclesiastica* 6, 10–11 (PG 67, 1317–21). Later, appeals were made to Pope Damasus.

¹⁰ Cf., e.g., Chadwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 18–19, 30, 58–60, 97.

faith, why should it be necessary to define it? If it was not, how can it be said that it is not “new”?

Now, the whole point of a theory of development is to answer this dilemma with a distinction or a *datur tertium*, by pointing to such analogies as those of vital growth, where identity and continuity are combined with change; or of formal reasoning, where the conclusion is contained in the (known) premises without being itself explicitly known. These analogies, however, only justify and illustrate the principle of development. They give little or no guidance on the crucial question, the degree or extent of legitimate development. Clearly, for instance, no one will want to press the analogy of vital growth or organic evolution to the point of asserting that in respect of faith the Apostolic Church stands to the Church of today as the acorn to the fully grown oak. That would be to assert a substantial evolution of the kind condemned by Pope Pius X.¹¹ Again, what is meant by “implicitly known,” or by the “explication” of doctrine? Is it the revealed deposit, or our apprehension of it, or authoritatively formulated doctrine, that develops? Clearly no difficulty is raised by the deduction that our Lady is Theotokos, Mother of God (a conclusion drawn as early as Origen); the question was never more than one of the propriety of language. But how to formulate a principle that will allow legitimate development and yet exclude illegitimate development, or development on an illegitimate scale? Neither the nature nor the scale of legitimate development can be determined *simply* empirically, by a generalization of the development that has so far occurred, for at least the possibility of further development must be admitted. Must both premises, then, be revealed? Or, on the other hand, is the new insight gained by non-logical processes? Does explication or development (let us ask with the faith of the Apostolic Church in mind) mean the passage from obscure to clear, from imperfect to perfect, from unconscious or subconscious to conscious, or perhaps rather from concrete to abstract knowledge?

Dr. Chadwick (whose interpretation of the history of dogma is

¹¹ *DB* 2079–80; cf. 2021. There is a brief statement of the principles of immutability and of development, false and true (“ad ea quoque illustranda et enucleanda, quae in fidei deposito nonnisi obscure ac velut implicite continentur”) in Pope Pius XII’s *Humani generis*, *AAS* 42 (1950) 562–78, esp. 563–70.

questionable) thinks that papal and conciliar definitions are more than clarifications, that they represent "new revelations," "additions" to the faith once delivered to the saints. Newman, he suggests, approaching the question historically, perceived that the Church needed an extreme theory of development to enable her "to reconcile the notion of an immutable revelation with the uncomfortable findings of historians." The Church, in fact, we are told, welcomed Newman's theory as "the supreme dodge" to make her independent of history.¹²

The Problem

While the precise nature and degree of legitimate development are still open questions, a variety of views being propounded in a debate that is not yet finished, all Catholic theologians will be agreed in rejecting this extreme theory. Nor does the history of dogma support it. On the theological side, it is Catholic doctrine that the object of Catholic faith is divine revelation and that this revelation, complete by the end of the Apostolic Age, is contained in Holy Scripture and apostolic tradition. In the language of the Vatican Council, there occurs individual and collective progress in the understanding of the revealed mysteries, but it is the *same* revealed truths that are apprehended, and in the same sense, down the ages.¹³ On this sameness Pope Pius X insisted in his condemnation of Modernism, and the proof of this identity has been proclaimed the noblest task of the theologian by both Pope Pius IX and Pope Pius XII.¹⁴ These authoritative statements are alone sufficient to rebut Dr. Chadwick's charge, in so far as its gravamen is that the Church is in practice ceasing to claim immutability for her teaching. The task thus defined by the Popes, however, is as delicate in its nature as it is formidable in its scope, and the present article is no more than a broad survey, admittedly tentative, of an imperfectly charted sea, taking soundings at selected points.

Clarification of Terms

Let us first clarify what it is that we are discussing, for "development of doctrine" is an unusually ambiguous phrase. "Development"

¹² Cf., e.g., Chadwick, *op. cit.*, pp. 159-60, 195, 183-84, 191-95. Dr. Chadwick assumes that to reject this view is to convict oneself of historical naiveté or dogmatic fanaticism.

¹³ *DB* 783, 1787, 1792, 1796, 1800.

¹⁴ Pius IX, *Inter gravissimas*, *Pii IX Pontificis Maximi Acta* 1 (1854) 260; Pius XII, *Humani generis*, *AAS* 42 (1950) 569.

is a wide and imprecise term; it could cover anything from the mere systematization of the revealed truths, or even a purely verbal development (their translation into abstract or technical language) to something analogous to the biological development of the modern horse out of some possibly original marine animal, or to the development of modern physical science out of its primitive beginnings in Egypt and Greece. The words most commonly used in explaining development are no less ambiguous. There are, perhaps, no words in the language which stand in greater need of (dare we say it?) linguistic analysis than “unfold,” “explication,” and “potentially contained.” We believe that the Church in her official teaching has generally avoided these terms and has used the word *evolutio* in this context only to condemn it.¹⁵ No one, indeed, knows better than Catholic theologians, accustomed to arguing with atheistic evolutionists, the ambiguity of the word “evolution”; it may mean epigenesis, the emergence of radically new characters, or it may mean the unfolding or disclosing—in a variety of possible ways—of characters already somehow contained in the germ. When transferred from biology and used metaphorically in other sciences, its vagueness (with the consequent possibilities of confusion) is greatly increased. If we use this biological metaphor in explaining doctrinal development, we must beware of formulations savoring of the idealist theory of doctrinal evolution, or even of Günther’s modified version of this theory, both of which were condemned by the Vatican Council.¹⁶

“Unfold” is also a slippery word. As applied to the revealed data, it could suggest the analogy of biological evolution or the unfolding of a flower. Or it could suggest the unrolling of a scroll: a legitimate comparison so long as it is remembered that in our actual case the whole scroll was open to inspection from the beginning. It could also legitimately mean that, saving the essential truths which have always been believed explicitly in the Church, Christians have, through theological progress, biblical exegesis, etc., gradually won a deeper understanding of the original revelation. And this might mean either that the Church has gradually unraveled truths obscurely contained in the deposit or

¹⁵ For example, cf. *DB* 2043, 2053, 2054, 2080, 2085. These condemnations, of course, concern only either particular alleged instances of development or a development mediated by “vital immanence” or the *conscientia christiana*.

¹⁶ *DB* 1800, 1808, 1816, 1818; cf. J.-M.-A. Vacant, *Etudes théologiques sur les constitutions du Concile du Vatican* (Paris-Lyon, 1895) 1, 360-65; 2, 282-88. Vacant discusses our whole question in 2, 186-319.

has come to perceive the further implications of truths clearly contained in the deposit.

But then what does "implication" mean? To "imply" may mean to give a clear hint or to state clearly though indirectly. "X implies Y" may mean that proposition Y is equivalently, though in other words, contained in proposition X. Or even that X says *more* than Y: either as the general proposition (whether a collective or a true universal) contains the particular, e.g., if all the Apostles were witnesses of the resurrection, then Andrew was a witness, and on account of the generalization of Mt 5:7 any merciful individual will obtain mercy. Or, somewhat conversely, as the specific contains (intensively) the general, so that to say that a creature is a tiger is to say that it is an animal; so St. Thomas argued that the doctrine of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son is contained in the scriptural doctrines that He is sent by Christ and is the Spirit of Christ, since procession is the most general (least determinate) of all modes of origin.¹⁷ Or as the nature contains its essential attributes, so that to say that Christ is true man is to say that He has a human intelligence. Or, to borrow an example from Vacant, as a man who tells me in Paris that he was born in Pekin tells me that he has traveled from the capital of China to the capital of France.¹⁸

Commenting on, and qualifying, St. Thomas' statement that *quoad substantiam* the revelation which culminated in Christ "non crevit per temporum successionem" (since it was all, in a sense, implicit in Gn 3:15), Cardinal Franzelin, the distinguished theologian consultor at the Vatican Council, points out that logical implication *quoad nos* is not coextensive with objective or ontological entailment. Objectively or ontologically, belief in God and His salvific will includes or

¹⁷ *C. gent.* 4, 24 and *Sum. theol.* 1, q. 36, a. 2. In the latter passage, discussing the procession of the Holy Spirit from the Son, St. Thomas says in his answer to the first objection: "De Deo dicere non debemus quod in Sacra Scriptura non invenitur, *vel per verba vel per sensum.*" The doctrine, he points out, is *equivalently* taught in Scripture. He also argues (1) that the distinction between the Son and the Holy Ghost cannot be grounded in an absolute reality (since each Person is God); it must therefore be grounded in a relation, which can (*in divinis*) only be a relation of origin; and (2) since Scripture expressly asserts (Jn 15:26) that the Spirit proceeds from the Father, He must also proceed from the Son, since the only distinction between Father and Son is the *oppositio relationis* (of Paternity and Sonship).

¹⁸ Vacant, *op. cit.* 2, 293-94.

implies belief in the whole Creed. Nevertheless, the articles of the Creed could not be deduced, by a finite intelligence, from these two general beliefs; further revelation was necessary. Obviously, as Franzelin pointed out, implications that are purely objective and *quoad se* (and not also logical and *quoad nos*) can play no part in doctrinal development.¹⁹

Implication, then, also means the logical entailment instanced by the syllogism and other kinds of formal reasoning. But it is an interesting coincidence that, just as many theologians are moving away from logical deduction as an explanation of doctrinal development, so the profane philosophers—whether or not they are influenced by Aristotle's observation that it is the mark of the educated man not to expect the same kind of proof in every subject matter or by Newman's study of non-logical inferences in his *Grammar of Assent*—are widening their ideas and re-examining the nature of reasoning. The distinction between the discovery and the proof of new truth (a distinction known, of course, to Aristotle) contributes to the theory of development. Truth is often *discovered* not syllogistically but by the detection of relationships²⁰ or patterns in data known long before. It is being more widely recognized, also, that logical entailment, indispensable as it is in the purely theoretical sciences, has a very limited application to the real world,²¹ and that logical necessity is not the only kind of necessity. Moral and physical necessity, and a kind of psychological entailment, are equally relevant to the truths by which we live. It is notorious, for instance, that while in practice we accept unhesitatingly the necessary character of physical laws, it is difficult to prove with strict logical rigor (though probably Dr. Hawkins has done it²²) the existence of causal necessity in the external world. Yet we *know* that the consumption of a pint of cyanide would kill a man. And we may be sure that there is no cyanide in our soup today, although the contrary is logically possible. In general, the mysteriousness of knowledge and inference is being increasingly recognized.

¹⁹ Franzelin, *De divina traditione et scriptura* (Rome, 1875) th. 26; St. Thomas, *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 1, a. 7; q. 174, a. 6.

²⁰ That is, relations other than the subject-attribute relation.

²¹ Cf. S. E. Toulmin, *The Uses of Argument* (Cambridge, 1958).

²² See D. J. B. Hawkins' penetrating study of this *crux philosophorum* in his *Causality and Implication* (London, 1937).

It is interesting, again, to reflect that it is in the psychological realm, in mental events, that causality becomes transparent. While we no doubt know that the deflection of the cricket ball wide of mid-off is not merely subsequent to, but really the consequence of, the impact of the bat, yet we have little insight into such physical causality. By contrast, I not merely know that my present joy is caused by the good news I have received about a friend, but I have insight into the causality, perceiving how the knowledge of my friend's safety produces or issues in the joy, and the joy arises out of the good news. This consideration leads on to a sort of psychological entailment of a different kind. If we know someone very intimately, we can within limits confidently predict how he would act in certain circumstances. Both in Greek (*hoios*) and in English, language attests this analogy (imperfect because of human freedom) between deterministic and psychological entailment. As we say that cyanide is of a lethal character, so we say that for X to commit theft would be "out of character." In some cases these psychological judgments come near to being actually analytical; if a man is essentially noblehearted, is it not logically impossible that he should betray his country's secrets for gain? Ah! but how can we *know* that a man is noblehearted or that, if he is, he has not changed?

Whatever the validity of these two objections in relation to men, neither applies (simply) to Christ. We know a great deal about the character of Christ on the authority of the Holy Spirit, and consequently we have concerning Him many certainties which are not explicitly stated in Holy Writ. We know, for instance, that Christ would not betray a friend or torture the innocent, though we are nowhere told this explicitly in Scripture—any more than we are told that He loved His Mother or that she loved her Son. We may suggest that this sort of knowledge is relevant to the doctrine of the Assumption (without at all wishing to *substitute* this kind of argument for the well-established, more objective proofs based on the perfect sinlessness and divine motherhood of our Lady). It is, in this connection, an interesting fact that while non-Catholic Christians commonly question our knowledge of the Assumption, they rarely if ever venture to question the fact of the Assumption. Moreover, not only has our knowledge of Christ a certainty perhaps denied to us concerning our fellow men, in

that the former is based on divine revelation and the latter on observation, interpretation, and inference, but also, while we look at our fellow men from the outside, the Christian—or at least the Church—sees Christ as it were from the inside, having herself in some degree “the mind of Christ.” Hers is not a mere human conviction, but the knowledge of divine faith. Finally, if it is objected that the ways of God are mysterious and inscrutable, yet in Christ God is revealed, and we know further that in His human nature also Jesus Christ is a perfect Son.

