

THE AUTHENTICATION OF DOCTRINES: HINTS FROM C. S. PEIRCE

DONALD L. GELPI, S.J.

[The author deals with the relationship between a normative theology of conversion and the identification of sound doctrinal teaching. He argues that five forms of conversion— affective, intellectual, personal moral, sociopolitical, and Christian— provide not only negative norms for excluding some doctrines found to be suspect or false but also positive norms for verifying doctrines both in the events that reveal the triune God and in the moral demands of Christian conversion. For the articulation of his argument, he draws upon certain insights from the philosophy of C. S. Peirce.]

FOR AUTHENTICATING THE TRUTH of some theological doctrines and for discarding others as false, Bernard Lonergan suggested a novel strategy.¹ In my present study I refer to this process of doctrinal discrimination as the authentication of doctrines, and I suggest specific criteria for either certifying the truth of a particular theological doctrine or for calling its truth into question. My criteria, however, do not derive from Lonergan's work but from the metaphysics of experience and the construct of conversion that I have been developing with hints from the thought of the American philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839–1914).

Lonergan's strategy for authenticating doctrines presupposed his theory of functional specialties. In *Method in Theology* he argued, correctly in my estimation, that one cannot speak properly of theological method because theologians employ at least eight different methods corresponding to eight different kinds of theological questions and ways of thinking. He divided his eight functional specialties into two groups of four, calling the first four specialties "mediating theology" and the second four "mediated theol-

DONALD L. GELPI, S.J., received his doctorate in philosophy from Fordham University. He is professor of systematic and historical theology at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California. Besides several books already published on the theology of experience, he has two major works that are being published: *The Firstborn of Many: A Christology for Converting Christians* (Marquette University), and *Varieties of Transcendental Experience: A Study in Constructive Postmodernism* (Liturgical Press).

¹ Bernard Lonergan, *Method in Theology* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1972) 298–99.

ogy.” Mediating theology retrieves a religious tradition; mediated theology undertakes the constructive reformulation of that same tradition. Mediating theology mediates mediated theology. In other words, one must first retrieve a religious tradition before one can go about reconstructing it creatively, because without retrieving the tradition one will have no clear sense of the issues with which its creative reconstruction must deal.

The functional specialities of research, interpretation, history, and dialectic divide mediating theology. Theologians conducting *research* provide the tools that the rest of the theological community needs in order to pursue their own functional theological specialties. Research theologians pursue religious and biblical archeology, edit sacred texts, and compile dictionaries and grammars of sacred languages. In other words, their research provides the texts and artifacts that need theological interpretation. The *interpretation* of religious texts and artifacts attempts to explain what those texts and artifacts originally meant to those who created them and what they might mean to contemporary believers. *History* supplies the factual and cultural context that makes interpretation possible. Historians tell the story of a religious community and propose theories that explain why it evolved in one way and not in another. The story of any vital religious tradition reveals, however, that its adherents argue constantly with one another about that tradition’s real religious significance. *Dialectic* compares and contrasts the frames of reference of religious thinkers, distinguishes real from only apparent disagreement, and clarifies the issues that motivate real disagreement. In other words, dialectical theology clarifies the issues with which mediated theology must deal in attempting the creative reformulation of a religious tradition.

Four functional specialities also structure mediated theology: foundations, doctrines, systematics, and communications. *Foundations* formulates a strictly normative theology of conversion. Foundational theologians seek to answer the question: How ought one to live? Moreover, Lonergan revolutionized theological reflection on conversion by suggesting that it occurs in more than one form. Besides religious conversion, Lonergan originally distinguished two other forms of conversion: moral and intellectual. Each type of conversion invokes different kinds of norms. Those norms allegedly provide the criteria that the functional speciality called *doctrines* needs in order to discriminate between sound and unsound doctrinal affirmations. The identification of sound doctrines sets the stage for systematic theological thinking. *Systematics* seeks to explain the connection between sound doctrinal beliefs. The normative insights of foundational theology also makes a significant contribution to theological *communications*. In Lonergan’s theory of method, communications theologians need to deal especially with the breakdown of communications among contemporary believers. The breakdown of social communication betrays a lack of conversion

on the part of those who contribute to the collapse. A normative insight into the practical demands of the different kinds of conversion provides the diagnostic criteria for identifying the causes of breakdown in communications and for designing a program of instruction that will summon the unconverted to that degree of conversion needed in order to re-establish communication between antipathetic religious factions.²

My theological work endorses three aspects of Lonergan's theory of theological method: his suggestion that theology ought to mediate between a religion and the culture in which that religion roots itself;³ his definition of method as a set of recurrent and related operations yielding cumulative and progressive results;⁴ and his theory of functional specialties.⁵ I ground these methodological insights, however, not in Lonergan's transcendental method and turn to the subject, but in C. S. Peirce's pragmatistic logic and turn to community. In my judgment, Peirce's logic and metaphysics provide a sounder philosophical foundation for these aspects of Lonergan's thought than those Lonergan provided.

In this context, I find it interesting that toward the end of the 19th century Peirce in his groundbreaking studies in logic came to an insight that converges with Lonergan's understanding of the role that foundational theology plays in authenticating Christian doctrine. Peirce articulated his insights in the course of formulating his logical division of the sciences. He divided human scientific thinking into sciences of review and sciences of discovery. Sciences of review break no new ground but summarize the results of major scientific advances made by the sciences of discovery. The sciences of discovery seek to advance the boundaries of human understanding.

Peirce spoke of three generic kinds of science of discovery: mathematics, philosophy, and what he called the "idioscopic" sciences. Peirce, who loved to coin new philosophical terms, contrasted "idioscopic" and "coenosopic" thinking. He characterized the philosophical sciences as coenosopic (from the Greek term *koinos*, or "common"). Philosophy, he argued, reflects on the shared, the common, lived experience of human beings. In so speaking, Peirce vindicated the social, dialogic character of philosophy, and he equivalently replaced the Cartesian and Kantian "turn to the subject" with the Peircean "turn to community." In contrast to the coenosopic sciences, the idioscopic sciences—sciences such as physics, chemistry, psychology—focus on limited realms of human experience and ordinarily employ precise measurement and special instrumentation for studying their field of preference. All inquiry, whether mathematical, coenosopic,

² Ibid. 125–45.

