CURRENT THEOLOGY

INFALLIBILITY: A REVIEW OF RECENT STUDIES

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The climax of the First Vatican Council came on July 18, 1870, when its participants assembled in St. Peter's Basilica for the solemn proclamation of *Pastor aeternus,* the Council's "first dogmatic constitution on the Church of Christ,"[1] best known for its definition of the "infallible magisterium of the Roman pontiff."[2] Thomas Mozley, an Anglican clergyman and special correspondent for the London *Times* during the Council, described the event with Victorian verve:

> The storm, which had been threatening all the morning, burst now with the utmost violence, and to many a superstitious mind might have conveyed the idea that it was the expression of Divine wrath, as 'no doubt it will be interpreted by numbers,' said one officer of the Palatine Guard. And so the Placets of the Fathers struggled through the storm, while the thunder pealed above and the lightning flashed in at every window and down through the dome and every smaller cupola, dividing if not absorbing the attention of the crowd. *Placet,* shouted his Eminence or his Grace, and a loud clap of thunder followed in response, and then the lightning darted about the baldacchino and every part of the church and Conciliar Hall, as if announcing the response. So it continued for nearly one hour and a half, during which time the roll was being called, and a more effective scene I never witnessed. Had all the decorators and all the getters-up of ceremonies in Rome been employed, nothing approaching to the solemn splendour of that storm could have been prepared, and never will those who saw it and felt it forget the promulgation of the first Dogma of the Church.[3]

To the imaginative ultramontane the storm was a theophany appropriately expressing supernatural ratification of the conciliar decision. To

[1] The text is available in DS 3050-75 (or 1821-40 in older editions). Since *Pastor aeternus* was devoted to the place of the primatial office in the Church, the Council also intended to issue a second constitution on the Church as a whole. Due to the prorogation of the Council as a result of the Italian invasion of Rome in 1870, this intention went unrealized. The draft of this second constitution is available in Mansi's *Amplissima collectio conciliorum* 53, 308–17.

[2] The fourth chapter of *Pastor aeternus* is entitled "de Romani pontificis infallibili magisterio." This terminology is preferred to the popular but theologically misleading expression "papal infallibility." For an overview of the terminological problems connected with "infallibility," cf. J. Ford, "Infallibility—From Vatican I to the Present," *JES* 8 (1971) 779–84, and "Infallibility: Who Won the Debate?" *Catholic Theological Society of America, Proceedings* 31 (1976) 184–89.

[3] T. Mozley, *Letters from Rome on the Occasion of the Oecumenical Council, 1869-1870* 2 (London: Longmans, Green, 1891; Westmead: Gregg International, 1969) 445–46. Mozley (1806–93) was Newman's brother-in-law.

the frustrated anti-infallibilist, the storm was a sign of divine displeasure over ecclesiastical presumption. In fact, the storm-tossed session climaxed many months of tumultuous debate, outside as well as within the Council. By the time of the final session, few opponents of the definition were still in Rome to entertain such musings. After protesting to the Pope both their reservations and their loyalty, most of the anti-infallibilist bishops left for their homes, rather than attend the solemn proclamation.[4]

The storm might also be interpreted as prophetic. During the months following the conciliar declaration, the anguished debates were re-enacted on a personal level; gradually but reluctantly, the opposition bishops came around to accepting the definition. Most, but not all, Roman Catholics followed suit; a protest group eventually collected a modest number of adherents to form the Old Catholic Church.[5] Also, as predicted during the Council, the definition gave governments an excuse to interfere in ecclesiastical affairs; the *Kulturkampf*, for example, would probably have occurred without any incentive from Vatican I, but infallibility did provide a convenient incendiary.[6]

Just as storms eventually abate, so the intramural controversy about infallibility dissipated during the decade after the Council. Indeed, the fact that the papacy in general and infallibility in particular were frequently under attack may have fostered its eventually unquestioned acceptance in Catholic circles after Vatican I until Vatican II.[7] This unchallenged acceptance still perdured at Vatican II, where the discussion focused not on infallibility but on collegiality; in effect, Vatican II extended the teaching of Vatican I by acknowledging the episcopal college as an agent of infallibility.[8]

CENTENNIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In the wake of the theological aggiornamento stimulated by Vatican II, it was inevitable that eventually there would be a reassessment of

[4] Two negative votes were cast at the solemn session by Bishop Riccio of Cajazzo (Italy) and Bishop Fitzgerald of Little Rock, Arkansas. As J. Hennesey (*The First Council of the Vatican* [New York: Herder and Herder, 1963] 281) observes, Fitzgerald's vote "has never been satisfactorily explained."

[5] V. Conzemius,"Catholicism: Old and Roman," *JES* 4 (1967) 426–45.

[6] Cf. M. Trauth,"The Bancroft Despatches on the Vatican Council and the *Kulturkampf*," *CHR* 40 (1954) 178–90; A. Randall, "Papal Infallibility and the Politicians," *Times Literary Supplement*, no. 3576 (Sept. 11, 1970) 1001–2; for an American counterpart, cf. J. Smylie, "American Protestants Interpret Vatican Council I," *CH* 38 (1969) 459–74.

[7] Since most of the interconciliar literature in English is more or less apologetic, there are only occasional hints that there might be unresolved difficulties concerning the doctrine of infallibility: e.g., G.Mitchell, "Some Aspects of Infallibility," *ITQ* 23 (1956) 380–92.

[8] Cf. *Lumen gentium*, no. 25; Cf. J. Ford, "Infallibility: Primacy, Collegiality, Laity," *Jurist* 30 (1970) 436–46.

infallibility. Theologically considered, infallibility is a doctrine that cross-cuts many others: the nature of revelation, the personal appropriation of faith, the witness of tradition, the concept of dogma, the process of doctrinal development, the teaching office of the Church, etc. With each of these other topics undergoing re-examination and reformulation, there accumulated a series of implications that should necessitate collateral revisions in the doctrine of infallibility. For example, postconciliar theological renewal increasingly tended to consider revelation as a communicational phenomenon, while simultaneously rejecting an identification of revelation with (revealed) truths or propositions. Consequently, infallibility as a charism bestowed for the authentic presentation of revelation should not be identified with (infallible) truths or propositions.

While the ongoing revision in various areas of systematic theology would have logically forced an eventual reconsideration of infallibility, a number of factors hastened the process. First, the convocation of Vatican II stimulated considerable interest in its predecessor in particular and in conciliar history in general.[9] The result was a steady stream of publications: on the history of general councils, such as Philip Hughes's *The Church in Crisis*;[10] on the First Vatican Council, such as Roger Aubert's *Vatican I*;[11] on the role of national hierarchies, such as James Hennesey's treatment of "the American experience" in *The First Council of the Vatican*;[12] and on the part played by individual bishops, such as Augustin Verot, whose biography, *Rebel Bishop*, was written by Michael Gannon.[13]

After Vatican II, conciliar studies continued to be published in anticipation of the centennial of Vatican I. The Vatican Press, for example, issued a collection of previously published studies on "the doctrine of Vatican I."[14] Two aspects of this collection are noteworthy. First, the analysis of the Council and its dogmatic constitutions was beginning to uncover a number of long-forgotten theological problems that had been concealed in the text or buried in the archives; in other words, the scholarly world, in suitably staid style, was beginning to suspect the

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[9] Pertinent (and exhaustive) bibliography is available in the annual issues of *Archivum historiae pontificiae*, 1963 to present.

[10] Garden City, N.Y.: Hanover, 1960.

[11] *Histoire des conciles oecuméniques* 12 (Paris: l'Orante, 1964); the classic treatment of Vatican I in English is still C. Butler's *The Vatican Council* (London: Longmans, Green, 1930; reprinted Westminster, Md.: Newman, 1962).

[12] New York: Herder and Herder, 1963; review: J. Gadille, *Annuarium historiae conciliorum* 1 (1969) 469–71.

[13] Milwaukee: Bruce, 1964.

[14] *De doctrina Concilii Vaticani primi* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1969); most of the essays were originally published between 1960 and 1964, though a few were earlier. Incidentally, one of the two English-speaking contributors wrote in French, the other in Latin.

existence of a few lacunae in the theological teaching of Vatican I. Secondly, not one of the seventeen essays in this volume was in English; presumably, the English-speaking world was minimally aware of the ongoing theological re-examination of Vatican I.

In contrast, the European theological reassessment of Vatican I was gaining momentum. One of the first monographs to appear was that of Gustave Thils, who studied the specific question of pontifical infallibility via a threefold approach: historical background, textual analysis, and theological elaboration.[15] While Thils's treatment may now seem conventional, its publication made a significant break with the manualist practice of interpreting texts in logical-legal fashion. More importantly, his theological presentation indicated some of the hermeneutical difficulties concerning infallibility and suggested possible solutions. Just as the volume of his Louvain colleague Aubert offered an excellent overview of the history of Vatican I, so Thils's work furnished a preliminary survey of the problem of infallibility.

A second factor stimulating theological discussion on infallibility was ecumenical dialogue. Immediately after Vatican II, ecumenically-minded theologians began discussing such topics of long-standing contention as Scripture and tradition, faith and justification, Eucharist and ministry. While all of these topics implicitly bordered on papacy and infallibility, an official consideration of these subjects was usually judged premature, not only because their treatment presupposed a yet-to-be-discussed ecclesiological framework, but also because these subjects still retained a good measure of polemical potential. Eventually, of course, the officially constituted bilateral conversations would take up these topics, with such notable results as the collaborative assessment of *Peter in the New Testament*[16] and the collected papers from the Lutheran-Catholic dialogue on *Papal Primacy and the Universal Church.*[17]

One of the earliest dialogues specifically devoted to *Infallibility in the Church*[18] took place in Birmingham in 1967; the papers from this symposium, although attracting little attention in the United States,[19] proved to be prescient. For example, Austin Farrer, an Anglican participant,

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[15] *L'Infaillibilité pontificale: Source–conditions–limites* (Gembloux: Duculot, 1969). Reviews: R. McBrien, *TS* 32 (1971) 336–38; M. Gervais, *Laval théologique et philosophique* 26 (1970) 200–203; B. Butler, *Tablet* 224, no. 6762 (Jan. 3, 1970) 3.

[16] Ed. R. Brown, K. Donfried, and J. Reumann (Minneapolis: Augsburg; New York: Paulist, 1973).

[17] Ed. P. Empie and T. Murphy (Lutherans and Catholics in Dialogue 5; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1974).

[18] M. Goulder *et al.* (London: Darton, Longman, Todd, 1968).