But is not the Assumption nevertheless a “new” doctrine, supposing (a point to which we shall return) that it is not contained explicitly in apostolic tradition, but only implicitly in Scripture? To the argument itself, from Scripture and the early Fathers,²³ we have nothing to add. But we may note that there is a sense of the word “development” which is relevant to this kind of clarification of what is obscure in Scripture. That is the analogy of photographic development, by which the dim outlines of a picture are sharpened as the print falls into focus. To complete our analogy on the subjective side, we may, taking another metaphor, ask: “Is fire in the flint?” Though colloquial language says that it is, strictly it is not; and even in flint and steel considered together there is fire only potentially. But when flint *meets* steel, there is fire. Somewhat in the same way, the encounter of faith and revelation is fruitful. In studying development we must not neglect the part played by contemplation, the *theoria* so highly esteemed by the Church in all ages, the reverent and loving gaze which she directs at the *Verbum incarnatum* as portrayed in the *verbum scriptum* and as present in the Eucharist. As a magnifying glass may enable the sun’s rays to produce fire, so while the Church’s contemplation focuses her faith in a steady gaze over the centuries, ever and again “in my meditation a fire shall flame out.”²⁴ Considered in the abstract, the Incarnation does not *obviously* imply the Assumption by a logical necessity, but viewed by

²³ Among some recent admirable statements of the argument we may note those by George W. Shea in *The Mystery of the Woman* (ed. E. D. O’Connor, C.S.C.; Notre Dame, Ind., 1956); by C. Dillenschneider, C.S.S.R., *Le sens de la foi et le progrès dogmatique du mystère marial* (Rome, 1957); by C. Journet, *Esquisse du développement du dogme marial* (Paris, 1957); cf. also W. J. Burghardt, S.J., *The Testimony of the Patristic Age concerning Mary’s Death* (Westminster, Md., 1957).

²⁴ Ps 38:4 (Douay; cf. Vulgate).

faith in its particularity and historical concreteness, it does imply it, so that to deny one is to deny the other.²⁵

“Doctrine” is also, in this context, an ambiguous word. It could refer either to the revealed truths themselves, or to systematic and speculative theology, or to credal formularies and dogmatic definitions. A development of doctrine, in the significant sense in which the term is commonly used today, means that a truth not plainly but only obscurely or implicitly contained in the sources of revelation becomes part of the object of divine and Catholic faith either when it is solemnly defined or when it is first proposed by the universal ordinary magistratum. Thus, although *theology* has clearly developed on a spectacular scale from the New Testament and the Apostolic Fathers to our own day, theological progress, however great, need not (in its idea) connote any doctrinal development in this sense. Additions to the Creed and new definitions, likewise, do not necessarily imply doctrinal development, since more often than not the truth in question is defined only because denied or challenged, and was already part of the faith. Obviously, for instance, though only later defined, the doctrines of transubstantiation and the Real Presence were (explicitly) part of the faith from the beginning. Nor did the condemnation of Nestorius in 431 mark the beginning of the Church’s explicit faith that Christ, while God and man, is yet but one Person.²⁶ To avoid confusion, therefore, we shall reserve the term “development of doctrine” for the “significant” sense defined above.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMMUTABILITY: THE TRADITION

Its Contemporary Statement

We are not here concerned exclusively, or even primarily, with specifically Catholic doctrines. The questions raised by Dr. Chadwick

²⁵ We must, however, beware, as a friendly critic warned me after reading this paragraph, of the Free Church or Congregationalist theory, according to which the individual mind, guided by the Holy Spirit, discovers or releases truth in the Scriptures. In the text I am thinking, not of the illumination of the individual Christian, but of the corporate mind and faith of the Church. Again, the analogy of photographic development is no more than an analogy and does not solve the problem; it has, however, the advantage of focusing attention upon what seems to be the crux of the whole question, the very subtle distinction between the growth of the revealed deposit of faith (which seems to be inadmissible) and the growth of the Church’s understanding of the revealed deposit. Perhaps in other points also this paragraph requires further definition.

²⁶ Cf. *DB* 2062, 2064.

touch the central and fundamental doctrines of Christianity. He argues that the Vincentian canon has been a skeleton in the theologian's cupboard ever since Petavius drew attention to the Platonic terminology and otherwise unsatisfactory language of some of the ante-Nicene Fathers concerning the Blessed Trinity, and that the acrimonious controversies which preceded many of the Trinitarian and Christological definitions show that, if the Church believed these doctrines previously, she can have believed them only "unconsciously," and that the historic Councils of Nicaea, Constantinople, Chalcedon, and Ephesus show us the Church not declaring her mind, but "making up her mind." The doctrines defined at Trent, Dr. Chadwick thinks, are still more obviously novelties, defensible only on a theory of development that really jettisons any claim to immutability.

In the investigation of this question, a first line of exploration is suggested by Newman's claim that his theory of development, so far from being itself novel or revolutionary, "has at all times, perhaps, been implicitly adopted by theologians."²⁷ We shall perhaps find that, as Newman's "implicitly" hints, there has been development in the idea of development itself. At the same time this procedure will bring before us the teaching of some of the theologians and Doctors of the Church on the question of development and immutability and on the respective roles of Church and Scripture, tradition and creeds, in determining the rule of faith.

To get our bearings, we may begin by summarizing the position as the theologian can state it today, especially as, partly owing to controversy with Protestants, the logic of the question has never been clearer since the very first generations. The motive of divine faith is the authority of God revealing; the revelation itself, God's revealing Word contained in Scripture and apostolic tradition, is the object of faith and also the ultimate rule of faith, as being the source whence the Church derives the truths which she infallibly proclaims. But although, at the level of divine faith, the Word of God is the motive and the object of faith, yet the voice of the living Church, the proximate rule of faith, has a logical and epistemological priority in so far as the inspiration of Scripture rests on the authority of the Church. The Bible cannot prove its own inspiration, let alone establish its own credentials or provide its own interpretation. Now, as in the first days, the

²⁷ *Essay on Development* (1845) p. 27.

Word of God comes to us through the apostolic preaching, the teaching of the Church: *fides per auditum*. Since the Church is infallible in preaching the revealed deposit, her voice is final, decisively resolving all disputes. Moreover, any other criterion is logically impossible. The Protestant appeal to the great Creeds of the first centuries, if not a concealed form of the illegitimate appeal to the Bible as their source, is really an appeal to the Church which propounded them; and if the Church was infallible then, why is it not infallible now? The appeal to the first four general councils as a norm of faith, or to the faith of the primitive Church (itself, in any case, hotly disputed), is subject to the same logic. The final appeal, therefore, must be to the living Church; and even an infallible Church is useless as the guardian of revelation unless it has an infallible organ; for otherwise it will be impossible to know which of the many conflicting voices is the infallible one.

There is not complete agreement at present among Catholic theologians concerning the relation of Scripture and tradition in respect of the *content* of revelation. Does the teaching of the Council of Trent, repeated by Vatican,²⁸ that revelation is contained in Scripture and (*et*) in unwritten traditions, mean that it is contained completely in each separately, or partly in each and completely only in both taken together? Since Prof. Geiselman recently showed that Trent deliberately rejected the proposal to define the *partim . . . partim* sense,²⁹ some theologians have returned to what seems to have been the traditional view (to be more exactly defined presently) that revelation is contained wholly in Scripture as well as wholly in tradition. It is perhaps significant that leading Mariologists (themselves engaged at a key point in the development of dogma) have been among the first to reassert this view. Thus, such eminent theologians as Fr. Dillenschneider and Msgr. Journet hold, in their recently published works, that the New Testament is the inspired crystallization of the apostolic preaching and represents adequately the belief of the primitive Church, so that the central corpus of revealed truth is contained explicitly or

²⁸ *DB* 783, 1787.

²⁹ "Das Missverständnis über das Verhältnis von Schrift und Tradition und seine Überwindung in der katholischen Theologie," *Una sancta* 11 (1956) 131-50.

implicitly in its pages.³⁰ While, however, we welcome this trend as a return to the traditional and quite healthy emphasis, nevertheless Geiselmann's view needs to be qualified by some important reservations—qualifications which, though not explicit in his article, we imagine he would willingly accept. First, it is important to notice that neither Trent nor Vatican nor Pope Pius XII in *Humani generis* defined *either* view; they appear to have deliberately left the question somewhat imprecise. Secondly, any interpretation must take due account of Trent's statement that Scripture and tradition are to be received "pari reverentia." It is, indeed, obviously impossible to accept in a rigid and quite literal sense the formula that all revelation is in Scripture, since not only the *veritates manifestativae revelationis* (the canon and inspiration of Scripture, etc.) but also some liturgical formulas and at least some disciplinary doctrines are clearly contained in tradition alone. There is also the question of the spiritual sense of certain passages in Scripture; this is knowable only through revelation, whether given in Scripture itself or in apostolic tradition.³¹ If, then, one accepts the formula (which has some claim to be traditional) that revelation is contained in Scripture, it must be precisely in the broad traditional sense, which recognizes these important qualifications. So understood, the formula is not concerned to deny that some additional revealed data are provided by tradition alone, but simply affirms that the central corpus of revelation, the "Mysteries" (roughly the Creed and the sacraments), are to be found in Holy Scripture.³² To recognize tradition as *interpretativa et completiva*—as not only governing the interpretation of Scripture but as occasionally supplementing it—does not forbid us to regard Scripture and tradition less as two separate sources of dogma than as a single twofold source.

To return now to St. Vincent of Lérins and Bossuet. Neither stands in direct antithesis to Newman. Vincent, certainly, strongly empha-

³⁰ See an interesting discussion of the recent books of these theologians by Charles Davis, "Mariology," *Clergy Review*, n.s. 43 (1958) 274-94.

³¹ *Divino afflante Spiritu*, AAS 35 (1942) 311; cf. 310 (C.T.S. translation by G. D. Smith, chaps. 28-35) and *Humani generis*, AAS 42 (1950) 569-70 (C.T.S. translation by R. A. Knox, chaps. 22-24), and, for the wider question, *ibid.*, pp. 567-68.

³² Bellarmine, *De verbo Dei* 4, 11, *ad init.*, teaches that the *mysteria primi generis*—he mentions the Apostles' Creed, the Ten Commandments and "some of the sacraments"—are contained in Scripture. For Vacant's view see *op. cit.* 1, 373-79.

sized the immutability of dogma, but he anticipated two of Newman's most characteristic images, those of the seed and the infant. Where Newman, however, in his pre-Catholic days, was inclined to speak of the development of the revealed deposit itself, Vincent meant that our understanding of revelation can grow. As for Bossuet, he, as his biographer and best interpreter Brunetière emphasized, not only recognized that heresies have helped theologians to clarify their language and perfect their concepts, but admitted a deepening understanding of dogma (a formula almost coincident with that of the Vatican Council), and the tradition he so strongly emphasized was not a dead tradition to be sought in the past, but the living tradition incarnate in the Church, where Christ and His mysteries are perpetuated in their power and their glory.³³

St. Cyril of Jerusalem

We shall next examine the teaching of a representative of the fourth-century Eastern traditionalist school, St. Cyril of Jerusalem (*ca.* 314–386)—and let us not be shocked by what at first sight may seem the almost Protestant emphasis which this great Doctor of the Church placed on Holy Scripture. Although, like some other witnesses to the tradition, Cyril perhaps overemphasizes one aspect, yet he contributes to the shaping of the total pattern. His personal history illustrates instructively the imperfect balance of his theory, and his involvement in one of the bitterest doctrinal conflicts that have ever torn the Church taught him that a too rigid insistence on formal immutability would destroy the thing he loved and that the purity of the gospel could be preserved only by the (linguistically) unscriptural definitions of the Councils of Nicaea and Constantinople.

This great saint and stout conservative began his episcopacy *ca.* 350, about fifteen years after a great part of the Eastern Church had revolted against the Nicene definition of the “consubstantial.” Although his Christological doctrine was always unimpeachably orthodox (as Msgr. J. Lebon has shown in two scholarly articles³⁴), in his ecclesiasti-

³³ Suspicions of a Gallican strain in Bossuet, however, find some confirmation in the recent studies of Canon Martimort and others, studies based on Bossuet's private notes and letters rather than on his published works.