⁴ Ibid. 4.

³ Ibid. xi.

⁵ Ibid. 125–45.

or idioscopic, advances socially and dialogically through shared, systematic inquiry.

Peirce identified five philosophical or coenosopic sciences: phenomenology; the three normative sciences of esthetics, ethics, and logic; and metaphysics. Phenomenology employs descriptive categories in dealing with shared, lived, human experience. Descriptive categories give an account of what appears within experience without passing judgment on its reality. Metaphysics does, however, discriminate between reality and illusion. It offers a fallible hypothetical account of reality in general which it seeks to verify in shared, lived, human experience and in the verified results of the idioscopic sciences. Metaphysics, moreover, needs the strictly normative insights yielded by esthetics, ethics, and logic in order to distinguish between reality and self-deception. This understanding of the relationship between normative philosophical thinking and metaphysics marks an interesting point of convergence between what Peirce says about philosophical thinking and what Lonergan says about the relationship between foundational thinking and doctrines. Both invoke analogous kinds of normative insight in order to discriminate between illusion and reality. In what follows I examine the convergence between the thought of these two brilliant minds. I suggest what their insights have to tell us about the authentication of doctrines.⁶

My study divides into three parts. Part 1 ponders in greater detail Peirce's understanding of the way in which the normative philosophical sciences mediate between phenomenology and metaphysics. Part 2 compares Peirce's insights with Lonergan's on the authentication of doctrines. Here I argue that Peirce's logic suggests operational procedures for authenticating doctrines which Lonergan failed to supply. Part 3 draws both on Peirce and on my own theology of conversion in order to elaborate specific criteria for authenticating or repudiating theological doctrines. As I hope to prove, Lonergan in *Method in Theology* remains extremely vague about what norms enjoy doctrinal relevance and just how foundational theology provides the criteria that allow one to discriminate between sound and unsound doctrine. In other words, my third part invokes Peirce's theory of the coenosopic, philosophical sciences in order to clarify the meaning of doctrinal authentication by naming basic operational procedures for judging between true and false theological doctrines.

NORMATIVE PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES

In his division of the philosophical sciences, Peirce at first felt reluctant to include esthetics among the normative sciences on the basis of the

⁶ Charles Sanders Peirce, *The Collected Papers of Charles Sanders Peirce*, ed. Charles Hartshorne and Paul Weiss, 8 vols. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1931–1958) 1.175–299, 1.573–677.

age-old principle *de gustibus non est disputandum*. But Peirce abandoned this earlier conception of esthetics when he recognized the possibility of normative thinking about supreme excellence and beauty. In his logic the normative sciences ponder the kinds of habits one needs to cultivate in order to live life fruitfully. In the process, they deal normatively with the kinds of issues that preoccupy the “turn to the subject” but do so in a social, dialogic context.

Esthetics measures other goods against supreme excellence and formulates a normative account of the kinds of habits one needs to cultivate in order to appreciate supreme goodness and beauty. An esthetic perception of supreme goodness engages the heart rather than the head. In other words, it engages that appreciative insight into the identity of the good and the true which humans call the beautiful. Esthetics puts order into the human heart and psyche by teaching it to appreciate those realities and values that make life ultimately worth living. Esthetic insight grasps affectively and simultaneously reality’s goodness and truth.

Esthetics also gives an ultimate orientation to the other two normative sciences of ethics and of logic. Ethics studies the kinds of habits of choice one must cultivate in order to live for the ultimately beautiful. Logic teaches one to think clearly about reality so that one can make realistic choices that lead one to the appreciation and enjoyment of ultimate beauty, goodness, and truth. In other words, in Peirce’s understanding of normative thinking both ethics and logic serve the ultimately beautiful as their end. In fact, Peirce equated ultimate excellence and beauty with the reality of God.⁷

Peirce also approached phenomenology somewhat differently from other philosophers. Instead of engaging in extensive descriptions of experienced realities, he pondered the logic of descriptive thinking and argued

⁷ Peirce, *Collected Papers* 6.452–93; Vincent G. Potter, S.J., *Charles Peirce on Norms and Ideals* (Worcester: University of Massachusetts, 1967); “Peirce’s Analysis of Normative Science,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 1 (1966) 5–32 [hereafter: *Transactions*]; Herman Parrett, *Peirce and Value Theory: On Peircean Ethics and Aesthetics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1989); S. Veyama, “Development in Peirce’s Theory of Logic,” *Journal of Symbolic Logic* 20 (1956) 170; Arthur W. Burks, “Peirce’s Conception of Logic as Normative Science,” *Philosophical Review* 52 (1943) 187–93; Richard S. Robin, “Peirce’s Doctrine of the Normative Sciences,” in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce: Second Series*, ed. Edward C. Moore and Richard S. Robin (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 1964) 271–88; Larry Holms, “Peirce on Self-Control,” *Transactions* 5 (1969) 90–106; Beverly Kent, “Peirce’s Esthetics,” *Transactions* 12 (1976) 261–83; Catherine Wells Hantzis, “Peirce’s Conception of Philosophy: Its Method and its Program,” *Transactions* 23 (1987) 289–307; Helmut Pape, “Final Causality in Peirce’s Semiotics and His Classification of the Sciences,” *Transactions* 29 (1993) 581–607.

that one can reduce any descriptive category to one of three general categories: quality, fact, and law.

Quality

A quality exemplifies "particular suchness." One never experiences pure quality. Indeed, one experiences quality as such through a process of abstraction, namely, by abstracting the ways in which one senses and perceives reality from the realities one grasps and from one's mind which does the grasping. When one abstracts notions such as "red," "hard," "house," "giraffe," "equal" from the things that they enable us to know and from one's mind that knows them, then one experiences a quality. When thus abstracted, a quality simply is what it is and exemplifies a particular essence, or particular suchness. Qualities in and of themselves disclose possibilities to the human mind.

Through the experience of quality, we become present to the world and to ourselves. In my judgment, humans become conscious when they distinguish between their bodies, the environments from which they emerge most immediately, and their bodies' surrounding environment. When we can no longer make that distinction we go to sleep or lose consciousness in some other way. Once asleep, we regain consciousness when some strong environmental stimulus, such as a loud noise or a physical blow, makes us once again aware of the difference between our bodies and their world. Once conscious, we grow in personal awareness by making distinctions and by seeing relationships among distinguished realities, actualities, and possibilities.