[19] Though written in a traditional perspective, one of the first American articles to suggest the need for a modernized view of infallibility was J. Kenny's "The Positiveness of the Infallibility of the Church," *AER* 156 (1967) 242–56.

noted an apparent confusion of the function of teaching with that of governing in the Church and questioned how the Church can claim to dogmatize historical revelation if the factual conclusions of historians are basically unsure.[20] Simultaneously, Robert Murray, a Roman Catholic contributor, examined the ways in which one may legitimately use infallibility; Murray envisioned infallibility as a gift of the Church which can be exercised by different functional organs: the pope (as specified by Vatican I), the episcopal college (as specified by Vatican II), and even the laity.[21] Examining the contemporary functioning of the *sensus fidelium*, Murray noted that "the Church's moral consciousness on the question of contraception is in a state of evolution similar to that which took place on the question of usury, against which there were much more explicit scriptural prohibitions and much clearer Church documents."[22]

In addition to its central teaching on human life and the question of contraception, the publication of *Humanae vitae* in 1968 focused attention on the papal teaching office and its infallibility. Indirectly and unintentionally, *Humanae vitae* set the stage for the subsequent infallibility debate.

Almost simultaneously with the issuing of *Humanae vitae*, Francis Simons, bishop of Indore (India), published *Infallibility and the Evidence*.[23] Simons, in an effort to update Catholic teaching, had previously attracted attention by challenging many traditional moral absolutes; this time, his target was infallibility. In brief, Simons asserted that the New Testament, particularly the customary proof-texts, cannot provide sufficient historical evidence to claim infallibility for the Church, or for the pope. Although many were attracted by Simons' basic insight—infallibility needs to be reformulated or reinterpreted—his argument was based on such a fundamentalistic approach to Scripture that it was hermeneutically untenable. Thus Simons' denial of infallibility was well noticed, but easily dismissed, in theological circles.

The year after *Humanae vitae* was published, another book appeared that directly challenged papal authority and infallibility. Francis Oakley's examination of the Great Western Schism showed that the medieval Church did not possess any juridically effective mechanism for correcting papal malpractice; thus the Council of Constance had to fabricate a solution to the schism. Although the procedures of Constance stanched the schism, should they be considered merely pragmatic or do they have

[20] "Infallibility and Historical Revelation," ibid (n. 18 above) 9–23.

[21] "Who or What Is Infallible?" ibid. 24–46.

[22] Ibid. 44.

[23] Springfield, Ill.: Templegate, 1968; reviews: G. Baum, *Ecumenist* 7 (1968) 6–7, 10–12; W. Burghardt, *National Catholic Reporter* (Nov. 27, 1968) 3; A. Outler, *JES* 7 (1970) 803–6; H. Ryan, *TS* 30 (1969) 130–31.

theoretical implications as well? Oakley's *Council over Pope?*[24] advanced the thesis that conciliarism is still a viable ecclesiological option. If, as Oakley maintained, the decree *Haec sancta* (1415) of Constance still retains dogmatic status, there is a direct conflict with Vatican I's *Pastor aeternus.* "The definitions of Vatican I have, therefore, to be confronted and a decision has to be arrived at concerning the relationship between them and *Haec sancta.*"[25] Although Oakley's call for a re-examination of Vatican I was supported by scholarly credentials, his case was so patently colored by his reaction against *Humanae vitae* that his historical interpretation was suspect.

Although Simons and Oakley succeeded in drawing attention to the problematic nature of infallibility, what was really needed was an indepth probing of the issues involved. Such was the project undertaken by an international, interdenominational, and interreligious colloquium chaired by Enrico Castelli at Rome in January 1970.[26] Although infallibility was considered in a variety of perspectives—historical and phenomenological, scriptural and sociological—the major focus of the colloquium papers was philosophical and theological.

For philosophers, the initial question is whether infallibility is a philosophical possibility at all. Given human finiteness in general, and the human propensity to error in particular, it would seem initially impossible to speak of infallibility in any human context. While it would be simpler to preclude infallibility from the start, there are two phenomena that make such a preemption gratuitous. First, in the persistent quest for truth the human inquirer basically seems to be searching for infallibility; even if this goal is judged impossible, one needs to explain why it seems to be an inherent part of the human search for certitude. Secondly, in their basic tenets all religions seem to be making a claim to infallibility; even if such claims, separately or collectively, are rejected, one needs to explain why all religions apparently make such a claim.

If philosophers cannot avoid encountering the existence of infallibility postulates, their meaning is far from clear. The customary negative definition of infallibility, "immunity from error," is not particularly helpful in specifying what infallibility *is.* Moreover, a philosopher would want to inquire about the noetic system(s) in which infallibility is presumed to be meaningful. For example, is infallibility a concept that is viable only in a closed system?

[24] New York: Herder and Herder, 1969; reviews: B. Marthaler, *TS* 31 (1970) 376–77; A. Outler, *JES* 7 (1970) 803–6; cf. F. Oakley, "The 'New Conciliarism' and Its Implications: A Problem in History and Hermeneutics," *JES* 8 (1971) 815–40.

[25] *Council over Pope?* 163.

[26] *L'Infaillibilité; Son aspect philosophique et théologique,* ed. E. Castelli (Paris: Aubier, 1970); reviews: B. Marthaler, *Cross Currents* 21 (1971) 481–87; J. Ford, *JES* 9 (1972) 613–14.

The problem of meaning emerges with full force when one attempts to predicate infallibility; again, who or what is infallible? Simultaneously, in the process of determining purportedly appropriate ways of predicating infallibility, it would be necessary to construct a verification process that could satisfactorily determine when infallibility is being used correctly. In this regard, particularly in light of later events, it is worth noting that colloquium participants seriously questioned whether it is ever legitimate to describe propositions as infallible.

The philosophical discussion of infallibility was incisive and insightful. In addition to such specific issues as those already mentioned, it became clear that infallibility is not exclusively a Roman Catholic problem but a fundamental religious concern. Accordingly, infallibility needs to be discussed in a much broader perspective than has ordinarily been the case.

Like many similar symposia, the Castelli colloquium resolved few issues. If anything, infallibility appeared even more problematic than before, as if all the questions left hanging at Vatican I had been resuscitated with renewed vigor. Thus the cumulative contribution of the symposium was in the area of raising the right questions; in other words, the participants were remarkably successful in avoiding the false problems that have plagued too many less discerning discussions of infallibility. In this respect the colloquium is one of the relatively few occasions when philosophical issues connected with infallibility have been discussed perceptively rather than polemically. Thus the Castelli colloquium did valuable spadework for a potentially productive reappraisal of infallibility. Unfortunately, this potential has gone largely unrealized; at the same time that the colloquium proceedings were published, the attention of theologians was being mesmerized by a more daring rival.

KUNG VERSUS INFALLIBILITY

If it was possible for theologians easily to dismiss the charges of Oakley and Simons, the work of a well-known and widely influential theologian could hardly be ignored. And if it was difficult to digest the ramifications of the Castelli colloquium, it was far easier to respond to a clearly and concisely formulated case against infallibility. So the publication of Hans Küng's *Unfehlbar?* immediately stirred the long-simmering difficulties about infallibility into a heated debate.[27]

Küng's "inquiry" voiced considerable irritation with the retarded pace of postconciliar renewal. The most apparent impediment to renewal was ecclesiastical authoritarianism, especially that of the "Roman system," whose penchant for self-preservation was responsible for *Humanae vitae,*

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[27] *Infallible? An Inquiry* (New York: Doubleday, 1971); review: J. Hughes, *TS* 32 (1971) 183–207. Unfortunately, the American edition is sometimes more a paraphrase than a translation of the original. An extensive bibliography of reactions to Küng's work is available in *Fehlbar? Eine Bilanz,* ed. H. Küng (Zurich: Benziger, 1973) 515–24.

the most recent of "numerous and indisputable" errors of the ecclesiastical teaching office.[28] The alleged mistakes of the papacy prompted Küng to re-examine the scriptural basis for infallibility: the New Testament was found to guarantee the indefectibility of the Church but not the infallibility of its statements. Thus the papal claim to infallibility must abdicate in favor of an ecclesial assurance of indefectibility.

Küng's questioning of infallibility quickly spawned a far-reaching reaction. Almost immediately, his German-speaking colleagues rose either to attack or to defend;[29] with the appearance of an English translation, American theologians joined the discussion. The result was an avalanche of articles; many reviewers agreed with Küng—at least to some extent. Typically, theologians shared Küng's repudiation of an exaggerated extension of infallibility to any and every kind of papal pronouncement; reviewers also sympathized with Küng's concern for re-examining the scriptural and historical foundations of the doctrine and the concomitant need to revise the customary teaching on infallibility.

It was equally evident, however, that many reviewers who congratulated Küng also had some serious reservations about his work. First, his presentation was colored by an antiauthoritarianism that many found both distracting and distorting. Richard McBrien, for example, remarked that "it seems important that the issue of infallibility should be studied from a perspective larger than the phenomenon of *Humanae vitae* or even of the crisis of ecclesiastical leadership."[30] Secondly, Küng's presentation suffered from some hermeneutical deficiencies surprising in a theologian of his stature. In particular, his rejection of any scriptural basis for infallibility savored of "biblicist presuppositions" that discounted the difficulty of restating the Christian message and seemed to disallow the possibility of genuine postapostolic doctrinal development.[31] Similarly, Küng's list of "classical errors of the ecclesiastical teaching office" was not as conclusive as purported;[32] if most conceded that the instances cited were mistakes, many simultaneously questioned whether such decisions really involved an exercise of infallibility.[33] In addition, the inter-

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[28] *Infallible?* 32.

[29] Cf. M. Fahey, "Europe's Theologians Join the Debate," *America* 124 (1971) 429–31; L. van Voorst, "Küng and Rahner: Dueling over Infallibility," *Christian Century* 88 (1971) 617–22. The Küng-Rahner exchange is summarized in *TD* 19 (1971) 107–23.

[30] *The Infallibility Debate*, ed. J. Kirvan (New York: Paulist, 1971) 35; reviews: E. Lauer, *National Catholic Reporter*, Jan. 28, 1972, 10; L. Swidler, *JES* 9 (1972) 151–54; J. Ford, *AER* 166 (1972) 250–54.

[31] Cf. N. Lash, *Clergy Review* 56 (1971) 815–16.

[32] *Infallible?* 31.