³⁴ J. Lebon, “La position de saint Cyrille de Jérusalem dans les luttes provoquées par l'arianisme,” *Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique* 20 (1924) 181–210, 357–86.

cal alliances for the first decade or two of his episcopate Cyril belonged to the moderate Eusebian party and refused to accept the word "consubstantial" as being novel and unscriptural.³⁵ It would, he felt, strike an inharmonious note in the Jerusalem Creed, a veritable mosaic of scriptural words and phrases. In this Creed, Cyril insists, the whole Catholic faith is summarized, and the Creed itself is simply "the most important points collected out of all the Scripture"; "like the mustard-seed . . . this Creed embraces in a few words all the religious teaching of the Old and New Testaments."³⁶ Creeds, Cyril thinks, are necessary only because few people have both the time and the learning to read Scripture for themselves. While it is the Church that delivers the Creed to the candidates for baptism, Cyril insists that "concerning the divine and holy mysteries of the faith, not even a casual statement must be taught without the Holy Scriptures,"³⁷ and in fact his *Catecheses* are, materially and formally, a demonstration of the Creed from Holy Writ.

Cyril is probably a witness of the central Christian tradition (which will later reappear in St. Thomas) when he views the Creed as a summary of the most important truths contained in Scripture and asserts a rough equation (in respect of content) between revelation and Scripture. But in the very passage where he most strongly insists that the mysteries which the Church proposes to the belief of the faithful are the mysteries taught in Scripture, he insists also that "the glory of the gospel," "the mysteries of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost," belong essentially within the believing community; they are unintelligible to the heathen.³⁸ Moreover, Cyril's exposition of the Creed from Scripture is the Church's traditional and authoritative exposition, and in emphasizing the mysterious and essentially obscure character of the revealed truths Cyril implicitly recognizes that their faithful interpretation implies the need of an infallible interpreter. Though too much preoccupied by his sublime task to pay much attention to other con-

³⁵ Cf. *Cat.* 11, 11-13 (*PG* 33, 701-8); *ibid.* 11, 19 (*PG* 33, 713-15). *PG* 33 prints Dom A. A. Toutée's great edition of the *Catecheses* (1720). A more recent edition is that of W. K. Reischl and J. Rupp (2 vols.; Munich, 1848-60). The work is a series of discourses on the (Jerusalem) Creed, delivered to the candidates for baptism during Lent *ca.* 350.

³⁶ *Cat.* 5, 12 (*PG* 33, 520-24).

³⁷ *Cat.* 4, 17 (*PG* 33, 476-77).

³⁸ *Cat.* 6, 29 (*PG* 33, 590).

siderations, Cyril was well aware that the Church determines the canon of Scripture, delivers it, and interprets it. Similarly in his paragraphs on the Church, this intransigent champion of Holy Scripture insists that the Catholic Church is the unique bearer and teacher of the indispensable *gnosis*, the divinely revealed and saving wisdom.³⁹ This saving truth, of course, he thinks of as identical with the truth revealed in Scripture, but here Cyril is thinking of it rather as living tradition. Finally, Cyril was eventually convinced by the continued spread of Arianism that the term *homoousios* ("consubstantial"), unscriptural as it was, must be accepted as the necessary safeguard of orthodoxy, and he was one of the foremost bishops at the Council of Constantinople.

St. Thomas

St. Thomas' doctrine is a brilliant theological synthesis of the teaching of the Fathers on revelation. For him the key text is Jn 17:3: "Now, this is eternal life, that they know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent," with its sister text from Heb 11:6: "For whoever would draw near to God must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who seek Him." This saving knowledge concerning God and Christ must be supernatural, given in revelation and received by faith. Since the coming of Christ, and where the gospel has been preached, explicit faith in the triune God and in Christ, at least in the summarized form in which it is expressed in the Creed, is necessary for the educated faithful; a less complete explicit belief seems to be demanded of the *rudiores*. Revelation, St. Thomas observes, was gradual. Before the coming of Christ—the time of fulness—it was sufficient to have a general belief in the one true God, and that He had a plan to save mankind (Heb 11:6), for these two articles implicitly contain the whole Creed. Where St. Thomas speaks of the relation of Creed and Scripture, his thought and even his language are reminiscent of St. Cyril's: "The truth of the faith is contained in Scripture sporadically (*diffuse*) and in widely different ways, and in some of these ways obscurely. Consequently, to disengage the truth of the faith from Holy Scripture demands long study and a professional skill not attainable

³⁹ *Cat.* 18, 23–28 (*PG* 33, 1044–49).

by all. . . . Therefore it was necessary that a clear summary be collected from Scripture to be proposed to all for their belief."⁴⁰

St. Thomas, therefore, recognizes that the content of revelation is to be found in Scripture, and that the Church delivers and interprets Scripture and propounds the Creed. He shows a rather clearer awareness than St. Cyril of the obscurity of Scripture. He also has a more developed ecclesiology, defending the later, fuller creeds not only on the ground that all creeds are in any case taken from Scripture, but also because the universal Church cannot err, on account of the command given to Peter (Lk 22:32). If heresy, he says, necessitates the clarification or "explication" of some point previously only implicitly proposed in credal formularies, this is the prerogative of the Sovereign Pontiff, whose office it is to summon general councils. It is hardly necessary to add that St. Thomas clearly recognized the authority of tradition in both its formal and material senses.

At least as regards the central (Trinitarian and Christological) mysteries, St. Thomas seems nowhere to teach that the deposit of revelation itself, once completed in Christ, undergoes development. Being the final and definitive "explication" or unfolding of the primitive or Old Testament revelation, the revelation given by Christ to the Apostles is not itself further explicated—though our understanding of it may deepen, or the Church may add to the list of the principal or necessary truths selected from the deposit and proposed in her credal formularies. St. Thomas uses, indeed, the language of "explication" in this last context—not in relation to the deposit itself, but in relation to the Creed. In his pattern of thought, the problem raised by such additions made historically to the Creed (e.g., the descent into hell, "under Pontius Pilate," the "consubstantial," *genitum non factum*) is the question how earlier Christian generations could have been saved by the profession of a creed which did not contain these articles or phrases which were later included among the necessary truths.⁴¹ His

⁴⁰ *Sum. theol.* 2-2, q. 1, a. 9, ad 1m; for this and the next paragraph, cf. *ibid.* 2-2, q. 1, aa. 6-10; q. 2, aa. 1-8; q. 174, a. 6; *Opusc.* 7 [6], *In symbolum apostolorum*, a. 1; *In 3 Sent.*, d. 25; *Compend. theol.* 2.

⁴¹ St. Thomas was quite abreast of modern scholarship in recognizing that "necessitas editionis Symbolorum fuit duplex: scilicet instructio fidelium in credendis; et ad hoc editum est Symbolum Apostolorum. Item impugnatio haeresum; et ad hoc edita sunt

answer is that these truths were included implicitly in the earlier, shorter creeds, of which the later, fuller ones were explications; and that in any case *all* the creeds are collected from Scripture, which was always the object of the Church's faith. All that happens, therefore, in such cases is that the Church takes more from the deposit and formally includes it in her credal formularies, thereby making of divine and Catholic faith what was already of divine faith; or commonly it was already, as proposed by the ordinary magisterium, of both divine and Catholic faith, though only now solemnly defined. Thus, as creeds lengthen and definitions multiply, the proximate rule of faith approximates more and more to the remote rule of faith (the revealed deposit), though it will never entirely coincide with it or represent all its fulness.

It is obvious how close, in spite of some difference in his approach and concern, St. Thomas' theory is to our modern developed theory of development. More: our conception of development is implicit in St. Thomas' teaching. It emerges from the principles just outlined when juxtaposed with another doctrine of St. Thomas: the obscurity of Scripture. In the discussions summarized above, St. Thomas is thinking of the transference to the creeds of doctrines taught clearly and explicitly in Scripture, and here there is no development in the significant sense. But in his doctrines of the obscurity of the Scriptures and their infallible interpretation by the Church we have the elements of the doctrine of accidental development without detriment to substantial immutability. For when the magisterium formally clarifies what is only implicit or obscure in the deposit, development occurs.

St. Thomas held that the time of Christ was the time of fulness and that the generations nearest to Christ, and especially the Apostles themselves, understood the revealed mysteries *plenius*. On the strength of such passages it has sometimes been suggested that the Angelic Doctor, so far from believing in doctrinal development, held a theory of doctrinal "undevelopment" or recession. This suggestion, however, misunderstands St. Thomas' doctrine and confuses the subjective understanding of revealed truths with the objective revelation either

alia duo: primo Nicaenum, secundo Athanasii. Et ita secundum quod diversae haereses pullulabant, diversa apponebantur remedia, et ita non propter insufficientiam primi symboli" (*In 3 Sent.*, d. 25, a. 1). Cf. J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Creeds* (London-Toronto, 1950) pp. 64-65.

in itself or as proposed in the Church's formularies.⁴² Individual and collective insight into revelation may vary from age to age, but defined doctrine, while it may develop, cannot (as St. Thomas well knew) undergo "undevelopment" or recession. Nevertheless, since insight into the revealed truths and significant doctrinal development, though distinct, are closely connected, it is salutary to recall this view of St. Thomas when—confusing perhaps the marvelous achievement of Catholic theologians over the centuries with doctrinal development in another sense—we are tempted to exaggerate our doctrinal advantage over our fathers by a loose use of the oak-acorn analogy.

The First Three Centuries

An examination of the rule of faith in the first three centuries reveals the same general pattern. Here Fr. Van den Eynde's distinguished study of the period⁴³ provides valuable guidance. Until the end of the second century, that is, in the period of the Apostolic Fathers and the Apologists, the rule of faith is simply the teaching Church, which hands on the legacy received from the Apostles.⁴⁴ The bishops, successors of the Apostles, guard the tradition. Indeed, before Justin "the gospel" means something preached and handed on orally rather than a written book, and "Scripture" generally means the Old Testament. Conversely, it is true, "tradition" not infrequently refers to the New Testament—thought of, however, less as an inspired book than as the record of the living teaching of Christ and the Apostles. In the third century, from Irenaeus onwards, Scripture is given great prominence; the bishops find themselves at a greater distance from the Apostles, and the inspired character of the New Testament is more vividly realized. In this period, says Van den Eynde, Scripture "enjoys an absolute authority. The Fathers present it as the criterion of truth and falsehood, the sole demonstration of the faith and the norm of Christian teaching."⁴⁵ When, a little later, the Creed comes to be presented as a summary of

⁴² Of course, if development is defined in terms of understanding alone—and not of the definitive ecclesiastical formulation of understanding—the interpretation mentioned is perhaps legitimate.

⁴³ D. Van den Eynde, *Les normes de l'enseignement chrétien dans la littérature patristique des trois premiers siècles* (Gembloux-Paris, 1933).

⁴⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 50-51, 103, 67.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

the principal or necessary doctrines collected from Scripture, we have the position of St. Cyril. For, like Cyril, these third-century Fathers (as Van den Eynde is careful to point out) knew well that Scripture is normative only as presented and interpreted by the Church. In what looks at first sight like a merry-go-round of final authorities (Scripture, tradition, the Creed), in fact the magisterium always had the last word. While assuming that as a matter of fact revelation is contained in Scripture, the Fathers of the third century recognized explicitly or implicitly and in practice, and more vividly in times of controversy, that the decisive and logically prior rule of faith is the living voice of the Church. As in the second century the "rule of truth" was the agreed teaching of the bishops, so in the third it was something richer and more flexible than the Creed (itself, in any case, drawn up by the bishops).⁴⁶ The advanced catechesis, for instance, usually included sacramental doctrine, the Our Father, and some moral teaching. The Church, in fact, never forgot that in the first century of all she had existed before the New Testament, and that it was she who had composed it.

Conclusion: The Theological Data

We may now say provisionally that the chief data provided by the main stream of Christian tradition are these: (1) the proximate and, for practical purposes, final rule of faith is the infallible teaching of the divinely assisted Church; (2) a strong emphasis on the immutability of doctrine and on the teaching Church as the guardian of tradition; (3) the common teaching of the Fathers from the third century onwards, as later of St. Thomas and St. Robert Bellarmine, that the revealed Mysteries are in fact contained in Holy Scripture, which is, in so far, the remote or ultimate rule of faith;⁴⁷ (4) the obscurity of Scripture; (5) the essential obscurity of the revealed Mysteries; (6) a distinction, within revelation, between the revealed Mysteries themselves and the *veritates connexae*.

The obscurity of Scripture is to be distinguished from the inherent obscurity of the Mysteries. The former is a principle of significant

⁴⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 130-31, 261-80; also the last chapter *passim*; Franzelin, *op. cit.*, th. 5, 6, 11, and especially 19: "Sufficiencia Scripturarum a ss. Patribus praedicatur non excludendo sed supponendo Traditionem . . ." (pp. 232-45).