Fact

A fact exemplifies concrete action and reaction. Again, we never experience facts alone, since our qualitative, cognitive responses to the things that touch us and upon which we act decisively make us present to our environment's impact on us and to our impact on the environment. We experience facts as sensed. A complete fact has, moreover, a dual character: namely, the impinging act and its corresponding reaction as a single complex event. One would come close to an experience of pure facticity, if, on discovering that the door to one's home is locked, one would, instead of figuring out another way of entering, lose all rational control and begin beating on the door, which of course would just beat back, as one's bruised hands would testify. Facts endow experience not with possibility but with concreteness and with social and environmental connectedness.

We sense facts. The five external senses reveal to us environmental impact. Color discloses the interaction between our eyes and radiating light; sound, between our ears and vibrating air. Propriosensation reveals

to us our own bodily processes, the most immediate environment from which we emerge. Because a fraction of a second elapses between light striking the retina and the sensation of color, the facts that we sense give us an immediate past just as qualitative experience gives us a present.

Law

Laws exemplify real generality. In Peirce's thought they correspond more or less to the Aristotelian category "habit" transformed into a reality that subsists in its own right. When one grasps a "law" in Peirce's sense of that term, one knows "what would happen if." In other words, one grasps tendencies to react or to respond in a specific manner, how they tend to respond, and the conditions under which that reaction or response tends to occur.⁸

Within the course of cosmic evolution, living things exhibit the power of habit taking. The conscious fixation of belief exemplifies habit taking. If I cannot decide about the trustworthiness of another person, I do not know whether to believe or mistrust what he or she tells me. Once I decide that I am dealing with a pathological liar, I build into myself the tendency to mistrust that person's testimony.

Living organisms exemplify autonomously functioning, developing complexes of laws, or tendencies, which spread continuously as the organism grows through ongoing interaction with its environment. If qualities endow experience with a present and facts with an immediate past, laws, tendencies, endow experience with a real future of repeatable kinds of actions and evaluations. As a consequence, a sound understanding of law enables one to predict the future.

Categories Grasp Realities

In his metaphysics, Peirce argued that all three of his descriptive categories grasp realities. He felt that most people would concede the existence

⁸ Peirce, *Collected Papers* 1.284–353. See John Dewey, "Peirce's Theory of Quality," *Journal of Philosophy* 32 (1935) 701–8; Thomas A. Goudge, "Views of Charles Peirce on the Given in Experience," *Journal of Philosophy* 32 (1935) 533–44; "Further Reflections on Peirce's Doctrine on the Given," *Journal of Philosophy* 33 (1936) 289–95; Jeffrey Di Leo, "Peirce's Haecceitism," *Transactions* 27 (1991) 79–109; Robert A. Jacques, "On the Reality of Seconds," *Transactions* 28 (1992) 757–66; David Savan, "On the Origins of Peirce's Phenomenology," in *Studies in the Philosophy of Charles Sanders Peirce, First Series*, ed. Philip P. Wiener and Frederic H. Young (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1952) 185–194; Isabel S. Stearns, "Firstness, Secondness, Thirdness," in *Studies, I*, 195–208; Charles Hartshorne, "The Relativity of Nonrelativity: Some Reflections on Firstness," in *Studies, I*, 215–24; Charles K. McKeon, "Peirce's Scotistic Realism" in *Studies, I*, 238–50.

of qualities and of facts. Because qualities endow experience with the vivid experience of the present moment, we find it impossible to doubt their reality, as long as we take doubt seriously. In an analogous manner, facts demonstrate their existence by forcing themselves on us whether we want them to happen or not. Moreover, when one is actually feeling a blow or a caress, one cannot, if one takes doubt seriously, sincerely call into question the actuality one is sensing. The history of philosophy, however, shows that people can and often do doubt the existence of laws, of tendencies, of real generality. Those who deny the existence of real generality espouse some form of philosophical nominalism.

Nominalists deny the reality of real generality. They reduce the objects of knowledge to concrete, sensible realities. The history of philosophy contains two kinds of nominalism: classical medieval nominalism and modern conceptual nominalism. Classical medieval nominalism reduced universals to the physical attribution of the same spoken word to the same concrete thing. In other words, in classical nominalism, the abstract idea of a "horse" does not exist, only the physical repetition of the word "horse" over a series of hoofed, maned, four-footed, long-necked, long-faced, hairy-tailed animals. Modern European philosophy propagated a form of conceptual nominalism. Conceptual nominalism conceded the existence of universals but confined them to human subjectivity. Immanuel Kant gave systematic expression to conceptual nominalism when he argued that in scientific thinking, the human mind imposes universal concepts, built a priori into the structure of the mind, on concrete sensible realities.

Peirce rejected both forms of nominalism. He characterized the whole of modern European philosophy from Descartes to his day as a tedious set of variations on the same nominalistic theme. Peirce grounded his refutation of nominalism in the logical structure of inferential thinking. After an extensive study of the syllogism, Peirce concluded that one could reduce any rational argument to one of three kinds of inferences: abduction, deduction, and induction. Every inference, Peirce held, interrelates a rule, a case, and a result. A case exemplifies a way of characterizing descriptively some fact or law. A result exemplifies one's account of facts in need of explanation. A rule exemplifies one's conception of the law which renders perceived facts intelligible.

The fact that each form of inference interrelates a rule, case, and result differently makes the three forms of inference logically irreducible. An abduction, or hypothetical inference, concludes to a case. A deduction, or predictive inference, concludes to a result. An induction, or verifying inference, concludes to a rule.⁹

A historical example may make these logical abstractions somewhat

⁹ Francis E. Reilly, S.J., *Charles Peirce's Theory of Scientific Method* (New York:

more concrete. When Albert Einstein formulated his general theory of relativity, he engaged in abductive, or hypothetical, thinking by providing a way of conceiving the physical universe very different from classical Newtonian physics. Since Einstein's abductive theory postulated the bending of light, scientists interested in testing his hypothesis predicted deductively that, if Einstein had it right, then one ought to observe the bending of light during a solar eclipse. Those who subsequently observed the bending of light at the next eclipse of the sun argued inductively that the law of general relativity actually gives dynamic structure to physical events.