[33] Cf. W. Brandmuller, *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 72 (1971–72) 10–24; abstract: *TD* 19 (1971) 207–12. The book of J. Costanzo, *The Historical Credibility of Hans Küng* (North Quincy, Mass.: Christopher, 1979) arrived too late for this survey.

pretation of infallibility which Küng chose to attack was an ultramontane summary characteristic of many outmoded theological manuals, but one which few theologians after Vatican II care to defend.[34]

The "infallibility debate" was enormously successful if measured quantitatively by the plethora of publications. Was the debate also profitable qualitatively? In retrospect, it seems that the controversy was overly centered on Küng, whose book, effectively but not always accurately, set the parameters for discussion. On the one hand, Küng's premise—the doctrine of infallibility needs to be re-examined—was undeniably on target. On the other hand, some of Küng's particular charges misfired. For example, Küng's repeated attack on "infallible propositions" is basically a repudiation of a popular misconception of Vatican I; as such, Küng can be credited for demolishing an untenable misinterpretation which certainly deserved destruction. However, *Pastor aeternus* did not use the expression "infallible propositions" but spoke of "irreformable definitions." Insofar as the former expression is philosophical and theological, and the latter is juridical, Küng's questioning of the former leaves the latter untouched.[35] Thus, by dispensing himself from the task of rigorous textual exegesis, Küng failed to advance the critical understanding of infallibility.[36]

If Küng's aim was sometimes directed at the wrong targets, his critics frequently followed suit by defending the indefensible. For example, a fair number of Küng's critics sought to legitimize "infallible propositions" again without paying attention to the fact that the Council did not use this expression. Moreover, not only was the "infallibility debate" fought in the wrong places; it was also fought with the wrong weapons. Unfortunately, the polemical pitch of *Infallible?* was allowed to set the tone for the debate. Küng quickly acquired more opponents than anyone deserves, and sometimes he was treated unfairly.[37] Yet strategically, if not by plan, Küng emerged, if not unscathed, at least as champion of "truthfulness in the Church."[38]

It is perhaps symptomatic that the "infallibility debate" ended almost as quickly as it started. Given the focus on pseudo problems veneered by

[34] Cf. A. Dulles, *America* 124 (1971) 427.

[35] Cf. J. Ford, "Küng on Infallibility," *Thomist* 35 (1971) 501–12.

[36] *Infallible?* 89; cf. 139; Küng continued his offensive against "infallibly true sentences" in *Fehlbar?* 379–85.

[37] For example, the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith opened an investigation which requested written responses to a number of charges (cf. documents in *Fehlbar?* 497–509). Küng's request for space to reply to his critics was denied by Rahner, who edited a collection *Zum Problem Unfehlbarkeit: Antworten auf die Anfrage von Hans Küng* (Quaestiones disputatae 54; Freiburg: Herder, 1971).

[38] Cf. H. Küng, *Truthfulness: The Future of the Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 19687); review: L. Cunningham, *TS* 30 (1969) 361–63.

polemics, dialogue was easily replaced by dueling. Küng seems to have realized that positions were stalemated; his "balance sheet" announced that he was turning his attention to more essential issues.[39] If, in retrospect, the "infallibility debate" seems more a polemical digression than a theological contribution, the controversy did highlight two areas that needed further investigation: first, a more precise and detailed history of the origins and development of infallibility; secondly, a systematic philosophical-theological explanation of infallibility.

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS: TIERNEY, BANTLE, POTTMEYER

During the decades following Vatican I, proinfallibilist theologians elaborated a convenient historical explanation for the origin and development of infallibility. Like many other subsequently accepted teachings, infallibility was not specifically formulated in the early Church; rather, infallibility is one of those dogmas that were germinally present in apostolic times and gradually unfolded in the postapostolic age. Specifically, if Peter and his earliest successors never explicitly claimed infallibility, still they taught in a way that today would be considered equivalent to an exercise of infallibility.

Latent in this historical approach are two intertwined assumptions. First and fundamental is the supposition that history develops organically; accordingly, the instances of authoritative papal teaching can presumably be plotted in a trajectory that advances towards greater clarity of both exercise and expression. Second and subordinate is the assumption that the pivotal part of the trajectory is in its initial stage; in other words, the doctrine of infallibility can and must be historically verified in the early Church. These assumptions were frequently reinforced by polemical considerations; since many anti-infallibilists charged that infallibility was a recent innovation, Roman Catholic proponents usually produced biblical and patristic "proofs" in defense of infallibility and tended to bypass its medieval and modern development.[40]

Consequently, theologians were generally caught offguard by the findings of Brian Tierney's *Origins of Papal Infallibility, 1150–1350*:

There is no convincing evidence that papal infallibility formed any part of the theological or canonical tradition of the Church before the thirteenth century; the doctrine was invented in the first place by a few dissident Franciscans because it suited their convenience to invent it; eventually, but only after much initial

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[39] *Fehlbar?* 307; Küng's "Bilanz" (*Fehlbar?* 305–493), though comparable in length to his original "Anfrage," received only modest comment in the English-speaking world: cf. E. Quinn, *New Blackfriars* 54 (1973) 466–72; K. McNamara, *ITQ* 40 (1973) 299–318; P. FitzPatrick, *ITQ* 41 (1974) 3–21; J. Ford, *JES* 12 (1975) 98–101.

[40] For a typical, and for its time excellent, presentation, cf. B. C. Butler's *The Church and Infallibility* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1954; reissued 1969).

reluctance, it was accepted by the papacy because it suited the convenience of the popes to accept it.[41]

The first result, then, of Tierney's research was a documented claim to have determined the precise period in which papal infallibility emerged as an explicit theological position. Simultaneously and surprisingly, Tierney discovered that papal infallibility was not originally the penchant of power-seeking primates, but a strategy to restrict papal authority.

However unexpected these results, their broader implications were even more provocative; Tierney's conclusion directly challenged conventional assumptions about doctrinal development. If papal infallibility is not the fructification of a process of development originating in apostolic times, but a fortuitous medieval invention, then it is "hardly possible—even allowing for all theories of development of dogma—to maintain that the doctrine of infallibility formed part of a *depositum fidei* handed down by Christ to the apostles."[42] Tierney, of course, was criticized for overextending his conclusions—not only outside the period of his historical competence but also outside of history into theology.[43] One suspects, however, that such criticism is only superficially fair; methodologically, it seems that an evolutionary interpretation of doctrine is being used to judge an episodic view of history. If so, such criticism begs the latent and unresolved question whether the history of dogma is continuous or disjunctive.

In addition to the question of doctrinal development, Tierney's treatise raised other issues. Outside of recourse to divine providence, neither the medieval nor the modern Church has an effective procedure for dealing with a pope who falls into heresy, much less one who simply errs.[44] In a sense, the medieval discussion about the deposition of an heretical pope has a modern counterpart in the problematic reception of papal doctrinal teaching. For example, Vatican I's apparent repudiation of Gallicanism— "definitions of the Roman pontiff are irreformable of themselves and not through the consent of the Church"[45]—seems to have had some unfore-

[41] Leiden: Brill, 1972, at 281.

[42] B. Tierney, "Origins of Papal Infallibiity," *JES* 8 (1971) 842.

[43] Cf. reviews of R. McNally, *JES* 9 (1972) 130–32; J. Lynch, *CH* 42 (1973) 279–80; A. Stickler, *CHR* 60 (1974) 427–41, and subsequent exchange between Tierney and Stickler, *CHR* 61 (1975) 265–79.

[44] Cf. R. Manselli, "Le cas du pape hérétique, vu à travers les courants spirituels du XIVᵉ siècle," *L'Infaillibilité* 113–30.

[45] DS 3074 (1839): "... eiusmodi Romani pontificis definitiones ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae, irreformabiles esse." Cf. G. Dejaifve, "Ex sese, non autem ex consensu ecclesiae," *Salesianum* 24 (1962) 283–95; reprint: *De doctrina Concilii Vaticani Primi* 506–20; tr.: *Eastern Churches Quarterly* 14 (1962) 360–88; digest: *TD* 12 (1964) 8–13. Also T. Caffrey, "Consensus and Infallibility: The Mind of Vatican I," *Downside Review* 88 (1970) 107–31.

seen and unfortunate side effects: a tendency to treat *all* papal decisions as unquestionably irreformable; a presumption that the task of theologians is simply to explain, but not to examine, papal teachings; a supposition that the acceptance of doctrine is automatic; an ignoring of the process by which church teaching is assimilated.

Tierney's study also challenged Maistre's equation: "*Infallibility* in the spiritual order and *sovereignty* in the temporal order are two perfectly synonymous words."[46] Tierney, in contrast, found the terms incompatible: on the one hand, "a sovereign ruler cannot be bound by the acts of his predecessors"; on the other hand, "the infallible decrees of one pope are binding on all his successors, since they are, by definition, irreformable."[47] Thus the basic reason for the medieval papacy's rejection of papal infallibility was its implied restriction of papal authority: medieval popes saw papal infallibility as imprisoning them within the confines of their predecessors' decisions. This fundamental incompatibility of sovereignty and infallibility continues to surface: either a pope will feel constrained to reiterate the decisions of his predecessors (as was the option exercised by Paul VI in *Humanae vitae*), or, should a pope contradict previous papal teaching, it will be necessary to harmonize the two teachings artificially. In the latter case, "theologians, more reprehensibly (from a historian's point of view), have devised hermeneutical principles so ingenious that the documents of the past can never embarrass them."[48]

In contrast to Tierney's work, Franz Xaver Bantle's study of the treatment of infallibility by South German Catholic theologians during the last third of the eighteenth century showed that the Church's infallibility was a commonly accepted teaching, and also an occasional topic of polemical preaching.[49] Of particular interest is the ecclesiological framework undergirding this proinfallibilist ecclesiology.[50]

Schematically, the Church was seen as an institution whose teaching is normative in matters of revelation. At its foundation, the apostles presumably received revelation, not only immediately but in its entirety, from Christ; in other words, revelation is construed as an absolute datum, unaffected by the historical situation. Similarly, while this original revelation obviously has to be transmitted in the postapostolic Church, the

[46] *Origins* 1; Joseph de Maistre's *Du pape* (1817) had a tremendous influence on the development of ultramontane ecclesiology in the nineteenth century.

[47] *Origins* 2.

[48] Ibid. 5.

[49] *Unfehlbarkeit der Kirche in Aufklärung und Romantik: Eine dogmengeschichtliche Untersuchung für die Zeit der Wende vom 18. zum 19. Jahrhundert* (Freiburg: Herder, 1976); reviews: L. Scheffczyk, *MTZ* 28 (1977) 98–100; J. Ford, *CHR* 64 (1978) 674–76.