⁴⁷ This formula is a convenient generalization, but it admits of exceptions and is subject to the qualifications emphasized above. Cf. also previous note.

development, the latter a principle of immutability. As a principle of development, the obscurity (in some degree) of Scripture arises from its occasionally metaphorical or indirect mode of speech, from its use of typology, from the fact that its teaching in many passages is occasional and fragmentary, and doctrines are sometimes referred to or assumed as known rather than explicitly stated, etc.

The six doctrines or assumptions listed above are interlinked and illuminate one another. (3), for instance, must be understood with the qualification implied by (6), and (6) leads back to (1). That is to say, there are certain revealed truths—most obviously, the preliminary, logically fundamental truths of the inspiration and canon of Scripture—which, if we are to avoid a logical circle, we cannot learn from Scripture itself but must learn from apostolic tradition and immediately from the Church. On the other hand, when the Fathers and classical theologians speak of the whole of revelation being contained in Scripture, they are commonly thinking of the central mysteries (of Christ and the Blessed Trinity) and, secondarily, of the sacramental mysteries. This distinction, however, between “the Mysteries” and other revealed truths must not be understood as a distinction between fundamental and inessential truths, as if the latter were in some sense “optional.” Regarded subjectively and in relation to the motive or formal object of faith, all revealed truths stand on the same level and have the same absolute claim on faith; to deny one is to refuse obedience to the authority of God revealing, and so is tantamount to denying all. The distinction is, rather, within the material object of faith; in stating it we shall, with Cardinal Franzelin, the principal theologian consultor before and during the Vatican Council, follow the guidance of St. Thomas. Quoting Jn 17:3 and Heb 11:6, the Angelic Doctor describes the central corpus of revelation and the prime object of theology as the knowledge of God and Christ. This, including basic sacramental doctrine, is the saving knowledge, necessary for justification and eternal life. These truths roughly coincide with the content of the traditional catechesis, the Mysteries of the Creed and the sacraments; every Christian may reasonably be expected to know them, and their knowledge is ordinarily or per se necessary where the gospel has been preached.⁴⁸

⁴⁸ Cf. Franzelin, *op. cit.*, th. 23, pp. 283–85 and 288–89; and pp. 545–46, with notes.

The disengagement of these central mysteries from within the whole body of revealed truths clarifies many aspects of the question of development. First, when the Fathers insist in a rather rigid way on the immutability of doctrine, they are principally thinking of these sublime mysteries, the (in the phrase of Vatican) "mysteria in Deo abscondita."⁴⁹ These are the "profunda Dei,"⁵⁰ inviolable, unsearchable, and the reach of man's knowledge is limited to what has been revealed about them. Even faith can in no sense expand them, though it can enter more deeply into the riches revealed. These are the primary truths preached by the Apostles, contained in the traditional baptismal catechesis, and therefore believed explicitly from the beginning. These truths cannot themselves undergo development, though they may be the controlling and even dynamic principles of development. Again—cf. (3) above—these truths are, not indeed as an abstract and harmonized system but in their elements, explicitly or equivalently contained in Scripture. Again, St. Thomas' doctrine that divine revelation was complete and fully explicated in the Apostolic Age must be understood with reference to these central mysteries; so qualified, it (like the doctrine of St. Cyril of Jerusalem) falls naturally into a reasonable theory of development. For, while (2) and (5) indicate the impossibility of the expansion of the *profunda Dei*, if we link (1), (6), and (4), we see that, as regards other revealed truths, the fact of a doctrine's being "contained in Scripture" is not necessarily an absolutely fixed quantity, so that in her function of interpreter of Scripture and guardian of tradition the Church naturally shows greater initiative in regard of those truths only obscurely taught in Scripture.

⁴⁹ *DB* 1795.

⁵⁰ 1 Cor. 2:10. The "profunda Dei" can be elaborated in systematic theology, but appear to be patient of only simple or analytic development, such as the unpacking of complex propositions (e.g., Christ, being perfect man, must have had a human heart, will, etc.). Franzelin, in spite of his sentence (*op. cit.*, p. 287), "Cum dogmata divina, quo sunt profundiora, eo sint fecundiora . . .," appears to accept this. See also his note, pp. 284–85: Although to believe in the one true God is implicitly to believe in the Trinity, and Christ's death is implied in the redemption, yet neither implicate is deducible by a finite intelligence: not the former, because the divine nature transcends human reason; not the latter, because it depended on God's free will. Similarly, Franzelin's discussion (pp. 289–91) of three stages of development does not envisage such definitions as those of the consubstantial, the divinity of the Holy Spirit, etc., since such doctrines could not have been denied or questioned "absque dispendio fidei" before their definition (p. 288). See also Franzelin's Thesis 26.

Possible examples are the exact nature of original sin, infant baptism, the validity of heretical baptism, the state of souls between death and the General Judgment, and truths contained in Scripture only typologically. In practice, of course, before pronouncing on the question whether development has occurred in any particular case, we must consider the possibility that the doctrine in question may have been taught more explicitly in apostolic tradition.

Again, (6) reduces the question of development to its proper proportions and places in a clearer light the fact that the central doctrines were consciously and explicitly believed from the beginning. This, however, is precisely what Dr. Chadwick questions. It is, indeed, the most radical suggestion in his book that the historical theology of Petavius gradually opened men's eyes to the fact that the Trinitarian faith as defined at Nicaea and Constantinople is not to be found in the writings of the ante-Nicene Fathers, or at least is not to be found in any of them separately but only in all of them taken together, by making a mosaic of isolated fragments. Dr. Chadwick thinks that he finds in Newman's *Essay* (presumably in some pages in the Introduction⁵¹) support for this view that the whole history of dogma from Nicaea onwards reveals continual additions to the primitive faith, or at best is the story of the Church becoming conscious of the truths which previously she believed unconsciously. The theologian's short answer to this somewhat outrageous suggestion is to point to the New Testament, wherein, in non-technical language, are contained all the doctrines about Christ and the Blessed Trinity defined in the third and fourth centuries. The Bible is the Church's book; she composed it; it is the expression or objectification of her primitive faith; it is the object or medium of her contemplation; therefore she has always believed—and consciously and explicitly believed—all the doctrines that are contained in it. That the fundamental Trinitarian and Christological doctrines are in fact contained in the New Testament is the burden of the "proofs from Sacred Scripture" in the textbooks of dogmatic theology.

To hold this is not to deny any and every kind of development (even

⁵¹ Cf. the *Essay*, pp. 11–16; but contrast the more categorical statement on p. 143, where Newman excludes from his theory of development such "primary doctrines" as the Incarnation, atonement, Holy Trinity, and episcopacy, saying that these were "generally witnessed from the first."

verbal) in Trinitarian and Christological doctrine. It is only to assert that, at least in their separate elements and concretely, the Church from the beginning believed in all the (Trinitarian and Christological) doctrines later defined in abstract terms by the councils. The primitive Church knew little about processions and relations of origin, but she knew that Christ was God and man, and yet was somehow one, and was the Son of God; that the Holy Spirit was a divine Person, the Spirit of God and of Christ, sent by the Father and by the Son; and that yet there is but one God. The great work of the bishops in council was to formulate these mysterious truths in terms and definitions which harmonized them all and so safeguarded them all.

DEVELOPMENT AND IMMUTABILITY: THE PROBLEM IN HISTORY

But how can this position be reconciled with the admittedly unsatisfactory language of so many of the ante-Nicene Fathers and with the long and bitter controversies which, in the East, followed the Nicene definition? How can we reconcile the assertion that the Church always held, and consciously held, the full Trinitarian doctrine with the fact that so large a part of the Eastern Church, including such illustrious sees as Jerusalem, Antioch, Caesarea, and Constantinople, refused, for longer or shorter periods, to accept the Nicene definition? And how is the contention that the complete Trinitarian faith is to be found in Scripture compatible with the fact that it was precisely to Scripture that Arians and Semi-Arians, as well as the orthodox, appealed? While it would be unrealistic to deny that there is a problem here, it is a problem which largely disappears in the light of the detailed facts. Since Vacant, no less than Dr. Chadwick, admitted that dogmatic theologians and historians are apt to view the evidence differently, we shall take issue with the historians on their own ground, taking the great Arian controversy as a test case. This is, admittedly, rather a late period; we choose it because it is possible to make a modest original contribution to the dogmatic history of this period, and it may fairly be chosen as a test case because, though post-Nicene, in this period some Trinitarian doctrines were positively denied, as they were not (at least on a comparable scale) in ante-Nicene times. Moreover, the main facts elicited by a brief study of this period will have an obvious relevance to the ante-Nicene circumstances.

*Trinitarian and Christological Doctrine**a. The Arian Controversy*

First, then, the Arian struggle was largely an unhappy story of personal rivalries and ambitions, complicated by the interventions of the Arianizing Emperor Constantius. In so far as the conflict was doctrinal, it was in large measure due to linguistic confusions, although there was undeniably a not inconsiderable group of bishops, led by such men as Arius himself, Eusebius of Nicomedia, and Acacius of Caesarea, whose views were definitely heretical. A high proportion of the Eastern opposition to the definition of the consubstantiality of the Son, however, came from bishops who were perfectly orthodox but who either objected to the word "consubstantial" (*homoousios*) as a linguistically unscriptural addition to the Creed or else thought that the term savored of Sabellianism (modalism) and imperiled the distinct personality of the Son. For in 268 a council at Antioch, the leading see in the East, had expressly repudiated the word because Paul of Samosata had applied it to Christ in an heretical (apparently modalist) sense.⁵² In the period of conciliation which began *ca.* 360, St. Athanasius met the linguistic difficulty by pointing out that although the Nicene terminology (*homoousios*, *ek tēs ousias*) is not scriptural, the idea is, since Scripture affirms a Word who is the Son, Wisdom, Image, and Radiance of God.⁵³ There was a great deal of genuine bewilderment, and there is no reason to disbelieve Socrates when (writing *ca.* 440) he states that the conflict was mainly due to mutual misunderstandings, "a battle in the dark."⁵⁴ The fundamental difficulty was that while the Church in the West had had, since Tertullian, a satisfactory word for "person" in *persona*, the Greek Church had no word for "person" in the metaphysical and theological sense. The Latins thought that the

⁵² Cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *Liber de synodis* 81, 86 (*PL* 10, 534, 538); Basil, *Epistolae* 52 (*PG* 32, 392 ff.).

⁵³ Athanasius, *Epistola de decretis Nicaenae synodi* 23 (*PG* 25, 416 ff.). Up to the (conciliatory) Athanasian council at Alexandria in 362 the Egyptians, like the West, equated *hypostasis* with *ousia*, as the Council of Nicaea also had done.

⁵⁴ That is, the conflict between Homoousians and Homoioussians or "Semi-Arians"; cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1, 23 (*PG* 67, 141), and Hilary, *Liber de synodis, passim* (*PL* 10, 479 ff.). Similarly, St. Athanasius himself wrote in 359 or 360 that the Homoioussians, provided that they accepted the *substance* of the Nicene doctrine, "should not be treated as enemies," but as "brothers who think as we do and differ only about a word" (*De synodis* 41 [*PG* 26, 765]).

Greeks should use *prosōpon*, but the Greeks thought that this word, meaning "face," "role," "aspect," or "character," lacked body, and so the great majority of the Eastern bishops thought it heretical in a Trinitarian context and preferred *hypostasis*, which the Latins thought obviously corresponded to their own word (*substantia*) for the unique divine substance—as etymologically, of course, it does. It is very significant that only a few years before the Council of Constantinople in 381 adopted the definitive Greek formula of three *hypostaseis* in one *ousia*, St. Jerome, a Latin residing in the East, wrote from Syria to Pope Damasus protesting that the proposed definition in these terms would mean at least a linguistic surrender to the Arians and the introduction of "a new creed after the Nicene": "Impose the formula, if you like," Jerome wrote wryly, "and I will not scruple to speak of three hypostases. If you order it, let a novel creed replace the Nicene, and let us orthodox confess our faith in the same terms as the Arians. The whole of the scholarly world equates *hypostasis* with *ousia*; then who, pray, will with sacrilegious lips confess three substances?"⁵⁵ St. Jerome himself used the formula of three *prosōpa* in one *ousia* or *hypostasis*, and was in consequence accused of Sabellianism by the monks of the Syrian Thebaid.