On the basis of his theory of inference Peirce argued, correctly in my judgment, that the human mind perceives more than it senses. The mind senses the physical impact of the universe, but it perceives the laws that explain that physical impact and does so inferentially. The inductive verification of the reality of a law exemplifies such a perception. If, however, at the end of a process of inference, one perceives with greater clarity the nature of the laws of the universe, one must have had a vague, intuitive perception of those same laws when one formulated one's original hypothesis. Deductive inference first clarified that abductive perception, then induction verified it.

Since abductive inferences perceive the real generality whose nature deductive inference clarifies and whose reality inductive inference verifies, that logical fact teaches us something about the content of all human perceptions, for, as an act of knowledge, abductive inference shades into every human judgment of perception. In other words, the human mind perceives law, tendency, real generality constantly and appreciatively, in common sense, imaginative, affective, and abductive forms of knowing.

By demonstrating the reality of law as a force in the existing scheme of things, Peirce's inferential logic completed the philosophical transition from phenomenology to metaphysics by vindicating the existence of all three generic phenomenological categories of description. Metaphysical thinking needs thereafter to demonstrate the ability of its fundamental

Fordham University, 1970); Harry G. Frankfurt, "Peirce's Notion of Abduction," *Journal of Philosophy* 55 (1958) 593-97; "Peirce's Account of Inquiry," *Journal of Philosophy* 55 (1958) 588-92; Idus Murphree, "Peirce's Theory of Inquiry," *Journal of Philosophy* 56 (1959) 667-68; Len O'Neill, "Peirce and the Nature of Evidence," *Transactions* 29 (1993) 211-37; Arthur W. Burks, "Peirce's Theory of Abduction," *Philosophy of Science* 13 (1946) 301-6; William L. Reese, "Peirce on Abstraction," *Review of Metaphysics* 14 (1961) 704-13; R. Michael Sabre, "Peirce's Abductive Argument and the Enthememe," *Transactions* 24 (1990) 363-72; Joseph S. Ullian, "Peirce, Gambling, and Insurance," *Philosophy of Science* 29 (1962) 79-80; Edward H. Madden, "Peirce on Probability," in *Studies, II*, 122-40; Arthur W. Burks, "Peirce's Two Theories of Probability" in *Studies, II*, 151-62; G. H. Merrill, "Peirce on Probability," *Transactions* 11 (1975) 90-109.

categories to interpret any experienced reality, whether one encounters it in the course of shared, lived experience or in the verified results of the idioscopic sciences.

The other two normative sciences, however, also make a contribution to sound metaphysical thinking. Esthetics orders human affectivity. It puts order into the psyche by teaching the human heart to perceive supreme beauty, goodness, and truth and to measure all other human perceptions of value by it. A disordered psyche runs the serious risk of confounding reality with its own distorted neurotic or even psychotic delusions. An esthetically cultivated psyche displays not only a capacity for enhanced sensitivity to supreme excellence but to the degrees of excellence ingredient in finite realities that the heart experiences as beautiful. Similarly, ethics teaches one to live selflessly for supreme beauty, goodness, and truth. Until one puts order into one's conscience, one lives prone to confuse reality with one's own selfish and irresponsible preferences. Moreover, as one cultivates virtuous habits of conduct, one acquires, as Thomas Aquinas correctly argued, a connatural sensitivity to authentic goodness.

In other words, all three normative sciences—esthetics, ethics, logic—contribute to one's systematic, metaphysical exploration of the three realms of being by giving one different kinds of norms for discriminating between illusion and reality. In what do these "realms of being" consist for Peirce? The first realm of being which corresponds to quality Peirce called "firstness" because qualities, by simply being what they are, enjoy a certain metaphysical simplicity. He called the second realm of being which corresponds to fact "secondness" because a complete fact which unites action and reaction exemplifies not two distinct and unrelated events but a single, dynamic event with a dyadic character. The third realm of being which corresponds to law Peirce called "thirdness" because habit, tendency, interrelates qualities and facts in the act of interpretation. In other words, Peirce's metaphysics in the end exemplifies a semiotic realism because it both vindicates the mind's capacity to grasp reality, if only it takes time to think clearly and inferentially about the way things behave, and because all reality has a symbolic character, the character of a sign. Reality exemplifies either an event capable of intelligent interpretation or the actual interpretation of that event.¹⁰

How does Peirce's theory of the normative sciences lend clarity to Lon-

¹⁰ Karl-Otto Pel, *Charles S. Peirce: From Pragmatism to Pragmaticism*, trans. John Michael Krois (Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities, 1995); Nynfa Bosco, "Peirce and Metaphysics" in *Studies, II*, 345–58; Carl Hausman, "In and Out of Peirce's Percepts," *Transactions* 24 (1990) 271–308; Carl Hausman and Douglas B. Anderson, "The Telos of Peirce's Realism: Some Comments on Margolis's 'The Passing of Peirce's Realism,'" *Transactions* 30 (1994) 825–38; Kelly J. Wells, "Contra Margolis's Peircean Constructivism: A Peircean Pragmatic *Logos*," *Transac-*

organ's understanding of the role of foundational thinking in the authentication of doctrines? To this consideration I now turn.

LONERGAN VERSUS PEIRCE ON AUTHENTICATION

In his own discussion of the authentication of doctrines, Lonergan principally contented himself with distinguishing among different kinds of doctrines. He distinguished among primary sources, church doctrines, theological doctrines, methodological doctrines, and the application of methodological doctrines in the functional theological speciality named "doctrines." Primary sources testify to the apostolic tradition that gives normative shape to Christian faith and that finds written verbal expression in the Bible. Church doctrines come to formulation in official creeds, in the teachings of the councils, and in other official documents of the Christian community. Theological doctrines result from the personal reflections of individual teachers on the significance of the Christian tradition. Methodological doctrines result from the debates of theologians about the best way to go about reflecting on the tradition. Finally, one needs to deal specifically with the norms that shape the functional theological specialty called "doctrines."¹¹

Lonergan argued that doctrinal theology needs to show sensitivity to the diversity of cultures and to the ways in which a particular culture modulates the formulation of theological doctrines. The authentication of doctrines needs also to take into account the way in which different kinds of consciousness shape doctrinal thinking. The forms of consciousness include common sense, systematic thinking, cultural awareness resulting from systematic meaning, methodological presuppositions, scholarship, and the critical analysis of intentionality.