[50] The following proinfallibilists are treated by Bantle: Pietro Maria Gazzaniga (an honorary "South German" in virtue of his teaching position at Vienna), Engelbert Klüpfel, Simpert Schwarzhueber, Stephan Wiest, Aloys Merz, Johann Evangelist Hochbichler.

process is one of logical explicitation, not a real developmental process. Given this framework, it can be confidently claimed that what the contemporary Church teaches is identical with the teaching of the apostles. In this respect infallibility is the divine guarantee that in the process of transmission the literal sense of scriptural revelation is accurately preserved. While the scope of infallibility was variously restricted or extended, these theologians generally agreed that the exercise of the Church's infallibility is vested in the episcopate as a whole. Some, of course, defended a papal exercise as well, but this was considered an open theological question.[51]

This approach had the advantage of being lucid and logical; as such, it was well suited for the then customary anti-Protestant polemics. But what apparently passed unnoticed was the fact that the ecclesiology was neither biblical nor patristic nor scholastic, but a Counter Reformation offspring. One result of this ancestry, when linked to a literalistic mentality, was the use of scriptural passages as proof-texts divorced from context. Whatever the obvious merits of such an ecclesiology, and of such a view of infallibility in particular, in reaffirming a sense of security among faithful Catholics, this theological construct was ill prepared to meet the challenge of the Enlightenment.

Given the rationalistic mentality of the Enlightenment, it is hardly surprising that a genuine Protestant-Catholic dialogue did not develop. What is revealing, however, is the experience of those Catholic theologians who presumed to raise objections against infallibility: their views were attacked, their writings placed on the Index.[52] From the vantage point of two centuries, one finds a familiar ring to their objections against infallibility. First, the meaning of the term *infallibilis*, as well as such German translations as *unfehlbar* and *untrüglich*, was seen to need clarification. Secondly, the customary texts from Scripture and the Church Fathers simply did not seem to prove what was claimed under infallibility. Thirdly, it was not clear what type of gift infallibility was or to what it applied. At the time, these objections went unanswered; all of them were to reappear, sometimes with greater force, both at Vatican I and in the recent infallibility debate.

However crucial such specific difficulties, the more basic issue, in

[51] On the topic of the "reception" of papal teaching, see M. Place's dissertation, *The Response Due to Papal Solicitude in Matters of Faith and Morals: A Study of Selected Eighteenth Century Theologians* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America, 1978), which studied the teaching of Pietro Ballerini, Alphonsus de Liguori, Francesco Antonio Zaccaria, and Mauro Capellari (Gregory XVI).

[52] Bantle treated the following anti-infallibilists: Beda Mayr, Kaspar Ruef, Matthias Dannenmayer, Karl Joseph Michaeler, Felix Anton Blau, Benedikt Maria Werkmeister. For a study of other eighteenth-century anti-infallibilists, see J. Pereira, "Fallible?" *Thought* 47 (1972) 362–414.

Bantle's judgment, was the role of historical methodology in theology. Almost predictably, four different responses to the confrontation with the Englightment emerged. First, the proinfallibilists, whose theology was underpinned with an ahistorical view of revelation, generally ignored the historical-critical method. Secondly, the anti-infallibilists, influenced by the Enlightenment, attempted to utilize historical critique in facing serious problems (such as infallibility) without changing their basically unhistorical approach to theology. Thirdly, some theologians in adopting the historical method conceded too much to the Enlightenment's apotheosis of reason. Only a few, like Johann Sebastian Drey, managed successfully to balance the utilization of historical methlogy with a respect for the authority of the Church in doctrinal matters.

A reader is left with a further question, admittedly beyond the scope of Bantle's book: To what extent was the relation of historical critique and theological inquiry really the substantive issue at Vatican I?[53] At the very least, the Council's history shows some definite parallels with the South German situation. First, some were apparently oblivious to historical criticism and felt that infallibility should be treated "dogmatically, not historically." Similarly, others felt that once the dogma was proclaimed, it was the task of theologians to explain (away) any apparent historical problems. In contrast, some felt that unless and until the doctrine of infallibility was historically demonstrated, it could not reasonably be accepted. Finally, some appear to have managed to balance an awareness of the real historical problems with at least a minimalistic acceptance of the conciliar definition.

Just as Tierney's volume was helpful in pinpointing the emergence of papal infallibility as a theological position, and Bantle's volume was useful in contrasting a regional recognition of ecclesial infallibility with a restricted awareness of its attendant difficulties, the work of Hermann Josef Pottmeyer has been particularly valuable in understanding the rapid rise of ulltramontane ecclesiology in the nineteenth century.[54] At the start of the century, papal infallibility was a "novel idea" insofar as it was a theological opinion, recognized in some quarters but rejected in others.[55] How, then, can one explain the precipitous progress of papal infallibility from denial to dogma in a half-dozen decades? Pottmeyer's

[53] The historical events that were most frequently discussed at Vatican I as instances where popes had betrayed their teaching responsibility were the condemnation of the "Three Chapters" by Vigilius, the letter on the "one will of Christ" by Honorius, the brief *Pro Armenis* of Eugene IV, and the *Unam sanctam* of Boniface VIII.

[54] *Unfehlbarkeit und Souveränität: Die päpstliche Unfehlbarkeit im System der ultramontanen Ekklesiologie des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1975); review: *TS* 37 (1976) 161–64.

[55] Cf. C. Langlois, "Die Unfehlbarkeit—eine neue Idee des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Fehlbar?* 146–60.

study envisioned papal infallibility as emanating from a politically structured ecclesiology that was concerned with preserving the independence of the Church, maintaining its international unity, and fostering its spiritual corporateness in the face of the attempted interference by civil authorities and the attraction of competing ideologies.

The initial, and possibly the most influential, step in this process was Maistre's *Du pape* (1817).[56] Maistre's diagnosis of Europe's ills as traceable to the revolutionary rejection of authority, both civil and ecclesiastical, had a decided appeal to those war-weary souls who yearned for the post-Napoleonic restoration of order in Church and state. For them, Maistre's equation of sovereignty and infallibility furnished a tidy theory that explained the disruption of the past while giving direction to the future. But what was not so apparent was the innovative character of Maistre's approach: where previous proponents had advocated papal infallibility on the basis of Scripture, the Fathers, and the traditional practice of the Roman Church, Maistre based infallibility on a secular concept—that of absolute sovereignty.

Although Pottmeyer's work is restricted to the preconciliar period, his findings are suggestive for a revisionist interpretation of Vatican I.[57] Thus two consequents of Maistre's identification of infallibility with sovereignty seem influential. First, Maistre had rerouted theological methodology away from the historical verification of tradition towards doctrinal speculation; subsequently, proinfallibilists at Vatican I would claim that their presentation of infallibility was ahistorical; they could thus discount the real historical problems about the papal exercises of infallibility as irrelevant. Secondly, and more obviously, Maistre's ecclesiology categorized the Church as an absolute monarchy; subsequently, ultramontane canonists would enhance the jurisdictional prerogatives of the papal monarch; thus they could ignore the limitations incumbent on the pope that exist in other ecclesial models.

Although a monarchical ecclesiology was in control at Vatican I—as much among the minority as among the majority, since there were no radical conciliarists present—the complexity and diversity available within a monarchical model is not always recognized. For example, nineteenth-century canonists did not agree on the relationship between *ordo, jurisdictio,* and *magisterium*; accordingly, the text of *Pastor aeternus* had to be worded in such a way that it avoided disputed jurisprudential questions. Such ambiguity appears, at least in retrospect, to have been operative in the Council's discussion of magisterium; one suspects

[56] On the ultramontane influence of Lamennais, Rohrbacher, Guéranger, and Phillips, cf. R. Costigan, "The Ecclesiological Dialectic," *Thought* 49 (1974) 134–44.

[57] Accordingly, the rest of this section is an attempt to utilize some of Pottmeyer's findings in understanding various facets of Vatican I.

that some participants considered magisterium as basically a teaching power which invites the response of faith, while others construed magisterium as essentially a lawmaking power which requires the response of obedience. Whatever the mentality of the Council fathers, the text of *Pastor aeternus* displays a commingling of theological and juridical perspectives. For instance, a theological approach is evident in the description of the pope as "enjoying that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer endowed his Church;" a canonical approach surfaces in specifying the conditions necessary for a pope to exercise infallibility: "when discharging the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians, he defines, with his supreme apostolic authority, a doctrine of faith and morals that must be held by the universal Church."[58]

The spectre of Maistre appears in other places as well. A striking resemblance to Maistre's concept of absolute sovereignty is found in the Council's ascription of "full and supreme power of jurisdiction" to the pope.[59] Similarly, should one detect Maistre's presence behind the Council's awkward juxtaposition of papal and episcopal jurisdiction or the Council's inability to assign limits to papal power?[60]

In some respects Maistre's presence can be sensed today in any absolutist monarchical ecclesiological schema, where judicial competence is more important than the content of the juridical decision; axiomatically, the king can do no wrong. In other words, paramount importance is attached to the extrinsic authority of the judge rather than to the intrinsic merits of the decision. When transferred to ecclesiology, such a view can easily accord supreme importance to the highest decision-maker, particularly when the revelatory data are unclear or disputed. Parenthetically, one might detect this phenomenon in operation on the pre-Vatican II scene when considerable emphasis was placed on any and every type of papal pronouncement. In addition, this emphasis on judicial competence tends to expect a basically passive receptivity to juridical decisions; in contrast, an emphasis on content tends to invite an active process of reception, in which the recipient is personally responsible for accepting or rejecting the evidence advanced.

If, then, Maistre's absolutism was operative at Vatican I, and afterwards even more influential in ultramontane writings, Vatican II, while professedly continuing in the footsteps of its predecessor, implicitly disowned a monopolistic and nonparticipatory sovereignty with its doctrine of collegiality.

The applicability of Pottmeyer's study is, then, not restricted to the particular problem of the ultramontane elaboration of papal infallibility

[58] DS 3074 (1839).
[59] DS 3064 (1831).
[60] DS 3060–61 (1827–28).

prior to Vatican I. First, his portrait of preconciliar papalism shows considerable plurality; it suggests that the infallibility debate at Vatican I was not only between the majority and the minority but among variegated shades of proinfallibilists as well. Thus the moderate definition that was finally voted by the Council represented a multilateral compromise, which has generally been unacknowledged in most subsequent presentations of infallibility. Moreover, if a spectrum of interpretations was legitimated by the participants at Vatican I, one ought to conclude that a diversity of views on infallibility is still legitimate today. Secondly, Pottmeyer's study suggests that papal infallibility is the keystone of a monarchical ecclesiology based on an absolutist political ideology. With the waning of political absolutism as an appealing option, it is hardly surprising that the collateral ecclesiology has become unattractive. Since the customary presentations of papal infallibility were embedded in a system that is no longer appetible, it is not surprising that some who have discarded a pyramidal ecclesiology also discarded papal infallibility. A more constructive alternative, however, would be to recast infallibility in terms of other models of the Church.