Most instructive of all is the case of St. Cyril of Jerusalem. For at least the first ten years of his episcopate he belonged to the moderate party among the "opposition" to the Nicene definition and steadfastly refused to accept the term "consubstantial," as being the introduction of a nonscriptural word into the Creed. Yet we know from the *Catecheses*, preached at the very beginning of his episcopate (*ca.* 350), that his Christological and Trinitarian doctrine was unimpeachably orthodox. In regard to the questions raised by Dr. Chadwick, it is very instructive to consider together the following facts about Cyril. His opposition to the Nicene formula went together with perfect orthodoxy of doctrine. He was stubbornly, almost fanatically,

⁵⁵ *Epistolae* 15, 3–4 (*PL* 22, 356–57); cf. A. Michel, "Hypostase," in *DTC* 7 (1922) 378; cf. *ibid.*, cols. 371–85. Jerome admits that the Semi-Arians explain their formula, "tres hypostases," as meaning "tria enhypostata, hoc est, tres subsistentes personas," and that this is an orthodox formula; but he objects to "tres hypostases" as being misleading and as being Arian in its history and associations. One recalls that Cyril of Jerusalem, whom Jerome stigmatizes as an Arian, uses *enhypostatos* of the Second and Third Persons; cf. *Cat.* 4, 7 (*PG* 33, 464); 11, 10 (*PG* 33, 701); 17, 5 (*PG* 33, 976).

loyal to the language of Scripture. The doctrine (as distinct from the word) of the consubstantiality both of the Son and of the Holy Ghost is clearly found in his *Catecheses*, as also—all but verbatim—is the additional teaching on the Holy Spirit defined at Constantinople (“Dominum et vivificantem, qui ex Patre procedit, qui cum Patre et Filio simul adoratur et conglorificatur”). Yet the saintly Bishop of Jerusalem was called an Arian by St. Jerome⁵⁶ and a Macedonian by Sozomen.⁵⁷ The fact, also, that the substance of the fully developed Trinitarian doctrine is contained in the *Catecheses* should be linked with the fact that Cyril drew his Trinitarian teaching uniquely from Scripture. This is a reminder that the developed Trinitarian doctrine is substantially contained in Scripture and was therefore in the faith of the Church from the beginning. St. Cyril, therefore, provides a concrete illustration of the truth questioned by Dr. Chadwick: the real equivalence of developed Christological and Trinitarian doctrine with the same doctrines as expressed in Scripture. The *Catecheses* provide the ideal middle term linking the abstract and technical terminology of the councils with the sporadic, unsystematic, and concrete teaching of Scripture, and showing the real identity of the two.

The following two passages from Cyril illustrate how Trinitarian doctrine could be expressed in nontechnical language, and they suggest how far resistance to the Nicene terminology was from being coextensive with real unorthodoxy.

Our hope is in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Not that we preach three Gods (let the Marcionites be silenced); no, we preach one God with the one Son through the Holy Ghost. Undivided is our faith, unseparated our godly piety. We neither with some divide, nor with Sabellius confound, the (holy) Trinity. But we religiously acknowledge the one Father who sent His Son to be our Saviour; and we acknowledge the one Son who promised to send the Paraclete from His Father's side.⁵⁸

The Father graciously bestows all things through the Son, with the Holy Ghost. Not that some graces are of the Father, others of the Son, and others again of the Holy Ghost; for there is but one salvation, one power, one faith; one God the Father, one Lord, His only-begotten Son, and one Holy Spirit, the Paraclete. This knowledge is sufficient; meddle not with “nature” and “hypos-

⁵⁶ *Chronicon*, at the 12th year of the sons of Constantine (*PL* 27, 502).

⁵⁷ *Hist. eccl.* 7, 7 (*PG* 67, 1429).

⁵⁸ *Cat.* 16, 4 (*PG* 33, 921 f.).

tasis." If it were in Scripture (*gegrammenon*), we should use the word; let us not dare to say what is not written.⁵⁹

The reference to the Marcionite accusation that the Christians preached three Gods is of interest. It reminds us how difficult it must have been, before the language of nature, person, and substance was introduced and stereotyped, to speak openly of the divinity of the Son and the Holy Ghost without giving the impression of tritheism. We recall how, in the record of the dialogue between Origen and Heraclides and his brother bishops (in a papyrus discovered as recently as 1941), Origen and Heraclides agreed on the formula "two Gods" (*duo theoi*), which bore a perfectly orthodox sense as it was qualified by the phrase "in one deity" or "in one power," and so meant "two divine Persons."⁶⁰ This linguistic difficulty no doubt largely accounts for the sparseness of the explicit Trinitarian witness in the ante-Nicene literature, especially as the linguistic difficulty would have been an important cause of secrecy in teaching and of the *disciplina arcana*; it was principally because they dealt with "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit" that Cyril's Lenten discourses were not allowed to be publicly circulated; they were strictly reserved for the eyes of the baptized.⁶¹

But the heretics also appealed to Scripture, and the fact that the key phrase of the heretical Homoian Creed was taken verbatim from Scripture neatly underlines the fact that Scripture can never be separated from the living Church, and that no doctrine, however plainly taught in the Bible, is secure apart from the divinely assisted teaching authority of the Church, as she infallibly interprets Scripture and preserves apostolic tradition. Without the Church's guidance, hesitations about our Lord's divinity could arise from a failure to understand the economy practiced in the early apostolic preaching as recorded in Acts, which placed in the foreground not the divinity of Jesus but His historic appearance as the Messiah. Again, while Trinitarian doctrine is objectively and clearly contained in the New Testament taken as a whole, individual verses could mislead. For instance,

⁵⁹ *Cat.* 16, 24 (*PG* 33, 953).

⁶⁰ This papyrus is briefly discussed and partially quoted by J. Quasten, *Patrology 2* (Utrecht-Antwerp, 1953) 62-64.

⁶¹ *Procatechesis* 12; *Cat.* 6, 29; and the Note (of uncertain date and authorship) which the editors print after the *Procatechesis* (*PG* 33, 352 f.; 589; 365).

when the Nicaeans (and St. Cyril) pointed to our Lord's words, "I and the Father are one,"⁶² the Arians riposted with another, apparently equally Trinitarian passage, "The Father is greater than I"⁶³—which could puzzle until the distinction between personal and essential relationships in the Blessed Trinity had been grasped (or abstractly worked out). It is equally important, however, for the theory of development and immutability to emphasize that these considerations by no means cast doubt on the fact that the full Christological and Trinitarian doctrine is really, objectively, and unquestionably contained in Scripture. It would be absurd to suggest that, objectively speaking, various unorthodox doctrines are equally contained in Scripture, or that the meaning of Scripture is (on these points) indeterminate until determined by the Church.⁶⁴ The Church's interpretation of Scripture is not arbitrary, not an interpretation imposed on Scripture; she does not read her interpretation into Scripture, but reads it off Scripture (in addition to possessing the truth by tradition); she "declares," as Trent says, Scripture's objective and true sense.⁶⁵

Once it is realized that the Constantinopolitan Creed,^{65a} with its developed Trinitarian teaching, is closely based on Scripture and for

⁶² Jn 10:30.

⁶³ Jn 14:28; W. Leonard, however, in *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London, 1951) p. 1007, thinks that this passage is not in fact Trinitarian, although many of the Fathers took it that way.

⁶⁴ That is, in the case of those doctrines which are wholly contained in Scripture. It is sometimes questioned whether the personality of the Holy Spirit is clearly taught in Scripture; but cf. the masculine pronoun (*ekeinos*) at Jn 14:26, 16:13,14; the neuter in 14:17 seems to be attracted to the preceding relative. Cf. Cyril, *Cat.* 16, 13 (*PG* 33, 937); 17, 33–34 (*PG* 33, 1005–9), who insists that Scripture represents Him as a living, subsisting Spirit who speaks, discourses, foretells, guides, comforts, and encourages.

⁶⁵ *DB* 995: "Ecclesia, cuius est iudicare de vero sensu et interpretatione sacrarum Scripturarum." Cf. *DB* 786: heretics "distort" the sense of Scripture. Sometimes, of course, Scripture is either obscure or needs complementing by tradition. Also where, in the minority of passages which have a spiritual sense, this sense is not intimated by Scripture itself, we must rely on apostolic tradition. The Pope associates the authority of the Fathers in the interpretation of Scripture (*DB* 1788) with their wonderful gift for penetrating to Scripture's "true meaning" (*Divino afflante Spiritu*, *AAS* 35 [1942] 312); cf. p. 310, where the Pope insists that the exegete's chief task is to determine the literal meaning. The *analogia fidei* is also relevant.

^{65a} The Creed which we recite at Mass, though still often popularly miscalled the Nicene Creed, is the Constantinopolitan Creed (A.D. 381), save that the latter lacked the "filioque" and the redundant "Deum de Deo."

the most part is a mosaic of scriptural words and phrases, we can confidently deny the assertion that the primitive Church did not (fully and consciously) believe such central doctrines as the perfect divinity and humanity of Christ and the divinity and distinct personality of the Holy Spirit (and, we may add, the divine Motherhood of Mary, the principle of development in Mariology). While recognizing that Bossuet was sometimes prone to exaggerate in this matter, we can in principle accept his view that "the Christian religion came from its Lord complete and perfect," as well as the view of St. Thomas that, in respect of knowledge of the revealed mysteries, the Apostles represent the time of fulness and humanity's prime. When harried by the historian or the patristic scholar with the question, "Where in ante-Nicene literature can you find an expression of the Church's Trinitarian faith?", we need not give the unsatisfactory reply that the Church of the first three centuries held these beliefs "obscurely," or that some ante-Nicene Fathers appear to have held them, while others did not, or that the faith later found in each of the Fathers separately must, in the earlier period, be "reconstituted" from the writings of all the ante-Nicene Fathers taken together, each Father contributing his mite. We can say that from the beginning the Church must have believed them with at least the degree of clarity in which they are contained in Scripture and that historically the Christological and Trinitarian definitions were controlled by Scripture. We can add the evidence of the Trinitarian formula in baptism, the liturgical doxologies, and the Trinitarian shape of the creeds. If, on this view, the scantiness of the ante-Nicene nonscriptural evidence of explicit Trinitarian faith seems surprising, even inexplicable, then a little historical imagination should help us to realize the difficulties and even dangers that, before the elaboration of a technical terminology, attached to the expression of the paradoxical central mystery of Christianity in any but the approved forms of sound words. The early Christians must have largely confined the expression of their faith to the consecrated formulas occurring in Scripture lections, sacraments, and liturgy. The great Trinitarian and Christological definitions, therefore, though they crown and crystallize a wonderful achievement of systematic theology, exhibit a doctrinal development that is no more than verbal.

b. Scripture and the Development of Doctrine

And yet, is there not some exaggeration in this last statement? Must we not admit (and thereby do justice to the historical and patristic point of view) that understanding is tied to language and that the abstract terminology and distinctions invented by the theologians of the third and fourth centuries undeniably give us greater insight into Trinitarian doctrine? The idea of "consubstantiality" is surely illuminating. Some degree of validity must undoubtedly be conceded to this view. How is it compatible with the other truth, that later Trinitarian formulations do not go beyond the Trinitarian doctrine of the Bible?

Two considerations may throw some light on this paradox. First, the double character of the New Testament illuminates the question of immutability and development. In so far as the New Testament was written by the Church and is therefore the expression and objectification of her primitive faith, we can say immediately that the Church believed from the beginning all the doctrines contained in it, and with at least the degree of clarity in which they are there contained. Secondly, however, the New Testament was, strictly speaking, composed not simply by the Church, but by the Holy Ghost working through some of her charismatically graced members. So regarded, the New Testament stands over against the Church and is the object of her faith, and the Church then *expresses* her faith not by writing it but by "receiving" it. This is why individual members of the Church, and even individual bishops, could understand imperfectly, or even misunderstand, what is the Church's own expression of her faith; and why the Church's members can, individually and collectively, grow in the understanding of the revealed mysteries.