Lonergan also required doctrinal theologians to take into account the way in which Christian teaching evolved over the centuries. Rational doctrines interpret religious realities that the imaginative mind grasps through myth, story, saga, and poetry. Although the Bible includes the aphoristic wisdom of the Hebrew sages, it largely employs image and story in its testimony to divine revelation. As early as the second century, however, Christian thinkers began to invoke philosophical categories in interpreting the significance of Christian revelation. The more eclectic, rhetorical the-

tions 30 (1994) 839–60; Cornelis de Waal, "The Real Issue Between Nominalism and Realism," *Transactions* 32 (1996) 425–46; Jeremiah McCarthy, "An Account of Peirce's Proof of Pragmatism," *Transactions* 26 (1990) 63–113; Timothy Shanahan, "The First Moment of Scientific Inquiry: C. S. Peirce on the Logic of Abduction," *Transactions* 22 (1986) 449–66; Douglas R. Anderson, "The Evolution of Peirce's Concept of Abduction," *Transactions* 22 (1986) 145–64.

¹¹ Lonergan, *Method in Theology* 295–98.

ology of the Fathers of the Church gave way to the medieval Scholastic passion for systematizing thought; and all of these doctrinal tendencies have conditioned the diction and categories of official church teaching.¹²

Lonerger's method prescribes that doctrinal theology derive its norms from dialectic and foundations. Lonergan puts it this way:

But against such deviations there is the normative function of doctrines. For the functional speciality, dialectic, deploys both the truth reached and the errors disseminated in the past. The functional speciality, foundations, discriminates between truth and error by appealing to the foundational reality of intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. The result of such discrimination is the functional speciality, doctrines, and so doctrines, based on conversion, are opposed to the aberrations that result from the lack of conversion.¹³

Unfortunately, *Method in Theology* remains largely silent when identifying in concrete detail what norms the doctrinal theologian invokes in authenticating specific doctrines.¹⁴ Dialectic presumably identifies those doctrines in need of authentication by clarifying the issues that in the past have given rise to contradictory interpretations of Christian revelation. The principle of contradiction rules out the simultaneous assertion of contradictory interpretations of divine revelation. When two teachers make contradictory statements about revealed realities, therefore, one or possibly both of them have erred.

Dialectical thinking, however, deals with more than particular doctrinal contradictions. It also weighs the frames of reference in which doctrinal thinking transpires. While the assessment of particular doctrines raises questions of truth and falsity, the prudential weighing of frames of reference invokes norms of adequacy and of inadequacy. An adequate frame of reference allows one to ask and answer all the relevant questions that any given doctrinal investigation seeks to elucidate. An inadequate frame of reference does not.

While dialectical thinking provides some criteria for identifying doctrines and frames of reference in need of authentication, within the framework of Lonergan's method, ultimately foundational thinking must articulate the norms for authenticating some doctrines and for rejecting others. Moreover, because the different forms of conversion address different realms of experience, they invoke different kinds of criteria in sanctioning different forms of converted behavior.

Lonerger did not in *Method in Theology* acknowledge the reality of psychic conversion, although he subsequently conceded the oversight and added psychic conversion to intellectual, moral, and religious conversion. I speak of affective rather than psychic conversion and give it my own defi-

¹² Ibid. 300–33.

¹³ Ibid. 299.

¹⁴ Ibid. 298–99.

niton. Affective conversion, as I understand the term, assesses the relative health of human emotional and imaginative responses and fosters the cultivation of sound esthetic sensibilities. Any normative account of affective conversion must, as a consequence, invoke both psychological and esthetic criteria for giving normative direction to affective and imaginative development.

Intellectual conversion deals with human beliefs about reality. If one approaches intellectual conversion with Peircean presuppositions, then one must acknowledge that the human mind judges reality in two ways: inferentially and affectively. Accordingly, intellectual conversion brings norms of truth and of adequacy to bear on both kinds of beliefs. The philosophical science of logic provides the norms for assessing the truth or falsity of inferred beliefs. The assessment of imaginative and affective judgments presupposes a sound insight into artistic and literary modes of expression in determining the meaning of intuitive perceptions of the real. Then one must invoke norms of truth and falsity, of adequacy and inadequacy in judging the way in which the imaginative mind grasps reality.

The two forms of moral conversion—personal and sociopolitical—both invoke ethical norms. One judges personal morality in the light of human rights and duties. The reality of rights and duties flows from the mutual interdependence of finite, developing, human persons in community. One experiences duty in the legitimate claim that the growth-needs of another make upon one. Thus parents have the duty to provide food, clothes, housing, and education for their children; and the children have the right to expect such care from their parents. One judges questions of public morality in the light of the common good. Since the common good requires respect for the rights of all persons, the sociopolitical convert will of necessity have to some extent to derive from personal moral conversion some of its norms in assessing the justice or injustice of human institutions. But concern for the common good does more than assess the actions of individual persons. Rather ethical thinking about the common good weighs the kinds of group behavior that any given society sanctions and so institutionalizes. Moral judgments about the common good ponder prudentially the extent to which any particular society's institutions enable it both to share its benefits equitably with all its members and to allow all to contribute with reasonable equity to those benefits.

In the foundational theology that I have been developing, the four forms of secular conversion—affective, intellectual, personal moral, and sociopolitical—can occur in and of themselves naturally. In the first half of the 20th century, theologians such as Karl Rahner and Henri de Lubac popularized the idea that we live in a universe in which grace has already begun to transform human nature. One can, however, concede the *de facto* present gracing of the human condition without arguing to the *a priori* gracing of

all human activity, as Rahner incorrectly did in my judgment.¹⁵ Nor does the present action of divine grace force one to view human nature in Rahnerian terms as a residual concept which results from abstracting from the graced dimension of lived experience some natural human residue.¹⁶ In conceiving human nature philosophically, one may avoid the “essence fallacy”¹⁷ which vitiated classical anthropologies, including Rahnerian neo-Thomism, by asserting that history defines the essence, the whatness, of spatiotemporal realities, which create themselves through ongoing interaction with their world. In such a universe, any given human decision derives its character from the evaluative response it terminates. Natural human responses prescind from the historical self-revelation of God and content themselves to interact exclusively but legitimately with created realities in a manner untouched by religious faith. In other words, despite the presence and action of divine grace in the world, humans retain the capacity to ignore the supernatural and to respond to the world from purely natural motives. In the process they create within themselves purely natural habits of response.