NEWMAN ON INFALLIBILITY

Newman's reservations about the projected proclamation of infallibility became public knowledge during the Council, when what was intended as a personal letter to his ordinary, Bishop Ullathorne, was leaked to a London newspaper.[61] After receiving the actual text of the definition, Newman found little difficulty in accepting the doctrine and encouraged his correspondents to do the same: " ... nothing has been passed of consequence."[62] Such advice, of course, stood in sharp contrast to his earlier willingness as an Anglican to characterize the papacy as fulfilling the antichrist prophecies.[63] Nonetheless, if Newman acknowledged the teaching of Vatican I, he continued to feel that the definition of infallibility was "done with an imperiousness and overbearing wilfulness, which has been a great scandal—and I cannot think thunder and lightning a mark of approbation, as some persons wish to make out, and the sudden destruction of the Pope's temporal power does not seem a sign of approval either."[64]

[61] This frequently cited text is available in C. Butler, *The Life of Bishop Ullathorne* 2 (London: Burns, Oates, and Washbourne, 1926) 58–59; cf. C. Dessain,"What Newman Taught in Manning's Church, "*Infallibility in the Church* 70.

[62] *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman* 25 (ed. C. Dessain and T. Gornall; Oxford: Clarendon, 1973) 224; additional excerpts: R. Strange, *Ampleforth Journal* 80 (Spring 1975) 61–70; J. Miller, *Thomist* 38 (1974) 372–75.

[63] P. Misner, "Newman and the Tradition concerning the Papal Antichrist," *CH* 42 (1973) 377–95.

[64] *Letters and Diaries of Newman* 25, 262.

The evolutionary stages of Newman's views on the papal primacy have been carefully chronicled in Paul Misner's *Papacy and Development.*[65] Some of Newman's positions on the papacy are already familiar; for example, if his *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845) had not satisfied him that the Petrine office is a legitimate development, he presumably would have remained an Anglican. Equally familiar is the toast in his *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk* (1875): " . . . to Conscience first, and to the Pope afterwards."[66]

What is easily overlooked, however, is the fact that Newman's *Letter* was not only a riposte to Gladstone's charge that Roman Catholics could not simultaneously be loyal subjects of both queen and pope[67] with appropriate discretion, Newman (then not yet a cardinal) was also disowning the heavy-handed interpretation of infallibility championed by Archbishop Manning.[68] Newman's contemporaries were variously delighted at, or silenced by, the deft strokes of his two-edged sword that cut both popular Protestant prejudice and ultramontane clerical intransigence. However much one may relish Newman's rapier, the significance of this *Letter* for the infallibility debate needs to be highlighted: "There was after all more than one admissible opinion regarding the interpretation of the Vatican decrees current in the Catholic communion, and in the end a moderate view, hedged around with lawyer-like clauses, would prevail."[69] Similarly, the current infallibility debate would certainly have been less polemical, and possibly more productive, if all participants would have acknowledged the legitimacy of different interpretations of infallibility.

Theology, then, is indebted to Newman for not leaving the explanation of infallibility exclusively in the hands of the ultramontanes; Newman's efforts in this respect (as in others) were almost completely ignored in the decades between the Vatican Councils. Although not victorious at Vatican I (insofar as *Pastor aeternus* allows a spectrum of interpretations), ultramontanism managed in large measure to capture the popular Catholic imagination, which tended to treat every papal utterance as

[65] Leiden: Brill, 1976; review: R. Clancey, *TS* 37 (1976) 703–5; J. Holmes, *CHR* 64 (1978) 697–98.

[66] *Certain Difficulties Felt by Anglicans* 2 (London: Longmans, Green, 1900) 261. Cf. J. Altholz, "The Vatican Decrees Controversy, 1874–1875," *CHR* 57 (1972) 593–605; J. Holmes, "Liberal Catholicism and Newman's *Letter to the Duke of Norfolk*," *Clergy Review* 60 (1975) 498–511.

[67] W. Gladstone, *The Vatican Decrees in Their Bearing on Civil Allegiance* (London, 1874).

[68] H. Manning, *The Vatican Council and Its Definitions* (London, 1870), and *Petri Privilegium* (London, 1871); cf. R. Ippolito, "Archbishop Manning's Championship of Papal Infallibility, 1867–1872," *Ampleforth Journal* 77, no. 2 (Summer 1972) 31–39.

[69] Misner, *Papacy and Development* 161.

infallible. Secondly, theologians should be grateful to Newman for insisting on the difference between official proclamation and conscientious acceptance; "his strongest argument for the authority of the Vatican Council's decrees was not their confirmation by the pope, but their reception by the whole Roman Catholic communion with few exceptions."[70]

Thirdly, Newman sought to fill a void left by the premature prorogation of Vatican I.[71] The termination of the Council left in abeyance the plan to promulgate a constitution on the Church as the context for the constitution on papal primacy.[72] While some may construe this default as providential, the blessing was mixed. On the other hand, this lack of a conciliar ecclesiology left theologians free to interpret the papal primacy and magisterium within what today would be called different "models of the Church."[73] Nonetheless, the absence of an ecclesiology gave ample opportunity for the aggrandizement of authoritarianism through what B. C. Butler has described as "creeping infallibility."[74]

Newman, though in his seventies, rose to the occasion. Abuses in the Church arise not only from the sinfulness of its members—a point which his ultramontane opponents would have conceded—but also from an imbalance in ecclesial functions—a point they would have denied. Utilizing the conventional description of the threefold ecclesial powers—regal, priestly, prophetic—in a creative way, Newman pointed to their embodiment, respectively, in the pope as ruling, in "pastor and flock" as worshiping, and in the *schola theologorum* as teaching. In effect, Newman redistributed powers in a check-and-balance system. Accordingly, abuses are seen as arising when one office attempts unduly to monopolize the Church's mission; in other words, ecclesial functions are not the exclusive prerogative of the hierarchy but require a dialectic among all members of the Church.

But if Newman did not want the fate of the church to be left solely in the hands of its rulers, he did not deliver it altogether into the hands of its theologians either. The ruling function, embodied in the hierarchy, must feel the restraint of

[70] Ibid. 178. Other considerations aside, the *Humanae vitae* controversy indicates that more theological attention needs to be given to church teaching as a dialogical process.

[71] After the Italian invasion of Rome on Sept. 20, 1870, the Council was prorogued by *Postquam Dei munera* on Oct. 20, until "a more opportune and favorable time"; a translation of the text is available in *AER* 141 (1959) 252–54. Some suggestions were made about transferring the Council to Malines; cf. J. Fenton, "The Vatican Council's Unfinished Business," *AER* 142 (1960) 220–22.

[72] Cf. note 1 above.

[73] Following the lead of A. Dulles (*Models of the Church* [Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1974]), it would be interesting to examine the primatial office in a number of different models in addition to the institutional.

[74] "The Limits of Infallibility," *Tablet* 225 (1971) 372–75.

theology, but likewise theology must temper its logical reasoning, when it threatens to lose contact with concrete reality, by taking into consideration the needs and capabilities of the church in its other two functions, as a worshipping community organized in a polity.[75]

Newman's search for ecclesial balance brought him into a series of unpleasant (and almost unbelievable) conflicts with authoritarian figures in the Victorian Church. If his elevation to the cardinalate late in life removed the cloud of suspicion about his personal orthodoxy, his theology remained suspect in some quarters.[76] Fortunately, the period after Vatican II is more disposed to sympathize with Newman's concern for honesty, his sensitivity to truth, and his theological insight; he might "rightly be considered the most prophetic Christian intellect of modern times."[77] Nowhere is Newman's prophetic leadership more evident than in the question of infallibility; "it is hard not to believe that had Newman's view been taken up, there would have been neither cause nor occasion for the kind of protest against the doctrine which Hans Küng has felt bound to make."[78]

PARTICIPANTS AND BYSTANDERS

In view of the gradual ascendency of ultramontanism after Vatican I, it should be emphasized that Newman's moderate interpretation was not an isolated exception. As Frederick Cwiekowski's study of *The English Bishops and the First Vatican Council* has shown,[79] Manning's "position was not at all representative of the English bishops generally."[80] In fact, Manning's ultramontanism was shared by only two of his episcopal colleagues;[81] the rest of the hierarchy was either moderately inopportunist or moderately infallibilist; whatever differences the bishops had among themselves, they were united in their distaste for Manning's extremism.

[75] Misner, *Papacy and Development* 166–67.

[76] At the turn of the century, the ambiguous appropriation of Newman by various Modernists diminished his reputation among Roman Catholic theologians for at least a generation. For a bibliographical guide to "Newman's Philosophy and Theology," cf. C. Dessain's survey in *Victorian Prose*, ed. D. DeLaura (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1973) 166–84.

[77] J. Ellis, "Should Cardinal Newman Be Canonized?" *America* 133 (1975) 251.

[78] R. Strange, "Newman on Infallibility: 1870 and 1970," *Ampleforth Journal* 80 (Spring 1975) 70.

[79] Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1971; reviews: J. Hennesey, *TS* 35 (1974) 215; A. Rush, *AER* 168 (1974) 637–38; T. Joyce, *CHR* 61 (1975) 305–7.

[80] Cwiekowski 317.

[81] Bishop Cornthwaite of Beverley and Bishop Chadwick of Hexham and Newcastle. The latter's conciliar correspondence, which has been edited by D. Milburn ("Impressions of an English Bishop at the First Vatican Council," *Wiseman Review* 493 [1962] 217–35), shows some reservation about the proinfallibilist exaggerations of the *Tablet* and an awareness of Manning's propensity to manipulate.

Before the Council, many bishops had been irritated by Manning's intemperate writings favoring a definition; during the Council, his suffragans were decidedly embarrassed by their metropolitan's highhanded maneuvering in caucuses and committees; after the Council, the bishops were disconcerted by the archbishop's effort to make everyone else accept his version of the Council's teaching.

Such factors as an English sense of fair play, tolerance for diversity, and reserve about airing intramural disputes before a customarily hostile British public apparently allowed opponents of the definition to work out some *modus vivendi* with the conciliar decision. Lord Acton, for example, who not only published his opposition to infallibility before the Council and continued expressing his reservations after the doctrine was proclaimed, managed to remain within Roman Catholicism, while his former teacher Döllinger did not.[82] Acton's escape from official censure is particularly interesting, since his opposition to infallibility could hardly be overlooked.