It is tempting to find in this distinction between the two aspects of the New Testament the solution of the whole problem and to argue that (assuming all the major revealed doctrines to be contained in the Bible) *any* degree of development is compatible with immutability, since, if the Church only gradually became conscious of even Trinitarian doctrine, she would nonetheless, in so far as she always believed the Bible, have believed it implicitly from the beginning. But while this argument is perfectly valid in relation to doctrines contained only implicitly in the Bible (and not more explicitly in

tradition), to push the principle to extremes and to hold that the Church could originally have believed only "blindly" (as obscurely contained in Scripture) major Christological or Trinitarian doctrines is clearly impossible on general theological grounds. Such a view, moreover, seems impossible to reconcile with Pius VI's condemnation, as heretical, of the view that Christian truths *gravioris momenti* had suffered a general obscuration over a considerable period.⁶⁶ In any case, the theory could not cover doctrines contained only implicitly in tradition (and not at all in the Bible). But while it cannot warrant unlimited development, this double aspect of Scripture, as expression and object of the Church's faith, both illuminates and justifies the limited amount of development that has in fact occurred. For those who hold that all revealed truth is contained in the Bible, the principle will be of even greater importance. In the light of this principle we can partly grasp the elusive phenomenon we call "development" as something that arises in the reciprocal and fruitful interplay between the contemplation of the Church and its object, the Word of God.

c. Theological Progress and Doctrinal Development

Against the suggestion, however, that the great theological achievement that preceded the definitions of Nicaea and Constantinople implies an equally spectacular "doctrinal development," we must invoke a second consideration. Theological progress is far from being adequately identical with what is ordinarily called doctrinal development. Accustomed as we are to abstract conceptual thinking, we tend to judge the Bible as a theological textbook, and then to contrast its apparently meager or elementary dogmatic content with the majestic medieval synthesis, and then to jump to the conclusion that "development" has occurred on a spectacular scale. We shall, however, be much nearer the truth if we say (oversimplifying) that speculative theology and the Bible present the same body of truth in two different languages: the one philosophical or scientific, abstract and technical the other generally untechnical, more concrete and dynamic. The biblical enthusiast is sometimes tempted to magnify the distinction and to describe the theologian's language as propositional and objec

⁶⁶ DB 1501—though the reference is to a particular period.

tive, where the language of the Bible is personal or "intersubjective," in the sense of creating a moral and religious context for the fully personal encounter of God and man. This, however, is inaccurate. For, on the one hand, all prose statement, including the New Testament, is propositional (and more or less abstract), and the biblical "faith in" a person would be meaningless if it were not also a "faith that"—a belief in a number of propositions; and, on the other hand, the Christian faith as summarized in a system of theological propositions or conciliar definitions is also essentially intersubjective (challenging or existential), although here the intersubjective quality is to some extent presupposed or implied rather than presented (it is actualized when the individual is invited to believe), whereas in the Bible it is dramatically enacted and more vividly and continuously realized and communicated. This literary or stylistic difference, therefore, should not be exalted into a difference of doctrinal character or content. Even the Bible, after all, is not the reality itself. As an inspired expression, as the very Word of God, it glows with movement, life, and color; but it compares with the theologian's statement not as the reality with the representation, but, if we may say it with reverence, as a colored cinefilm with a series of "stills" catching the key moments in the sequence.

Again, the theologian's analytic and synthetic procedure has great instructional value. He takes a complex fact and spotlights its component items or aspects in turn, and then reassembles them in a logical structure. But he still presents to us "the same dogma in the same sense." Illuminating, therefore, as abstract analysis and synthesis can be, we must always remember, when comparing the doctrinal content of the Bible with the corresponding statement of the theologian, that, if the Bible is in some sense relative, in so far as it belongs essentially within the context of the Christian tradition and forms an interlocking or even organic unity with the Church which contemplates and interprets it, so (somewhat conversely) the theologian's theses (when *de fide*) and even the dogmatic formularies of the Church are relative to the sources of revelation—not, of course, in the sense (contrary to all tradition and explicitly condemned in *Humani generis*) that they are mutable or of less than absolute value, but in the sense that (as *Humani generis* asserts), whether in identical

or equivalent terms, they are (accurate) statements of the revelation contained in Scripture or apostolic tradition.⁶⁷

It is true that in rare cases (cases of significant development) the *de fide* thesis is a statement of a truth contained only implicitly in revelation; the theological statement then, of course, is a statement of developed doctrine. Theology naturally keeps pace with development and may herald it. But the question we are now asking is whether of its nature the theologian's abstract statement, of even explicitly revealed truths (e.g., of the "consubstantial"), represents such a clarification that, when defined, it constitutes a significant doctrinal development. Here we are brought up against the rather surprisingly neglected question of the nature and method of theology. Theological progress might, perhaps, constitute or ground doctrinal development on an immense scale on the view, which has at some periods found favor, that theology finds in the revealed truths no more than its initial premises and that its real business is to move thence, deductively, into fresh territory. Such a view of theology, however, will, we believe, find few advocates today. While it is impossible to discuss the question here, we accept in its general emphasis the view propounded by Fr. Johannes Beumer in his recent important study of the question.⁶⁸ The revealed truths, on this view, are not the premises but the object of theology (Beumer considers the opposite view not only erroneous but incompatible with the teaching of the Vatican Council). While theology may, legitimately and validly, draw conclusions that have not been revealed, this is not its main business; theology is, rather, a science of faith (*Glaubenswissenschaft*) that leads to an understanding of faith (*Glaubensverständnis*). While, as a science, speculative theology uses the syllogistic method, its goal is not (normally) the more or less remote implications of the truths of faith, but the (obscure) understanding of the truths of faith themselves. This understanding is the *intellegentia mysteriorum*. Negatively, it shows the absence of inner contradiction in the mysteries, and positively it is,

⁶⁷ *Humani generis*, AAS 42 (1950) 565-69: The Church's traditional formulas, above all the conciliar ones, express the revealed mysteries "notionibus adaequate veris," though these notions (sometimes or generally) can "perfici et perpoliri." The case is somewhat different with doctrines only implicitly revealed (*ibid.*, p. 569), of which we go on to speak.

⁶⁸ *Theologie als Glaubensverständnis* (Würzburg, 1953); pp. 121-203 are an exposition of the famous paragraph cited in DB 1796.

not Günther's insight into the mysteries' inner content, but, as Vatican taught, a grasp of relations that stands in an analogy of proportion with naturally known truths and links the mysteries to one another and to man's last end. (We should—in agreement, we think, with Fr. Dillenschneider—distinguish further and find in the *intellegentia mysteriorum* also the *theoria*, or concrete contemplation, which, itself illumined by faith, produces a heightening of clarity in its object and is thus a key to significant development.) Fr. Bernard Lonergan, S.J., the distinguished author of *Insight*, has shown that, in spite of Beumer's own doubts, St. Thomas' mature theological method, as instanced by the *Summa theologiae*, largely conforms to Beumer's conception of theology.⁶⁹ There St. Thomas commonly moves not from revelation to theological conclusions distinct from revelation, but from theoretical premises to conclusions coincident with, and confirmed by, the revealed data. St. Thomas, that is, uses the syllogism not only as a tool of proof or of discovery, but also as a means of generating understanding—a use of the syllogism known to its inventor, Aristotle.

It is by no means essential, then, to theology, as a rational, logical construction, a systematic ordering of the revealed data, to transcend these revealed data. Like *theoria*, the abstract understanding that is speculative theology also produces a heightening of clarity in its object, but it is an abstract, diagrammatic clarity. Systematic theology is related to the theology of the Bible as the painter's sketch or cartoon to the finished picture. To the question, therefore, whether the Trinitarian and Christological mysteries are contained in Scripture *as clearly* as in the abstract statements of them in definitions or theological formulas, we may say, first, that they are clearly contained in Scripture in the sense that they are unquestionably and unambiguously contained there; secondly, that mysteries are of their nature obscure and knowable only by revelation and in the degree in which they are revealed; thirdly, that the theological statement has the advantage in abstract clarity, the clarity of clear and distinct ideas; it discloses interrelationships between the revealed data and also their analytic implications (yielding verbal development), rather as the design may appear more clearly in the sketch than in the painting, or the plot of

⁶⁹ In Lonergan's valuable review article in *Gregorianum* 35 (1954) 630–48.

Hamlet may be clearer in the "argument" than in the play itself; but, fourthly, abstract ideas are abstractions *from* the concrete reality, and the Trinitarian theology of the Bible has the advantage in concrete richness and in *claritas* in the sense of brightness.⁷⁰

d. *Some Objections*

This account may seem to do less than justice to the nature or importance of the (in our view merely verbal and systematic) development achieved by the theological labors of such great Doctors as St. Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers and crystallized in the conciliar definitions. And yet these Fathers themselves would be the first to insist that their formulations simply expressed and safeguarded the Trinitarian doctrine of Scripture and tradition. The definition of and distinction between person, nature, and substance made it possible to think more easily and speak more coherently about the sublime doctrines whose elements are contained sporadically (*diffuse*) in Scripture, to hold them together in the mind, to harmonize them in a single body of doctrine, to fix them in the intellectual memory, to focus them more steadily, to naturalize them in the vocabulary of ordinary speech and relate them analogically to other knowledge, and so to enter more fully into the riches of the mysteries displayed in Scripture and orally transmitted in the Church. And yet—here is the paradox—the mysteries were already "there," both objectively and subjectively, or in the faith of the Church. In the most pregnant sense of Newman's saying, in the beginning, before they were formally defined, some of the central Christian doctrines were held "without words"—or only in the scriptural and liturgical formulas, without the later technical vocabulary.

Yes—but, it may be objected, this account ignores the real problem, which is that the doctrine of the "consubstantial" and the distinction between person and nature give us a sense of illumination and intellectual satisfaction such as we experience when, on solving a puzzle or scientific problem, all the elements of the problem acquire a new significance as they fall into place in the true pattern. Most of us undoubtedly do feel something like this about the Nicene definition, but

⁷⁰ The concrete reality is, of course, the triune God, but the theological statement is, immediately, an abstraction from the biblical revelation.

it is obvious that the analogy with the solving of a scientific problem is illusory. While the consecrated conciliar and theological formulations are true and accurate statements of the revealed data, they do not transcend them. The technical terminology is a help in thinking, and an immense help in speaking, about the Blessed Trinity, but the triune God remains mysterious and the theologian's intellect remains unsatisfied.

There is still one further point which the reader may feel we are overlooking. How is it possible to reconcile the position that Catholic doctrine, and only Catholic doctrine, is objectively contained in the Bible with the obvious fact that the Bible has been interpreted by heretics in radically different ways through the centuries? This point was vividly phrased by a Dean of Canterbury fifty years ago when, arguing that every reader of the Bible finds in it his own opinions, he continued:

The Romanist finds in it the primacy of Peter. . . . The Protestant discovers in it that Rome is the "Mother of Harlots". . . . The Sacerdotalist sees in it priestly supremacy, Eucharistic sacrifice and sacramental salvation. The Protestant cannot find in it the faintest trace of Sacerdotalism, nor any connection whatever between offering an actual sacrifice and the holy memorial supper of the Lord. . . . The Calvinist sees in it the dreadful image of wrath flaming over all the pages. . . . The Universalist sees only the loving heavenly Father.⁷¹

This eloquent passage underlines the inescapable practical necessity of the Church not merely to accredit the Bible but to safeguard its true meaning. The Bible is a great storehouse of our knowledge about God, but it is a difficult book, not a theological textbook complete with distinctions and explanations. Yet while the historical fact that Protestants have "found" these various aberrations in the Bible shows the necessity of an infallible teaching Church, it is clearly not true that Catholicism, Lutheranism, Calvinism, Ritualism, and Universalism are all equally taught in the inspired pages. In spite of some considerable degree of obscurity in the Bible, the perfect exegete would find Catholic doctrine, and only Catholic doctrine, in it, and the Catholic theologian does in fact successfully prove his Trinitarian, Christological, and other theses from Scripture. This generalization is com-

⁷¹ Quoted by W. H. Mallock in *Doctrine and Doctrinal Disruption* (London, 1908) pp. 86-87.

patible with the fact that for a minority of theses (as we shall see) the theologian cannot provide a cogent proof from Scripture alone, but needs the corroboration or supplementation of tradition.⁷² Again, even apart from these exceptions, it is only within the context of the worshipping community, the Holy People of God (*plebs tua sancta*), that the New Testament is fully meaningful. These considerations, however, as important as they are trite, should not drive us to an opposite, anti-biblical extreme or lead us to undervalue the doctrinal content of Holy Scripture.

Secondly, it must be remembered that we are not here directly and primarily concerned with the question, what proportion of revelation is contained in Scripture. Our main contention is that contemporary Catholic doctrine is substantially identical with the original revelation, whether that is contained in Scripture or partly in Scripture and partly in tradition. If, however, we have successfully shown against Dr. Chadwick that the Constantinopolitan Creed is in fact contained in Scripture, then we have achieved the principal part of our purpose at one stroke.

Other Catholic Doctrines

When we pass from the articles of the Creed to other Catholic doctrines, we find a few instances of development, but none of extravagant or illegitimate development. It is, of course, Catholic doctrine that the Mass and the seven sacraments were instituted by our Lord Himself;⁷³ the non-Catholic inquirer can find the relevant scriptural references in Denzinger's excerpts from the Tridentine decrees. Trent admits, however, that the scriptural basis for the sacramental character of Christian marriage must be supplemented by tradition.⁷⁴ Again, Trent vindicates by an appeal to Scripture the Church's right to order the administration of the sacraments "*salva illorum substantia*."⁷⁵ Protestants, of course, constantly assume that the doctrine of transubstantiation is an obvious "novelty"; but, as a defined doctrine, transubstantiation only means that the reality of the consecrated elements is changed into the Body and Blood of Christ, the appearances remain-

⁷² Moreover, the qualification (above) relating to the spiritual sense has its application here also.