The fact that the natural or graced character of a decision depends on the kind of evaluative response it terminates means that all four secular conversions— affective, intellectual, personal moral, and sociopolitical—can and often do occur naturally. We act naturally when we take a legitimate decision with respect to created realities and without any concern for the historical self-revelation and self-communication of God.

How, then, do conversions occur naturally? When one converts initially, one passes from irresponsible to responsible behavior in some realm of human experience. One identifies a realm of human experience by the kinds of habits that structure it. In a triadic, Peircean construct of human experience, human tendencies divide into two generic sorts: habits of evaluation and habits of decision. One may subdivide habits of evaluation into habits of sensation; habits of intuitive, or imaginative, thinking; habits of inferential argument; and habits of deliberation. The distinction of these different kinds of human evaluative response partially grounds the neces-

¹⁵ I have discussed elsewhere the shortcomings that characterize Rahner’s theological anthropology; see Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., *Grace as Transmuted Experience and Social Process and Other Essays in North American Theology* (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1988) 66–95.

¹⁶ Karl Rahner, S.J., *Schriften zur Theologie* (Cologne: Benziger, 1954) 1.339–40; English translation, “Concerning the Relationship between Nature and Grace,” in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, trans. Cornelius Ernst (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961) 297–317, esp. 307–8.

¹⁷ The essence fallacy illegitimately reifies ideas by treating them as the objects of thought rather than viewing them as modes of human presence to environmental realities and actualities.

sity for more than one form of conversion, since different kinds of conversion target different kinds of human evaluative response. Affective conversion deals with intuitive perceptions of reality. Intellectual conversion deals with both intuitive and inferential beliefs. The two forms of moral conversion target deliberative thinking.

The different realms of experience only partially ground the diversity of conversions because the multiplicity of conversions also results from the kinds of norms one brings to bear on converted behavior. Both affective and intellectual conversion, for example, deal with intuitive forms of thinking, but, whereas affective conversion judges intuitive perceptions by psychological and esthetic norms, intellectual conversion judges the truth or falsity of intuitive beliefs and the adequacy or inadequacy of the frames of reference in which one reaches intuitive judgments. For example, Paul Ricoeur's *The Symbolism of Evil* offers a brilliant dialectical study of the relative adequacy of different mythic accounts of the origin of evil.

In my judgment, a conversion begins to have a graced character when its motives invoke supernaturally revealed truths, realities, and values. Otherwise, it occurs naturally. I may, for example, convert affectively and naturally out of a desire to bring neurotic pain to some kind of healing. I may convert intellectually because I disagree with my teachers and desire to think my own thoughts. I may convert morally because I recognize that received moral wisdom condones human bigotry. Such conversions in and of themselves lack any supernatural motivation.

The realm of the supernatural does not transcend human experience as a decadent manual Scholasticism once suggested. Instead, it transvalues natural experience. One transvalues an experience when, having perceived things in one frame of reference, one begins to perceive possibilities, actualities, and realities in a novel frame of reference. The realm of the supernatural results from God's decision not just to engage in the ongoing creation of the world but also to intervene in human history in incarnate form in order to invite humans into the collaborative work of undoing the consequences of their own sinfulness. One can only respond to the gratuitous, saving, supernatural self-disclosure of God within space and time on the terms which that self-disclosure demands: in other words, one can only respond in faith. One experiences the Christian God through faith in his Incarnate Son and in the divine Breath whom the latter mediates.

I draw these distinctions between natural and graced conversion because they have direct relevance to the way in which the criteria supplied by different kinds of conversion function within the authentication of doctrines. In what follows, I argue that criteria derived from natural conversion provide primarily negative criteria for calling doctrines into question because they ignore the historical self-revelation of God in Jesus and in his Breath, although, as we shall see, when one transvalues natural criteria in

faith and then applies them to the data of revelation, those criteria can also assist in the positive authentication of doctrines.¹⁸

CRITERIA FOR AUTHENTICATING

Peirce's logic and Lonergan's theory of theological method converge in several ways. First of all, they converge in the role that each thinker assigns to normative thinking. Lonergan looks to a normative account of the different kinds of conversion for the criteria one needs to distinguish between sound and unsound religious doctrines; Peirce looks to the three normative philosophical sciences to supply the criteria one needs in order to discriminate between sound and unsound metaphysical doctrines.

One also finds a convergence in the kinds of criteria that each thinker seems to invoke for discriminating between sound and unsound doctrines. As I have already indicated, when Lonergan wrote *Method in Theology*, he recognized three different kinds of conversion: religious, moral, and intellectual. He subsequently conceded the necessity of adding a fourth: psychic conversion. If one adds what I call affective conversion to the other three forms of conversion, then one augments the number of secular conversions, conversions that need not occur in a context of religious faith, to three. Moreover, the three forms of secular conversion correspond in a general sort of way to Peirce's three normative philosophical sciences: esthetics, ethics, and logic. Esthetics reflects normatively on affective conversion, ethics on moral conversion, and logic on intellectual conversion. Because ethical thinking engages two distinct but interrelated frames of reference—namely, personal morality and public morality—one can convert ethically in two ways. One invokes different kinds of norms in reaching moral decisions in each of these frames of reference—rights and duties in personal ethics and the common good in questions of public morality. That fact grounds the necessity for two distinct kinds of moral conversion.

Natural affective conversion invokes two kinds of norms in assessing intuitive thinking: psychological norms and esthetic norms. Psychological norms yield an insight into the relative health or pathology of affective and intuitive responses to reality. Esthetic norms measure the relationship of different possibilities, actualities, and realities to supreme beauty and excellence.

Natural intellectual conversion also invokes two kinds of norms: truth, falsity, and probability, on the one hand, and adequacy or inadequacy, on the other. The intellectually converted judge the truth and falsity of specific propositional affirmations or affirm them within a range of probability. The

¹⁸ Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., *Committed Worship: A Sacramental Theology for Converting Christians*, 2 vols. (Collegeville: Liturgical, 1993) 1.3–181.

verification or falsification of an abductive proposition requires one first to clarify it deductively, by predicting its operational consequences. Then one must verify it, falsify it, or verify it within a range of probability by invoking inductive inference. The intellectually converted also judge the relative adequacy or inadequacy of the frames of reference in which the human mind perceives reality. One measures a frame of reference's adequacy by its ability to allow one to think about all the possibilities, actualities, and realities one needs to consider in order to understand whatever one is investigating. At the dawn of the modern era, for example, scientists abandoned alchemy for mathematical measurement and hypothetico-deductive method because the latter provided a more adequate frame of reference for understanding the natural universe.