Arriving in Rome shortly before the Council convened, Acton did not content himself with being a bystander bemused by the conciliar pageantry or a host graciously entertaining visiting prelates.[83] Acton quickly became the rallying point of the opposition. An accomplished linguist, Acton was the catalyst who brought anti-infallibilist bishops into contact, though not into concerted action; in spite of his efforts, the opposition was too diverse to become a united force. Some of Acton's expectations were unrealistic; for example, his hope that the exodus of the minority bishops prior to the proclamation of *Pastor aeternus* could be galvanized into further resistance that would result in a revision or reversal of the conciliar decision proved illusory. After the Council, Acton was abandoned by the minority bishops.[84]

Similarly unsuccessful were Acton's efforts during the Council at mobilizing governmental opposition to the proposed definition. As a member of Parliament and a personal friend, Acton requested from Prime Minister Gladstone a private letter declaring his opinion on the definition's inexpediency. Although Gladstone was able to offer his personal

[82] Cf. Acton's "The Pope and the Council" (Oct. 1869) and his four letters to the *Times* (Nov. 9, 24, 30, and Dec. 12, 1874) in D. McElrath *et al.*, *Lord Acton, the Decisive Decade, 1864–1874: Essays and Documents* (Louvain: Publications Universitaires, 1970) 221–27, 246–61, respectively.

[83] Cf. *Lord Acton and the First Vatican Council: A Journal*, ed. E. Campion (Sydney: Catholic Theological Faculty, 1975); reviews: J. Hennesey, *TS* 37 (1976) 343–44; F. Cwiekowski, *CHR* 64 (1978) 692–93. Of interest for comparative purposes is H. Butterfield's "Journal of Lord Acton: Rome 1857," *Cambridge Historical Journal* 9 (1946) 186–204.

[84] Cf. S. Katzman and J. Holland, "Acton and the Bishops of the Minority," in McElrath, *Lord Acton* 185–217; Acton's arguments for continuing the opposition were expressed in his "Sendschreiben an einen deutschen Bishof des Vaticanischen Concils," ibid. 228–39.

support to the anti-infallibilist cause, he was unable to go further, since his own cabinet opposed any official governmental involvement in the Council. A curious addendum to their rather extensive correspondence during Vatican I came a quarter century later when neither Acton nor Gladstone could recall their unsuccessful campaign.[85]

An even more checkered result emerged from Acton's correspondence with Döllinger. Furnished with inside information by his ecclesiastical contacts, Acton relayed the latest news about the Council's proceedings to his former professor. Given conciliar secrecy, these reports, published pseudonymously as letters from Quirinus in the *Allgemeine Zeitung*, had a practical monopoly of the popular press. In the absence of more moderate interpretations of infallibility, Quirinus' *Letters from Rome on the Council*[86] fomented a widespread anti-infallibilism. Unfortunately, the correspondents seemed unaware that their personal concerns were substantially different: where Acton's anti-infallibilism was historically motivated by his zeal for church reform, Döllinger was theologically opposed to an apparent doctrinal innovation. If Acton could seemingly remain within a church that possibly could be reformed in spite of its claim to infallibility, Döllinger could hardly approve of a church whose teaching was apparently unwarranted. Even more unfortunate, the vignette of infallibility proposed by Acton and publicized by Döllinger helped nourish such anti-Catholic expressions as the *Kulturkampf* and the No-Popery movements.[87]

While Acton's efforts to mobilize opposition were necessarily restricted to extraconciliar activity, within the Council "perhaps the stiffest opponent" was Peter Richard Kenrick, archbishop of St. Louis.[88] Since Kenrick published two Latin treatises opposing the proposed definition, his theological argumentation during the Council is readily ascertainable.[89]

More conjectural, however, is the origin of Kenrick's anti-infallibilism. Apparently, a mitigated Gallicanism was current at Maynooth when Kenrick was a student there, yet the extent of such "seminary influence" in shaping his subsequent conciliar position seems impossible to verify.[90]

[85] W. White, "Lord Acton and the Governments at Vatican Council I," in McElrath, *Lord Acton* 141–83.

[86] New York: Pott and Amery, 1870.

[87] J. Conzemius, "Lord Acton and the First Vatican Council," *JEH* 10 (1969) 267–94.

[88] Butler, *The Vatican Council* 2, 176.

[89] The texts of his *De infallibilitate pontificia* and *Concio habenda et non habita* are available in Mansi 51, 1059–70, and 52, 453–81, respectively; a translation of the *Concio* is available in *Catholic Historical Records and Studies* 28 (1937) 93–131.

[90] The conclusion of S. J. Miller, *Peter Richard Kenrick, Bishop and Archbishop of St. Louis, 1806–1896* (= Records of the American Catholic Historical Society of Philadelphia 84/1–3 [1973]) 12, that "Peter Kenrick left Maynooth with ideas which can be styled mitigated Gallicanism," seems at best a partial explanation; cf. review: J. Hennesey, *CHR* 62 (1976) 496–98.

Similarly unverifiable is the relation of Kenrick's opposition to his proverbial dissatisfaction with the Roman Curia, whose recommendations he frequently found inapplicable to the missionary situation of the American Church; likewise, he resented curial efforts at centralization as an infringement of his episcopal prerogatives. What is certain is that Kenrick was ordinarily not one to shirk a fight; during his lengthy episcopal tenure, in addition to assorted curialists, bishops, and priests, Kenrick unabashedly opposed political officeholders and even Union Army commanders.

Given Kenrick's combat record, his acquiescence to the decrees of Vatican I is, in a sense, more surprising than his continued resistance would have been. A decisive factor in his submission was the example of the other majority bishops; he explained to Lord Acton: "Although some still held out, they were so few that hesitancy to declare my submission would have had the appearance of rejecting the authority of the Church. This I never intended to do."[91] Still, Kenrick's submission seems more volition than conviction: "the act was one of pure obedience, and was not grounded on the removal of my motives of opposition to the decrees."[92] Accordingly, though threatened with censure, he refused to retract his objections published during the Council. Insofar as Kenrick managed to reconcile himself intellectually to *Pastor aeternus*, it was by utilizing Newman's theory of development.[93]

The Pontifical authority as at present exercised is so different from what it appears to have been in the early Church, that it can only be supposed identical in substance by allowing a process of doctrinal development. This principle removed Newman's great great [*sic*] difficulty and convinced him that, notwithstanding the difference, he might and should become a Catholic, I thought that it might justify me in remaining one.[94]

Similar soul-searching, but with a different result, took place among the members of the Catholic theological faculty at the University of Bonn. Under Döllinger's influence prior to the Council, the majority of the priest-professors were opposed to the definition of infallibility; moreover, they expected the minority bishops (most of whom left Rome before the solemn session at which *Pastor aeternus* was proclaimed) to lead the opposition. Much to the professors' chagrin, their own ordinary, Archbishop Melchers of Cologne, himself an inopportunist during the Council,

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[91] Kenrick to Lord Acton (March 29, 1871) in McElrath, *Lord Acton* 213.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Instead of a single, homogeneous "theory of development," N. Lash (*Newman on Development* [Shepherdstown, W.Va.: Patmos, 1975] 56) finds that Newman's "*Essay* undoubtedly contains, in rudimentary form, the seeds of a number of such theories, the systematic elaboration of which might show that they are not mutually compatible."

[94] McElrath, *Lord Acton* 214. For an account of Kenrick's postconciliar behavior, cf. S. Miller, *Kenrick* 121–27. Unfortunately, much of Kenrick's correspondence is lost.

not only proved unsympathetic but quickly demanded their formal subscription to the conciliar decision. There followed a protracted period of negotiations in which professorial responses and archiepiscopal expectations never quite managed to match. Eventually a standoff ensued when ecclesiastical procedures against the priest-professors were checkmated by university statutes. On the one hand, the priests were deprived of their sacerdotal functions and excommunicated; on the other hand, they were supported by their professorial colleagues and sustained in their teaching positions by the Prussian government.

One can regret that the ecclesiastical proceedings evidenced more juridical exactitude than appreciation of theological difficulties; one can also regret that the priest-professors chose the dually dubious route of encouraging a schismatic movement and seeking support from an anti-Catholic government. But the true tragedy, as the archival research of the late August Franzen has poignantly proved,[95] was that the alienation of the Bonn faculty members was entirely unnecessary. In the course of their negotiations with their archbishop, the Bonn professors presented several letters of submission whose formulations were rejected as inadequate. What was unknown to both sides was that similar, and even more mitigated, formulae had been judged acceptable elsewhere—Rome included.

Unfortunately, the Bonn scenario had a counterpart at Munich, where Döllinger, who was all too well informed of the ultramontane maneuvers at the Council, seems to have been unaware of the more moderate interpretations of Pastor aeternus.

... Döllinger, agitated and in conflict with the "maximal infallibilists," *did not understand* the actions of the Council. Had Archbishop Scherr not pushed him for an early submission, Döllinger's own logic that a council becomes ecumenical when it is accepted by the episcopacy throughout the world would probably have led him to accept its decisions and to reevaluate his own. . . . [96]

Such misunderstanding, however, was not the exclusive prerogative of the anti-infallibilists. For example, if one can judge from a recent biography,[97] Louis Veuillot, the formidable proinfallibilist editor of L'Univers, seems to have had little appreciation of the doctrine's theological implications. If Veuillot's journalistic version of infallibility is somewhat ex-

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[95] *Die katholisch-theologische Fakultät Bonn im Streit um das erste Vatikanische Konzil* (Cologne: Böhlau, 1974); review: *CHR* 63 (1977) 595-97.

[96] P. Schrodt, *JES* 14 (1977) 120, in a review of (the late) J. Finsterhölzl's *Die Kirche in der Theologie Ignaz von Döllingers bis zum ersten Vatikanum*, ed. J. Brosseder (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975).