⁷³ *DB* 844; cf. *DB* 969. ⁷⁴ *DB* 969-70. ⁷⁵ *DB* 931; cf. *DB* 932, 933.

ing the same (Aristotle's hylomorphism is not defined). Surely it is the *denial* of this doctrine that would be an innovation upon Scripture. Similarly, the New Testament evidence for the primacy of Peter is plain enough to anyone who does not read Scripture with Protestant eyes (O. Cullmann's book is a striking recognition of the basic fact); and, again, it is the *denial* that Peter had successors that would import change—change in the constitution of Christ's Church.

It may seem paradoxical to assert that the Catholic doctrines assailed by the Protestant Reformers are all primitive and are for the most part taught in Scripture, since it was in the name of primitive Christianity and the Bible that the Protestants rebelled. And yet that is the fairly obvious truth. No reader of Fr. L. Bouyer's *The Spirit and Forms of Protestantism*⁷⁶ will find it puzzling. The best Protestant scholars are now beginning to recognize that the Catholic emphasis on the sacramental principle is truly scriptural, and that Luther's errors and negations sprang from an unsatisfactory nominalist (or conceptualist) philosophy, while the genuine insights which inspired the Reformers—the unique majesty of God, the essentially personal nature of Christianity, justification by grace through faith, the sole supremacy of the Word of God (written or oral, we add)—are all, properly understood, thoroughly traditional and Catholic and find their true place and fairest flowering within the Catholic Church.

As regards the episcopacy, it can hardly be questioned that the plenitude of the priesthood, including the power to transmit orders, is to be found in the New Testament; it was, perhaps, the distinction of the simple priesthood from the episcopate that was a later development, when the bishop ordained ministers to assist him, or deputize for him, at the altar; but in any case the simple priesthood is contained in the episcopacy as the lesser in the greater. Again, the permanent reservation of the Blessed Sacrament for adoration marks an advance in practice upon apostolic custom, but not a dogmatic advance upon the apostolic doctrine of the Real Presence. Again, doctrine may be implicit in custom or liturgy; for example, the scriptural evidence for original sin is reinforced and clarified by the apparently primitive custom of infant baptism. The Immaculate Conception is implied in the scriptural doctrine of the divine Motherhood; also in the *gratia*

⁷⁶ Translated from the French by A. V. Littledale (London, 1956).

plena (kecharitomenē) as interpreted from earliest antiquity by Catholic tradition; also by the combination of the scriptural doctrine that the pains of childbirth are the punishment of sin with the primitive belief (so early as to point to apostolic tradition) that our Lady bore the divine Saviour miraculously and painlessly.⁷⁷ The development in the doctrine of grace and merit, at first sight spectacular, appears to be really no more, in general, than a detailed application of the general principles enunciated in certain scriptural texts and doctrines: the new birth, the new creation, the new man in Christ, the incorporation into Christ and the partaking of the divine nature; "without me you can do nothing"; "converte nos, Domine, et convertemur." As Vacant has observed, the positive theology of the first centuries was followed by the systematic and speculative theology of Scholasticism.⁷⁸ But for the most part Scholasticism simply expressed the old truths in a new language. St. Peter would, no doubt, have been puzzled if he had been asked whether the sacraments worked *ex opere operato*, but when the term had been explained to him, he would undoubtedly have agreed that they do.

We will prudently refrain from committing ourselves about some of the obscure and complex questions concerned with sacramental doctrine, notably the character and the validity of sacraments conferred by heretics or schismatics where the proper rite is kept.⁷⁹ Undoubtedly, in sacramental doctrine and theory there has been some

⁷⁷ I owe this second way of putting it to J. H. Crehan, S.J. Vacant, again, *op. cit.* 2, 294, justly sees the Immaculate Conception as revealed in so far as it reconciles the expressly revealed dogmas of original sin and our Lady's perfect holiness.

⁷⁸ Vacant, *op. cit.* 2, 311, sees three stages or phases of theology, the patristic (positive), the Scholastic, and the critical.

⁷⁹ As regards the character, we incline, without dogmatizing, to the view that, if one attends to things rather than words, the patristic evidence is both early and strong, and that the doctrine is implicit in Scripture and is contained in Catholic interpretative tradition. Similarly, it seems to be historically tenable that, in spite of important local vagaries, the central Catholic tradition has always insisted, certainly on the unrepeatability of a valid baptism and, perhaps less certainly, on the validity of heretical baptism. The Nicæan canons seem to support this view (Montanist and Paulist baptisms were invalid owing to defect of form). Against St. Cyprian, both St. Stephen and St. Augustine as well as Cyprian's African opponents appealed to ancient and (even in Africa, before Agrippinus) universal custom. As regards ordination, the early evidence seems to prove no more than that heretical ordination was recognized to be *canonically* invalid, so that its subjects (beneficiaries) could be deprived.

important development and clarification, although neither on a scale nor of a kind to cause alarm or despondency. Variations in the liturgy and sacramental rites, it must be remembered, illustrate not so much (if at all) doctrinal development as the Church's power to order the dispensation of the sacraments, "salva illorum substantia." And since this saving clause admits the view that, at least for some of the sacraments, Christ instituted the sacramental sign (matter and form) not *in specie* but only generically,⁸⁰ at different times and places materially different rites may be, when authorized by the Church, not only valid but legitimate, provided that they are formally (i.e., in their signification) identical.

Again, the development in the recognition of the number of the sacraments as seven illustrates our general position. For although it is only since Peter Lombard, in the twelfth century, that Catholic theologians would have unanimously counted seven sacraments, his new synthesis, as the dogmatic theologians justly point out, involved no change in the facts. It was mainly a question of theoretical definition and classification; as regards the fact, the Church has always believed in the existence of seven rites instituted by Christ, in which He through His minister signifies and effects the sanctification of a suitably qualified and disposed subject. It is true that in the twelfth century many Western theologians and canonists denied that Christian marriage bestows positive grace, though most of these admitted that it provided a remedy against sin. Gandulph of Bologna, however, in a rather obscure passage, seems to have judged this distinction to be merely verbal, and it was not long before St. Thomas pointed out that the power to avoid sin must be an effect of grace. In any case, what this twelfth-century aberration seems to show is that, temporarily and over a sharply restricted area, a doctrinal or theoretical retrogression may occur in the course of the construction of an abstract theological synthesis. For this fairly widespread twelfth-century view compares unfavorably with both the scriptural and the patristic doctrine. For Scripture plainly implies that Christian marriage is cemented by grace; if it were not, it could be only a faint and far-off resemblance—not, as Eph 5:22-32 asserts, a symbol—of the union between Christ and

⁸⁰ Cf. Wm. A. Van Roo, S.J., *De sacramentis in genere* (Rome, 1957) pp. 109-10.

the Church; nor, without grace, could the spouses, as St. Paul commands them, love each other as Christ loved the Church. Among the Fathers and early ecclesiastical writers, we may cite Origen, St. Epiphanius, St. Cyril of Alexandria, and Tertullian. With good reason, then, Fr. G. H. Joyce, S.J., after discussing the twelfth-century evidence, wrote: "It may well surprise us that churchmen of eminence could be led to forsake traditional teaching by reasoning of such little weight."⁸¹

Again, some of the most fruitful work in sacramental theory has been the result not so much of logical deductions from either the revealed data or earlier doctrinal formulations, as of a return to the sources and a more penetrating study of revealed data not fully utilized before. One recalls, for instance, how the Dominican Fr. C. Spicq's valuable study of the Epistle to the Hebrews⁸² has enriched our understanding of the sacramental character as a participation in Christ's priesthood. Our point probably finds further illustration in the history of the theological theories explaining or interpreting the doctrine of the atonement.

In investigating the early history of dogma we must always remember the very fragmentary and incomplete nature of the evidence. Often, moreover, in a particular age it is precisely the truths that are generally understood and accepted that, being taken for granted, easily escape record, while the views of the crank or the non-conformist win publicity. Yet, positively adverse evidence must always be duly weighed, and our historical conscience compels us to admit that there are a very few doctrines concerning which the early evidence is perplexing. Of these the most striking, perhaps, is that of the canon of Scripture itself. This, however, presents a far bigger problem for the Protestants than for the Catholic Church, whose teaching is logically independent of Scripture. Purgatory is commonly alleged by Protestants as a palmary and decisive instance of a Catholic "innovation." But the Church's official teaching about purgatory has always been

⁸¹ *Christian Marriage* (London, 1933) p. 173. See the whole of chap. 4, with references, to which my paragraph is factually indebted.

⁸² *L'Épître aux Hébreux 2* (Paris, 1953); cf. Van Roo, *op. cit.*, pp. 243-45, with references. To recognize the value of Spicq's work is not to depreciate St. Thomas' admirable teaching on the point.

very reserved. She teaches only that after death certain souls pass through an intermediate state of purgation, in which they can be helped by the Church's Sacrifice and by the prayers of the faithful,⁸³ and so much is an easy inference from the (substantially biblical) doctrine of the Communion of Saints and from 2 Maccabees (12:43-46; LXX), a book whose canonicity, of course, Protestants deny.^{83a} Some early obscurity, nevertheless, with consequent development, must be admitted in eschatological doctrine, particularly concerning purgatory and the Particular Judgment; this was perhaps connected (whether as cause or effect) with the early obscurity about the deuterocanonical books, including 2 Maccabees, and with local millenarist interpretations of the Apocalypse.

In general, however, the facts do not bear out the contention that historical honesty requires the recognition of large-scale development, and still less the contention that the Church has adopted substantially new doctrines. Even the doctrine of indulgences, that stumbling block for Protestants, is implied by the scriptural doctrines of purgatory, the Mystical Body, and the power of the keys. And that, we think, concludes Dr. Chadwick's list of "novelties"—unless we are prepared to find grave theological problems in the invocation of saints, "the tonsure, incense, vestments, or the ring in marriage." The recently discovered (1887) *Peregrinatio* of Etheria revealed both archdeacons and the use of incense in the liturgy of the Church of Jerusalem in the late fourth century.

DEVELOPMENT AND HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Great light is thrown on the whole question of development and immutability by a study of the decrees of the Council of Trent, which range over an immense (and controversial) field outside Trinitarian and Christological doctrine: original sin, justification, grace, merit, the Eucharist, and other sacraments. Time after time the Fathers of the Council appeal to Scripture and demonstrate that Catholic doc-

⁸³ DB 983.

^{83a} Moreover, as an Anglican scholar of rare distinction, the late Dom Gregory Dix, has justly remarked, "A fully developed doctrine of purgatory is already accepted in the Acts of the African martyrs Perpetua and Felicity (c. A.D. 200)" (*The Shape of the Liturgy* [2nd ed.; Westminster, 1945] p. 344).

trine is contained there, though the complementary witness of tradition is also often invoked. Similarly the Vatican Council describes St. Peter's universal jurisdiction as "huic tam manifestae sacrarum Scripturarum doctrinae," begins the actual definition of the primacy of the Roman Pontiffs with the words, "quapropter apertis innixi sacrarum Litterarum testimoniis," and, in defining papal infallibility, appeals to Mt 16:18 and Lk 22:32 as well as to universal tradition.⁸⁴

The appeal to authority, however, is not apologetically decisive against Protestant cavils. It is, indeed, precisely the Protestant criticism that within 150 years of Trent the march of history had made the Tridentine position indefensible. Thus J. G. Cazenove, writing in 1887, asserted:

. . . Roman Catholic divines, especially at the epoch of the Reformation and long after, also professed to take their stand upon the principles asserted in the *Com-munitorium*. . . There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of the Roman Catholic controversialists who thus acted. They were not in a position to judge the evidence on behalf of this and that portion of mediaeval doctrine and practice, and they appealed with confidence to such stores of learning as lay open to them. A day came when this confidence was rudely shaken. The Benedictine editions of the works of the Fathers appeared, with honest and discriminating criticism applied to their writings. Not only was it seen how considerable a portion of their works, which had been long accepted as genuine and authentic, was in reality spurious, but it also became evident that while distinctively Roman tenets and practices received much support from the sermons and treatises relegated into the appendix of each volume, the case was widely different when reference had to be made to the genuine Patristic remains.⁸⁵

This passage anticipates Dr. Chadwick's principal contentions. For it is precisely the argument of the Master of Selwyn that only the medieval and Tridentine theologians' naive acceptance of the works of "Denys the Areopagite" and of other spurious writings concealed from them the fact that doctrinal novelties had been smuggled into the Church's teaching, and that the rise of critical history towards 1700 revealed the uncomfortable fact of variation, so that "Newman's extravagant theory of development" was supplying an urgent need. This criticism, however, overlooks the facts that, first, the writings of

⁸⁴ DB 1822, 1826, 1833, 1836.