One may, then, identify six sets of natural criteria that function in the authentication of doctrines. (1) Psychological norms judge the relative health or pathology of intuitive perceptions of reality. (2) Esthetic norms measure the relationship of possibilities, realities, and actualities to supreme excellence and beauty. (3) One judges particular propositional affirmations, whether intuitive or inferential, by norms of truth or falsity. (4) One judges interpretative frames of reference by norms of adequacy and inadequacy. (5) One judges questions of interpersonal morality by the norm of rights and duties. (6) One judges public morality by the norm of the common good.¹⁹

Christian conversion provides two kinds of faith norms for authenticating and rejecting doctrines: eschatological norms and moral norms. The eschaton, the last age of salvation, consists of graced human collaboration with God to undo the consequences of human sinfulness. Because it involves divine and human collaboration, the last age of salvation reveals God at the same time that human finitude prevents any exhaustive revelation of God within space and time. Eschatological history has, as a consequence, a sacramental structure that requires that one grasp its dynamic significance in faith. A sacrament in the broad sense both reveals and conceals the presence of God. Any authentic doctrine must interpret correctly the eschatological events that reveal God sacramentally in space and time.

The events that theological doctrines interpret come with an initial in-built interpretation because they tell the story of Jesus' proclamation of God's reign and of the apostolic Church's proclamation of the risen Christ. Doctrinal truths must take into account not only the normative account of eschatological history enshrined in the Bible. They must also interpret

¹⁹ I interpret the common good as including all the other norms which regulate public morality, such as distributive, commutative, and social justice, truth telling, and fidelity to binding public promises and commitments.

accurately a biblical interpretation of those same events. Hence, sound eschatological doctrines interpret both the events in which God graciously reveals the divine saving activity and the account of those events enshrined in the Bible that gives us cognitive access to the story of God's saving intervention in human history culminating in the Incarnation and in the mission of the Pentecostal Breath.

The New Testament, just as the Old Testament, does more than describe or even explain events. It also inculcates a complex set of religious commitments and attitudes that Jesus called the reign of God. Jesus did not proclaim a natural morality, as Enlightenment skeptics claimed, but a morality of faith. One can, moreover, discern in the New Testament the moral outlines of what he meant by the reign of God.

Jesus invited his disciples to enter into his experience of God as Abba, as Father. That relationship demanded a reverential intimacy with the Father which expressed itself in obedience to the moral demands of life in the kingdom, in unconditioned trust in the Father's providential care of his human children, and in all-consuming love of the Father. Unconditioned trust in the Father's loving providence has as its consequence that one cease to cling to physical possessions as the ultimate source of life. Instead, one looks to the Father as the ultimate source of life. Such trust frees one to share the physical supports of life, one's "bread," one's possessions, with those less fortunate than oneself. Radical trust in God's providential care requires Jesus' disciples to renounce not only wealth but the very desire for wealth. One must choose between God and money. A Christian disciple cannot, therefore, set out to get rich. One lives simply as a disciple of Jesus and shares what God gives one with others. The kind of sharing that Jesus demanded went beyond mere handouts. Jesus spoke frequently of hospitality toward the needy because Christian sharing seeks to bring into existence a community of sharing that binds its members together in mutual care and commitment.

If sharing expresses trust in God, unconditioned trust in God requires that Jesus' disciples practice unconditioned sharing: at least in this sense, that they must ask not whether others deserve to receive what they share with them, but whether or not those whom the disciples care for need help and assistance. In other words, unconditioned trust in God seeks to bring into existence a community of universal sharing that excludes no one in principle and that opens its doors to everyone, especially to those in greatest need. Christian sharing seeks, therefore, to break down the social barriers that sin erects in human society: barriers of gender, race, class, greed, privilege, coercion, etc.

Jesus headed a movement but did not establish juridical structures for a Church. Some have argued that he did expect his movement to survive him. He gave only rudimentary institutional structure to that movement when

he prophetically called the Twelve to function as the peasant patriarchs in the new Israel he was founding. In giving shape to the new Israel, Jesus rejected Davidic messianism, but he did make messianic claims.²⁰ In his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, he acted the part of the humble, peaceful messianic figure described in Zechariah 9:9. Like John the Baptizer, Jesus required converted commitment on the part of all Jews. In Jesus' religious vision the reign of God gave ideal content to that commitment. Indeed, Jesus seems to have intended his renewal movement to bring Israel to a degree of religious conversion and commitment that would allow it to serve as God's instrument for effecting a more universal salvation.

Jesus' messianic vision of the new Israel inculcated a morality of non-violence. While Jesus encouraged prophetic opposition to violence, injustice, and exploitation, he also refused to found the new Israel on coercive power and on law. He founded it instead on a worship of the Father authenticated by mutual forgiveness and reconciliation with one another on the part of the members of the new Israel. Moreover, in Jesus' messianic reversal of values, love of enemies measured the authenticity of one's forgiveness.

Jesus also insisted that leadership in the new Israel must never ape the oppressive ways of the kings of the Gentiles. Leaders in his movement, like the Twelve, must take Jesus and only Jesus as their role model. Jesus modeled a leadership of service that required an unconditioned commitment to those one served, since one must live willing, if required to do so, to lay down one's life for one's community, just as Jesus did. Humble service that treats not oneself but the lowliest and neediest members of the community as the most important defines the shape of authentic Christian leadership.²¹

One must measure theological doctrines by their ability to interpret truly and adequately the historical events that reveal the Christian God: namely, the twofold mission of the Son and of his sanctifying Breath. Those same events, however, require converted commitment to the ideal of God's reign. As a consequence, the moral requirements of life in God's reign authenticate any doctrine which, both in what it affirms directly and in the practical consequences of what it affirms, encourages fidelity to the vision of the kingdom. By the same token, any doctrine which, both in what it affirms directly or in the practical consequences of what it affirms, calls into question or contradicts the ideal of God's reign fails the test of authenticity.