[97] M. Brown, Jr., *Louis Veuillot, French Ultramontane Catholic Journalist and Layman, 1813-1883* (Durham: Moore, 1977); review: *TS* 39 (1978) 584-85.

cusable, the similarly rigorous interpretation of Archbishop Manning of Westminster borders on the unconscionable. Although one suspects that Manning, the "majority whip" at Vatican I, must have realized that *Pastor aeternus* was not quite the victory for which he had worked, still he was never so indiscreet as to acknowledge the legitimacy of interpretations more moderate than his own.[98]

A similar stance was evidenced by Ignaz von Senestrey, bishop of Regensburg and Manning's alter ego in their joint vow to do all in their power to achieve the definition of infallibility. Unfortunately, as Senestrey's recently published diary reveals,[99] their use of power bordered on the paranoid. Not only was the minority's concern about the opportuneness of the definition construed as obstructionism, the minority's theological problems were viewed as a devious plot to debilitate in advance any definition that might be adopted. In fact, Senestrey was so determined to fulfil his vow that he did not hesitate to manipulate those prelates whose devotion to infallibility did not equal his. Although intraconciliar politics was inevitable, Manning and Senestrey appear to have operated behind the scenes as if they were deeply afraid of embarrassment should their efforts prove unsuccessful. Similarly, after the Council, their elaborate pretensions of success seem characteristic of the person whose victory is flawed.

Another source that reveals the inner workings of the hyperultramontane mind is the diary attributed to Giovanni Franco, a staff member of *Civiltà cattolica*.[100] Although *Civiltà* was generally considered to be not only the house organ of the Roman Jesuits but also the unofficial voice of Pius IX, the diary shows that the *Civiltà* Jesuits were surprisingly suspicious of their more moderate confreres, including their own superior general. And while the Pope appreciated the publication's unswerving support, occasionally its endeavors inadvertently ran counter to his desires. The most revealing aspect of this diary, however, is its apocalyptic depiction of Vatican I as a battleground between the forces of good and those of evil; assuming a self-righteous role as papal champion, the *Civiltà* staff was not above employing the same type of intrigue and manipulation for which it eloquently reproached its opponents. Regrettably, the diary entries end with the proclamation of infallibility. It would be interesting to know whether the *Civiltà* staff was really content with

[98] R. Ippolito, "Archbishop Manning's Championship of Papal Infallibility, 1867–1872," *Ampleforth Journal* 72, no. 2 (Summer 1972) 31–39.

[99] I. von Senestrey, *Wie es zur Definition der päpstlichen Unfehlbarkeit kam: Tagebuch vom 1. Vatikanischen Konzil,* ed. K. Schatz (Frankfurt: Knecht, 1977); review: *TS* 39 (1978) 178–80.

[100] *Appunti storici sopra il Concilio Vaticano,* ed. G. Martina (Rome: Gregorian Univ., 1972); review: *CHR* 61 (1975) 307–8.

the definition; it would be even more fascinating to know whether *Civiltà* was involved in the subsequent campaign to obtain the subscription of the minority bishops.

Insofar as conciliar doctrine must be interpreted not simply from the wording of a text but from the life situation of its composers, recent historical studies of Vatican I personalities have theological significance. Specifically, it has become increasingly clear that the majority bishops who approved the doctrine of infallibility were theologically more diverse than is generally recognized. While ultrainfallibilists, like Manning and Senestrey, purported to speak for the Council, their interpretation was disowned by many of their peers;[101] by implication, the majority bishops interpreted Vatican I in a variety of ways. This plurality of interpretation is confirmed by the official acceptance of the variant subscriptions by the minority bishops after the definition; in effect, their submission implies a further broadening of the spectrum of acceptable interpretations of infallibility.

HASLER'S HISTORICAL APPRAISAL

It is highly unusual when a historical dissertation on Vatican I, written in German and published with multilingual references, creates a stir in the popular press. The reason for the popular attention accorded August Hasler's work on "Pius IX, Papal Infallibility, and Vatican I"[102] is its claim that "Pope Pius IX and his allies so rigged Vatican I that its actions may not have been valid."[103]

Hasler has mustered a catena of apparently cogent evidence to show how Pius IX manipulated the Council. First, during the preparatory stages, the various preconciliar commissions were dominated by members of the Curia, who, not surprisingly, prepared a statement on infallibility in advance. Meanwhile, a proinfallibilist campaign was begun in the ultramontane press, so that the bishops would be inspired spontaneously to acclaim the new dogma. However, when signs of opposition to the projected definition appeared, the procedures for the Council were designed in such a way that the opposition would have the opportunity of

[101] For example, see "The 1875 Statement of the German Hierarchy on Episcopal Powers," tr. F. Logan in *Jurist* 21 (1961) 285–95, and *The True and False Infallibility of the Pope* (New York: Cath. Publ. Soc., 1875) by Bishop Joseph Fessler, the Council's secretary general. Fessler's moderate views were commended by Pius IX, who did not bestow a similar approval on Manning's *The Vatican Council and Its Definitions* (New York: Sadlier, 1871).

[102] *Pius IX (1846–1878), päpstliche Unfehlbarkeit und 1. Vatikanisches Konzil: Dogmatisierung und Durchsetzung einer Ideologie* (Stuttgart: Hiersemann, 1977).

[103] *Time* 110, no. 20 (Nov. 14, 1977) 92; also reviews: G. Martina, *L'Osservatore romano*, Eng. ed. 10, no. 519 (March 9, 1978) 10; V. Conzemius, *Orientierung* 41 (1977) 207–9; R. Mols, *NRT* 99 (1977) 897–98.

speaking, but not really of influencing either the course of the Council or the preparation of its decrees. When some opposition prelates objected, pressure was brought to bear by delaying requests for faculties and by utilizing the surveillance and censorship of the papal police. Against such manipulative machinery, the minority bishops could strut and fret on the conciliar stage without being able to influence the decision that had been so well planned in advance. When some anti-infallibilist bishops proved recalcitrant by leaving the Council before the final ballot, the Curia rose to the occasion by demanding of each absent bishop a written submission to the conciliar decrees. Simultaneously, with the Council prorogued sine die, the opposition was separated and unable to act in concert. Individual bishops then were brought around by a judicious combination of withholding and granting privileges, along with a few exemplary resignations and reassignments. With the opposition reduced to the limited numbers of the Old Catholic movement, the Curia was able to attend to one remaining task, an orchestrated history of the Council, which was promoted by allowing only ultramontane historians access to archival records, which were simultaneously purged of any compromising material.

Hasler's well-documented presentation has the verve of an accomplished raconteur who knows when to season his tidbits with a dash of ecclesiastical gossip. However, a closer look at his sources reveals a prejudiced pattern. Preference on the whole is given to anti-infallibilist writers. Next, there is little critical evaluation of these sources, so that what later was proved to be rumor seems to be accounted as fact. Thirdly, the majority bishops are caricatured by regularly presenting the views of the most ultramontane as if they were representative of all proinfallibilists; simultaneously, the actions of the anti-infallibilists are appraised sympathetically, when they sometimes deserved censure. Inadvertently, a number of Hasler's findings seem to work against the thrust of his thesis. For example, if there really was considerable anti-infallibilist sentiment in the Curia, one needs to explain why this curial opposition did not aid the anti-infallibilist bishops; after all, it is not impossible for the Curia to frustrate papal intentions. Again, if Pius IX was as infirm and irresponsible as Hasler has suggested, it is hard simultaneously to picture him as masterminding the Council; moreover, Hasler's portrait of Pius IX has heavy shadings of Nordic disdain for Mediterranean volatility. Further, if the Council really was rigged in advance, one wonders why the ultramontanes were apparently afraid of the opposition; perhaps the minority bishops were more politically astute than Hasler might lead one to believe.

The discrepancies and inconsistencies in Hasler's historical account strongly suggest that the data has been adroitly arranged to fit the thesis. Similarly, his treatment of the theological debate at the Council displays

both obvious strengths and definite disabilities. On the floor of the Council, numerous texts from Scripture and patristic writings and dozens of cases from conciliar and papal history were discussed; thus, Hasler's catalogue of these arguments is extremely helpful. An examination of these arguments indicates that the majority bishops accepted these "proof-texts" as an indication that the infallibility of the pope, though expressed in different ways, had always been believed; thus the proposed definition should be viewed as a clarification of a traditional belief. In contrast, the minority felt that these texts simply did not substantiate what was claimed; moreover, not only did their requests for historical proof remain unanswered, but, as Hasler has rightly emphasized, recent research shows that the anti-infallibilist objections in this respect are unanswerable.

In harmony with his leitmotiv, Hasler has judged that the conciliar discussions were more ritual than reality; the minority was allowed to voice its objections to preserve the façade of freedom, but there was no essential development as a result of the debate. Such a judgment, however, does not give sufficient weight to two aspects. First, the text of *Pastor aeternus* was hammered out during the course of the debate; it seems unrealistic to describe this process of revision as exclusively an intramural ultramontane enterprise. Accordingly, while the minority certainly did not like the final version, can it also be said that the minority did not influence the textual wording? Secondly, the lack of substantive dialogue between the majority and the minority may stem from the conflict between two quite different mentalities: at least some of the majority felt that infallibility should be treated systematically, not historically; in contrast, some of the minority felt that without historical evidence no doctrine could be systematically presented. One might find it instructive to explore this methodological conflict, which may shed further light not only on the debate at Vatican I but also on its current counterpart.

Finally, while it is certainly regrettable that the way in which the Curia went about obtaining the submission of the anti-infallibilist bishops was generally supercilious and occasionally vindictive, one need not share Hasler's conclusion that this process was the final step in the dogmatization of an ideology. Although after the Council some of the opposition bishops seem to have conveniently changed the rationale for their opposition from anti-infallibilism to inopportunism, those with serious theological difficulties seem to have come to an acceptance of *Pastor aeternus* through two other routes: interpretation or obedience. First, quite soon after the Council, it became evident that different majority bishops were interpreting *Pastor aeternus* in different ways; some minority bishops followed suit by interpreting the definition as minimalistically as possible.

Secondly, some minority bishops were led to accept *Pastor aeternus* by distinguishing between external obedience and inner faith. While this distinction at first sight seems to be a semantic subterfuge, it corresponds to the intertwining of theological and canonical vocabulary within the decree.[104] Since the minority bishops had no difficulty in assenting internally to the infallibility of the *Church*, apparently some came around to accepting its exercise by the *pope* as a matter of juridical obedience.

Both interpretation and obedience have important implications for the ecclesial reception of infallibility but need further consideration and clarification. If the bishops who defined the doctrine also accepted a spectrum of interpretations of its meaning, presumably an analogous plurality is equally legitimate today. Such a spectrum, unfortunately, has not always been recognized. In the past, maximalistic interpretations largely prevailed, and sometimes became exclusive standards; more recently, when maximalism has become untenable, it has been tempting to reject the doctrine of infallibility as well. In effect, those who wish to defend—or to discard—a univocal view of infallibility have failed to appreciate the reception of a conciliar definition as an ecclesial hermeneutical process. In particular, if it is true that *Pastor aeternus* fuses credal and canonical language, then there is both a mixing of the areas of authority and education and a conflation of the anticipated responses: obeying and assenting. The inadequate differentiation of credal and canonical language, while providing some anti-infallibilist bishops with a convenient escape hatch, seems to have produced considerable confusion in the current debate.