⁸⁵ J. G. Cazenove, "Vincentius Lirinensis," *Dictionary of Christian Biography* 4 (London, 1887) 1158.

the Pseudo-Denys could be an embarrassment as well as a source of edification,⁸⁶ and, secondly, that modern scientific history and the critical study of antiquity have done far more to vindicate than to discredit the primitive character of modern Catholicism. For instance, the comparatively recent discovery of some of the early liturgies and of the shorter epistles of St. Ignatius has vindicated Catholic liturgy and certain points of ecclesiology against Protestant cavils. Similarly, when the *Catecheses* of St. Cyril of Jerusalem were first printed in the second half of the sixteenth century, French Calvinists and German Protestants were dismayed to find that they taught not only the Mass, the Real Presence, and transubstantiation, but also purgatory, the excellence and glory of virginity, and the dispersal of the relics of the true cross throughout the world for veneration—besides displaying a tender devotion toward the Mother of Christ.⁸⁷ This is only one of many cases in which it was the Protestants who found themselves embarrassed by the publication of a monument of antiquity. So disconcerting was this evidence that some Protestant scholars (e.g., Aubert and Rivet) impugned the authenticity of the *Catecheses* or made the charge of interpolation.⁸⁸ Today it is indisputable that Cyril of Jerusalem is the author of the *Catecheses illuminandorum*; while Cyril's authorship of the *Catecheses mystagogicae* is no more than probable, it is certain that this work is either by Cyril or by his successor, John of Jerusalem. If John is the author, it simply means that the work is three decades later.⁸⁹

As regards the Eucharist, Fr. Paul Palmer, S.J., commenting on the widespread modern Protestant recognition of the need for radical liturgical reform, can confidently write (what would have been controversial 300 years ago):

⁸⁶ St. Thomas often had to correct Denys' doctrine, either categorically or unobtrusively, as E. Gilson has pointed out in the fifth edition of his *Le thomisme* (Paris, 1944) pp. 196–204; translated into English by L. K. Shook, C.S.B., *The Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas* (New York, 1956) pp. 136–42.

⁸⁷ *Cat. illum.* 4, 24; 10, 19; 12, 31–34; 15, 23; 16, 19 (*PG* 33, 485–88; 685–88; 764–69; 901–4; 944–45); cf. also 18, 16 (*PG* 33, 1037) for the miraculous power of the corporal and secondary relics of saints. *Cat. myst.* 1, 7; 3, 3; 4, 1, 2, 6, 9; 5, 1, 7, 9, 10 and *passim* (*PG* 33, 1072; 1089–92; 1098; 1098–1100; 1101; 1104; 1109; 1116; 1116–17).

⁸⁸ Cf. Reischl, *op. cit.* (supra n. 35) 1, *Introd.*, chap. 4, pp. cxliii–cxlv, and *DTC* 3 (1908) 2534, with references.

⁸⁹ John died in 417.

In this task of restoration most Protestants will be content to return to the reformed Mass of Luther, to Calvin's liturgy of Geneva, or to Cranmer's first Prayer Book of 1549. But some may seek inspiration in more ancient and more classical patterns. Here, they will find that the Eucharist is not only a commemorative Supper but a Sacrifice commemorative of Christ's passion, death and resurrection, as all the early liturgies testify. But even on this most divisive issue, which separates Anglicans among themselves and Protestants from Catholics and Orthodox, there is evidence of a willingness on the part of many churchmen to reassess in the light of New Testament teaching and Patristic tradition the sacrificial aspect of the Eucharist. What was anathema to Luther and to Calvin, and an abomination to Cranmer, is being studied today with understanding and even sympathy.⁹⁰

Indeed, the purpose of Fr. Palmer's useful book is to make more widely accessible the early documentary evidence of "a clear and consistent tradition, a tradition that may become in time the common heritage of all Christians."

The Example of the Assumption

Most spectacularly of all, Fr. J. H. Crehan, S.J., has recently drawn attention to the striking evidence concerning the Assumption provided by the Old Armenian Lectionary.⁹¹ Edited by F. C. Conybeare in 1905,⁹² this ancient calendar and lectionary claims in its Preface to be the lectionary in use in the Mother Church of Jerusalem. At August 15th it reads: "August 15 is the day of Mariam Theotokos. At the third milestone of Bethlehem is said Ps 132:8. . . ." Now, Ps 132 (131):8 reads: "Arise, O Lord, into thy resting-place: thou and the ark which thou hast sanctified [or: 'of thy sanctuary': *tou hagiastatos sou*]." The feast celebrated, therefore, can only be that of the corporal Assumption of our Lady, the feast specifically designated the *Transitus* or *Passing* in the later Armenian calendars. The place of the station was presumably that associated by tradition with the mystery commemorated.

What is the date of this lectionary? The lectionary was adopted by the Armenian Church, and its learned editor, F. C. Conybeare, sug-

⁹⁰ *Sacraments and Worship* (London, 1957) Preface, pp. ix-x.

⁹¹ J. H. Crehan, "The Ark of the Covenant," *Clergy Review*, n.s. 35 (1951) 301-11, esp. 308-9.

⁹² *Rituale Armenorum*, ed. F. C. Conybeare and A. J. Maclean (Oxford, 1905). See p. 181, note a, and Appendix II, esp. pp. 510-11, 516, 518, 525, 526.

gests 464–468, 432, 552, and 353 as possible dates of this Armenian adoption or redaction. But he says that the lectionary itself was clearly that in use in the Church of Jerusalem in the second half of the fourth century. Grigor Asharuni, writing *ca.* 690, believed that Cyril of Jerusalem was its author. The nineteen Lenten lections are (practically) identical with those of Cyril's *Catecheses* (350), and the shape of the Jerusalem Lenten catechesis appears to have been changed by the time of the pilgrimage of Etheria (most probably *ca.* 390). An early date is strongly suggested by the remarkable fact that this lectionary, which contains the feast of the Assumption, has no feast of the Ascension (at least as separate from Easter). Even if the lectionary is a conflation, the reference to Bethlehem proves that the feast of Mary belonged to the original Jerusalem stratum. It may be objected that the title "Theotokos" suggests a date after Ephesus (431). But St. Cyril calls our Lady precisely "Mariam . . . Theotokos," and the title is found in Origen at the beginning of the third century.⁹³

There is, indeed, one item in the lectionary that cannot have been inserted before the fifth century. This is the commemoration of the Blessed John of Jerusalem.⁹⁴ Everything else points to a fourth-century date, indeed to the time of St. Cyril. Moreover, while it is quite natural that a Church's calendar should be enriched by the addition of commemorations of its holy bishops after their death, the fifth-century addition to a venerable calendar of a doctrinally significant feast, not clearly warranted by Holy Scripture, would be quite a different matter. To suppose that the Assumption is a fifth-century addition to the earlier Jerusalem calendar is to suppose that it is the only item of its kind in the lectionary, that it is unique; the *onus probandi*, therefore, lies upon those who assert it.

It is extremely probable, therefore, that the feast was celebrated in Jerusalem in St. Cyril's time. And to say this is to claim a far greater antiquity for the tradition of the Assumption; for we have already seen how extreme, almost excessive, was St. Cyril's conservatism. Implicit in the whole tone of the *Catecheses* is an appeal to a long-established tradition. Whether, therefore, Cyril found the lectionary

⁹³ *Cat.* 10, 19 (*PG* 33, 685); Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 7, 32 (*PG* 67, 812); cf. J. Quasten, *Patrology* 2, 81.

⁹⁴ John died in 417. Theodosius is also commemorated.

already in existence at Jerusalem, or drew it up himself, or, as Grigor Asharuni asserts, procured it from the bishop of Alexandria,⁹⁵ we can be confident that he was assured of the apostolic character of the tradition of the Assumption.

We have here, then, another striking example of the confirmation of Catholic teaching by the progress of historical science. Moreover—to return to our main argument—while the doctrine of the Assumption is clearly implicit in Scripture as interpreted by the early Church and, if based on Scripture alone, would be explicable as an instance of development according to principles discussed above, the possibility should not be overlooked that it is not, in the more significant sense, an instance of development at all, as being also contained explicitly in apostolic tradition. The feast, it should be noted, could hardly make its appearance in the liturgy earlier than it does, before any of the scripturally attested feasts of our Lady and before any of the feasts of our Lord except Epiphany, Holy Week, and the Resurrection. The delay in the adoption of the feast by some other Churches may be explained by the unfortunate rise of apocryphal accounts of the *circumstances* of the Assumption in the second half of the fifth century.⁹⁶ From the purely historical point of view, of course, this pious embroidery is most naturally explained as presupposing the simple fact of the Assumption, somewhat as the legend of Dismas presupposes the facts of the flight into Egypt and the crucifixion. Similarly, the definitive recognition of the canonicity of the deuterocanonical books (the canon being revealed only in tradition) was complicated and delayed by the

⁹⁵ There are several important early historical links between the Churches of Jerusalem and Alexandria, and Grigor's statement, quoted by Conybeare, is of particular interest to the present writer, who has pointed to striking affinities between Cyril's *Catecheses* and the Alexandrian School of Clement and Origen; see "St. Cyril of Jerusalem and the Alexandrian Heritage," *THEOLOGICAL STUDIES* 15 (1954) 573-93; "St. Cyril of Jerusalem and the Alexandrian Christian Gnosis," *Texte und Untersuchungen* 63 (1957) 142-56: being Vol. 1, Pt. 1, of *Studia patristica*, ed. Kurt Aland and F. L. Cross (Berlin, 1957). It is very probable that the underlying doctrinal scheme of Cyril's catechetical teaching was diocesan and represents a far older tradition. It is uncertain whether there was a relation of dependence between the Jerusalem and Alexandrian traditions or they ran parallel, belonging to a wider common tradition.

⁹⁶ The earliest manuscript of the *Transitus Mariae* dates from the end of the fifth century; cf. A. S. Lewis, *Apocrypha syriaca* (*Studia Sinaitica* 11; London, 1902) p. x, and Crehan, *art. cit.* (supra n. 91) p. 309, note.

circulation of apocryphal gospels and epistles aping the authentic Scriptures.

CONCLUSION: A NOTE ON NEWMAN'S POSITION

In conclusion, while it is not our purpose here either to defend or to impugn Newman's view, it is interesting to note, factually, that in the *Essay* (particularly in the edition of 1878, after he had become a Catholic) Newman was concerned not so much to argue that large-scale significant development had occurred, as to develop against the Protestants the *argumentum ad hominem* that if and in so far as, on given principles, development could be shown to have occurred in specifically Catholic dogmas, on the same principles the fundamental dogmas of Christianity also could be shown to have developed beyond the letter of Scripture. Often, moreover, the *Essay* is really proving not the development of dogma, but either the development of theology or the existence of an infallible living magisterium logically independent of Scripture.⁹⁷ Outside the rather elusive argument of the *Essay*, Newman, in his Catholic days, was categorical. While never abandoning the essential idea of the *Essay*, he now expressed it in formulas that gave full value to a simultaneous (substantial) immutability. Thus, in 1852 he was writing: "Christian truth is purely of revelation; that revelation we can but explain, we cannot increase, except relatively to our own apprehension." And in 1858: "Every Catholic holds that the Christian dogmas were in the Church from the time of the Apostles; that they were ever in their substance what they are now"—i.e., the doctrines existed before the definitions. In *The Idea of a University* Newman wrote: "What is known in Christianity is just that which is revealed, and nothing more. . . . From the time of the Apostles to the end of the world no strictly new truth can be added to the theological information which the Apostles were inspired to deliver." And, in accents that echo those of St. Vincent and Bossuet: "The Gospel faith is a definite deposit, a treasure, common to all and the same in every age." Writing to Acton, Newman defined development as "a more intimate apprehension, and a more lucid enunciation of the original dogma," and expressed the view that if

⁹⁷ Cf., e.g., pp. 100-130 (ed. 1845).

St. Clement or St. Polycarp had been asked whether our Lady had been immaculately conceived, they would, when the terms of the question had been explained to them, have replied: "Of course, she was."⁹⁸ We may surmise that, were Newman on earth today, he would say the same about the Assumption.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ *Discourses on the Scope and Nature of University Education* (first edition) p. 348; *Tracts Theological and Ecclesiastical* (ed. 1874) p. 287; a letter of February 5, 1871, to Fr. Coleridge, S.J., reproduced in *Letters of J. H. Newman*, edited by Derek Stanford and Muriel Spark (London, 1957).

⁹⁹ See also a private paper by Newman, only now edited by Hugo M. de Achával, S.J., and printed in *Gregorianum* 39 (1958) 585-96. This is a more nuanced, or perhaps dialectical, exposition. In *The Idea of a University* (London, 1891) p. 441, we find this: "It is possible, of course, to make numberless deductions from the original doctrines, but as the conclusion is ever in its premisses, such deductions are not, strictly speaking, an addition." This is more reminiscent of the standpoint of the *Essay*—and raises the questions of the nature of reasoning, theology, and revelation.