CHIRICO'S HERMENEUTICAL APPROACH

If nothing else, Hasler's work suggests the need for a new look at infallibility, which avoids both the absolutism of traditional ultramontane presentations and the equally simplistic rejection of anti-infallibilists, both past and present. Peter Chirico's *Infallibility: The Crossroads of Doctrine* has faced this challenge by considering infallibility as "the generic process by which the Church comes to certitude about saving reality."[105] While recognizing the need for verifying this process via the

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[104] For example, "infallibility" is vaguely described in *Pastor aeternus* in theological language: "...ea infallibilitate...qua divinus Redemptor ecclesiam suam in definienda doctrina de fide vel moribus instructam esse voluit...." The conditions under which the pope may exercise this infallibility are described in legal terms: "...cum ex cathedra loquitur, id est, cum omnium christianorum pastoris et doctoris munere fungens pro suprema sua apostolica auctoritate doctrinam de fide vel moribus ab universa ecclesia tenendam definit..." (DS 3074 [1839]).

[105] Kansas City: Sheed, Andrews, and McMeel, 1977; reviews: *National Catholic Reporter* 14, no. 18 (Feb. 24, 1978) 15; A. Dulles, *Commonweal* 105, no. 15 (Aug. 14, 1978) 504-6. The definition, cited from *Infallibility* xvi, is given in more detail in the glossary, 333.

history of various doctrines, Chirico has opted to consider the topic by examining "the generic processes by which modern men at different levels of development and in different cultures come to definitive understanding of the faith."[106]

In this anthropological approach to the topic, the first issue is whether infallibility is humanly possible. For Chirico, the possibility of infallibility is grounded in "universal meanings" that are available in human experience; a "universal meaning" is "*meaning* that exists or can exist as a moment of legitimate and necessary human development in every person of every age and culture."[107] The case for universal meanings is based on the facts of human communication and historical understanding; without universal meanings people would be unable either to communicate with one another or to understand the past. These universal meanings on the human level have a religious counterpart: "universal Christian meanings," also called "dogmatic meanings." These latter are meanings which have been achieved in Christ and which are demanded of all people at least as a goal and, if possible, as an achievement. The basic dogmatic meaning is the "acceptance of the universal presence and activity of the risen Christ";[108] other dogmatic meanings are presumed to be in an intrinsic relationship with, and thus derivations of, Christ's resurrection. Accordingly, Christian doctrine should not be treated as a set of propositions but as an organic whole which is progressively thematized through a cumulative process of understanding within the Christian community.

The second phase of Chirico's work is simultaneously a testing of the applicability of his hypothesis to the Church's teaching on infallibility and an attempt to supply for the notable deficiencies of previous theological presentations on the topic. Specifically, infallibility is categorized as a personal quality which is defined and limited by an individual's self-awareness; "infallible judgments"are those whose "denial would be tantamount to the denial of the subject's awareness of himself."[109] Correspondingly, ecclesial infallibility is centered on the Church's recognition of the Resurrection: "Only that aspect of Christ's risen humanity which is universally graspable can be understood with any certainty by men; and it is this universal aspect that can be expressed in dogmatic statements."[110] Since infallibility is a gift bestowed for articulating the core of the Church's resurrectional faith, it is inadequate merely to describe the conditions for exercising infallibility in juridical terms, as has been the fashion since Vatican I. Moreover, since infallibility involves the Church's self-awareness, "there is an acceptable Roman Catholic sense in which

[106] *Infallibility* xvii.
[107] Ibid. 337.
[108] Ibid. 125.
[109] Ibid. 155.
[110] Ibid. 192.

one can say that reception of a doctrine by the Church is necessary in order that a magisterial pronouncement should be infallible."[111]

To his credit, Chirico has tackled in a clear and concise manner a crucial philosophical problem—the possibility of a human basis for infallibility—which has generally been neglected, when not peremptorily denied. The resulting theological reconceptualization subsequently manages to rectify a number of deficiencies that troubled previous explanations of infallibility: infallibility is no longer seen simply as a divine immunization from error, but is viewed positively as process, as quality, as gift; doctrinal pronouncements are interpreted, not simply by juridical norms, but through the perception of their resurrectional significance by a believing community; the emphasis on "dogmatic meanings" nullifies once and for all the unprofitable focus on "infallible statements" which has sidetracked a major portion of the recent infallibility debate.

Yet, in a work that attempts to break as much new ground as Chirico's, it is not surprising that there are questionable assumptions and apparent inconsistencies. Most crucial, since it is the key to the entire structure, is his postulation of "universal meanings"; some may feel that the factual plurality of human life and thought makes such a postulate gratuitous.[112] But even if one grants the existence of "universal Christian meanings," some allowance needs to be made for analogous meanings in non-Christian religions; moreover, one may continue to wonder whether it is really possible to sift out "what is universal and lasting from what is temporally conditioned and ephemeral."[113] At times, the application of the general theme to specific issues does not seem consistent; for example, if infallibility is bestowed for articulating the core of faith, the retention of "secondary objects of infallibility" does not seem warranted. Finally, Chirico's conclusions do not always harmonize with Vatican I; for example, the Council did *not* reject the notion that the pope has to consult the Church before exercising infallibility; what the Council rejected was any specification of what form such prior consultation must take.[114] Again, the proposal that "we can best fix the meaning of a council by tracing the activity after the council of each bishop who composed it" would be herculean in the case of Vatican I; moreover, an examination of select

[111] Ibid. 240.

[112] However, Chirico does turn to advantage the objection that since man is "open-ended and unfinished," nothing he achieves is permanent or universal: the "very need to be expressing one's potential is universal" (56–57).

[113] Ibid. 98. In addition, it is presumptuous to claim that a contemporary interpreter is in a better position to recognize the "universal meanings" which were embedded in the truncated horizon of another age.

[114] Ibid. 224.

members of Vatican I indicates an (at least potentially) irreducible plurality of interpretations.[115]

REFLECTIONS

I trust that the preceding sampling of works concerned with infallibility has provided a sense of the varied flavoring of recent studies. In descriptive terms, these studies represent not a well-balanced, full-course banquet but a smorgasbord of offerings, which in some areas are substantial but in others quite sparse.

The most abundant selection available consists of historical studies concerned with Vatican I; the publication of archival sources has, in effect, continued to illuminate previously undetected facets of the Council's ambiance. What has emerged is an increasingly sharper, yet simultaneously more chromatic, picture of both the majority and the minority at the Council; nonetheless, Hasler's revisionist efforts notwithstanding, the general focus of historical interpretation of Vatican I seems unchanged to date.

In regard to the history of infallibility prior to Vatican I, much more ample fare is certainly desirable. For example, if papal infallibility is a medieval innovation, as Tierney has proposed, what is the historical trajectory between Pietro Olivi's original creation and Joseph de Maistre's subsequent adaptation of this doctrine? Similarly, it would be helpful to know more about the history of the reception of infallibility within various ecclesiologies in the period between the First and Second Vatican Councils.

Although the number of historical studies of Vatican I continues to increase, these are still comparatively untouched by theologians. Where earlier systematicians tended to base their theological interpretations of infallibility on a literal exegesis of *Pastor aeternus* (as if the text is self-explanatory), more recent analysts have utilized the conciliar speeches in Mansi's *Amplissima collectio* as an interpretive aid. While the latter approach is an improvement, it is only a partial one, insofar as it assumes that the official spokesmen represented the univocal mind of the Council.[116] Yet the postulation of a single conciliar mentality, and concomitantly a single interpretation of *Pastor aeternus*, is belied by the fact that the participants at Vatican I interpreted the conciliar document in notably different ways. If *Pastor aeternus* is a compromise document blending theological and juridical terminology, then it must be savored with much more hermeneutical discrimination than has usually been the case.

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[115] Ibid. 260. Chirico basically seems to feel that all pluralism eventually leads to unity (cf. 179).

[116] For further discussion of the interpretation of conciliar teaching, see G. O'Collins, *The Case against Dogma* (New York: Paulist, 1975); review: A. Dulles, *TS* 37 (1976) 147–49.

In the absence of a critical hermeneutical understanding of *Pastor aeternus*, theologians may unsuspectingly have inherited a doctrinal teaching without a supporting theology. On the one hand, it is evident that the absolutist monarchical ecclesiology which long sustained the doctrine of infallibility is no longer tenable.[117] On the other hand, it is simply not evident what role, if any, infallibility should play in contemporary ecclesiologies. Should one follow Küng and demythologize infallibility into the less offensive but more opaque doctrine of indefectibility? Should one, following Chirico's recipe, construct a theology with space for infallibility and then see how well the result harmonizes with conciliar teaching? Or should one return to the conciliar debate at Vatican I in the hope of discovering the theological paradigms in which infallibility was originally meaningful and see whether any of these paradigms have transcultural counterparts in contemporary theology?

The ongoing infallibility discussion has really not answered any of these questions. First, replacing "infallibility" with "indefectibility" simply relocates the problem; as John Macquarrie has observed, "To swallow up infallibility in indefectibility is to evade problems that must be considered honestly and sincerely if ecumenical progress is to be made."[118] Similarly, the attempt at modernizing infallibility by constructing a currently compatible conceptualization and then superimposing it on conciliar documents is, from a methodological viewpoint, a Procrustean fitting of the past to the exigencies of a modern schema. To achieve a more hermeneutically sophisticated analysis of conciliar teaching on infallibility, there should be a theological assimilation of historical findings in a framework that respects both the original conciliar pluralism as well as the analogous pluralism of contemporary theology.

In sum, although recent studies on infallibility provide good food for thought, the menu still needs to be improved.

[117] E.g., see T. Sanks, *Authority in the Church; A Study in Changing Paradigms* (Missoula: Scholars, 1974). The implications of changing ecclesiological paradigms (considered by Sanks in relation to the magisterium) might profitably be extended to a detailed analysis of infallibility.

[118] "Religious Language and Analytical Philosophy," in *The Development of Fundamental Theology*, ed. J. Metz (Concilium 46; New York: Paulist, 1969) 162-63. As "*the* ecumenical problem today" (cf. L. Swidler, *JES* 8 [1971] 751-67), infallibility has been the subject of protracted discussion in ecumenical conversations; the results of the Lutheran–Roman Catholic bilateral consultation (which were not available when this present survey was written) were published in *TS* 40, no. 1 (March 1979) 113-66.