²⁰ I agree with Nicholas Thomas Wright on this point; see his *Christian Origins and the Question of God 2: Jesus and the Victory of God* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1996) 477–539.

²¹ For a fuller discussion of these points, see Gelpi, *Committed Worship* 1.56–117; 2.70–97.

One can summarize the preceding reflections in the following theses. (1) In and of themselves, natural forms of conversion provide negative norms for challenging the authenticity of doctrines. (2) Christian conversion (a) authenticates doctrines that correctly interpret the events that reveal the triune God historically and eschatologically and that foster lived fidelity to the moral demands of life in God's reign and (b) rejects as inauthentic those that do not. In what follows, I exemplify the utility of these two principles in authenticating some doctrines and in excluding others.

Natural Forms of Conversion

Psychology provides some norms for questioning the authenticity of theological doctrines. To date, contemporary psychology and psychiatry have not successfully formulated a unified theory of the emotions, but we have learned enough about the working of human affectivity to name important symptoms of human psychological pathology. The negative emotions of shame, fear, anger, and guilt pose the most serious problems.

The negative emotions have a positive role to play in the development of human affectivity. Sinful or immoral actions should make us feel shame or guilt. We should fear threatening circumstances, and situations of needless suffering or injustice should cause righteous anger. We call these emotions negative because they function within intuitive cognition in a manner analogous to the way in which the word "not" functions in inferential thinking. When properly integrated into the conscious ego, the negative emotions ought to motivate us to deal in constructive ways with evil or threatening situations.

The negative emotions give rise to pathology when, instead of owning them and channeling them toward life-giving ends, we repress them. Then, they give rise to a steady disintegration of human affective responses. The first stage of dysfunction consists in "nervousness," i.e. in the tendency to overreact to minor irritating stimuli. If one does not attend to the unconscious feelings that motivate nervousness, then they tend to produce a broad range of more or less compulsive behavior patterns. At the next stage of emotional dysfunction, one tends to explode periodically in violent and antisocial forms of behavior, often of a criminal character. In the fourth stage of dysfunction, one develops delusional symptoms. One has so lost contact with reality as to require hospitalization. At the end of psychic disintegration lies suicide.²²

Human bigotry often engages different degrees of emotional pathology. When identifiable social groups of humans live in close physical proximity

²² Karl Menninger, Martin Mayman, and Paul Pruyser, *The Vital Balance: The Life Process in Mental Health and Illness* (New York: Viking, 1963).

but maintain only superficial social relationships with one another, the human mind tends spontaneously to form stereotypes of the members of the out-group. When out-groups enter into competition with one's in-group or threaten it in significant ways, repressed negative emotions tend to turn stereotypical thinking about the out-group into bigotry. In situations of prolonged antipathy between two social groups, bigotry motivates increasingly hostile behavior toward members of the threatening out-group: antilocution, avoidance, segregation, lynching, and genocide.²³

The invocation of psychological norms in the authentication of doctrine would call into question any doctrine that gives evidence of springing from emotional pathology or bigotry, no matter who teaches it or how many people teach it. When I taught high school in New Orleans in the 1950s, a religious tract entitled *God Gave the Law of Segregation to Moses on Mount Sinai* enjoyed widespread popularity in the Crescent City. The tract argued that racial segregation of the sort practiced in the Gulf South enjoyed the status of divine law because God had revealed it to Moses on Mount Sinai. Since the tract simply re-enforced the widespread racial bigotry of the people of New Orleans, it enjoyed credence among a large number of Catholics. The situation deteriorated to the point that it became necessary to bring in a major scripture scholar to refute publicly the tissue of errors and misinterpretations of the Bible that the author of the tract had woven together in support of an immoral and heretical doctrine. Long before its formal refutation by a competent scripture scholar, however, the manifest racial bigotry of *God Gave the Law of Segregation to Moses on Mount Sinai* justified rejecting it as false doctrine.

Different societies and cultures institutionalize bigotry in different ways. The human tendency to rationalize bigotry by endowing it with divine sanction makes it a fruitful source of false and misleading doctrines. Any religious doctrine, therefore, that rationalizes racism, sexism, classism, or any other bigoted "ism" fails to pass the test of doctrinal authenticity. Such rationalizations exemplify ideology, not sound doctrinal theology.

Bigotry institutionalizes false beliefs, sometimes false beliefs of a religious character. It tends, therefore, to motivate shared beliefs, while personal neurosis or psychosis can skew personal religious beliefs. I have a friend who once worked as a psychiatrist in a state hospital. She developed such remarkable success in treating religious psychoses that even her atheistic colleagues routinely referred religious psychotics to her care. She commonly found in dealing with religious psychosis that those who suffered from it feared that the psychiatrists in healing them would take away their faith and deprive them of any relationship with God. She attributed

²³ Gordon W. Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1954).

her success in dealing with religious psychosis in part to her ability to help her clients identify some genuine religious experience they had known. She kept them anchored there and promised them that she would never take authentic faith in God away from them, but she also told them that if they claimed to be the Immaculate Conception they would have to talk about that. In other words, my friend spontaneously invoked the psychotic origin of a personal religious belief in order to question its doctrinal authenticity.

Intellectual conversion requires one to verify and falsify doctrinal claims by evidence that establishes either the truth of a belief or its probability. It also requires that one think in adequate frames of reference. A frame of reference lacks adequacy when it does not allow one to ask and answer the questions that will allow one to understand the reality one is trying to understand and explain. The application of these norms in the authentication of doctrines would call into question any religious doctrines asserted without corroborating evidence or formulated in a demonstrably inadequate frame of reference.

The mere fact that a doctrine comes to formulation in an inadequate frame of reference does not, of course, establish its falsity, since the human mind can grasp some truths in almost any frame of reference. Ptolemaic astronomy, for example, grasped some true things about the working of the heavenly bodies. The fact, however, that inadequate frames of reference function as a set of intellectual blinders and prevent one from attending to relevant issues and evidence makes it likely that even the true beliefs that they allow one to formulate will need revision when recontextualized in an speculatively adequate frame of reference. Those, for example, who believed in the flatness of the earth espoused an inadequate geography, but even within that inadequate frame of reference they argued correctly that from a personal perspective, the earth tends to appear more or less flat. They erred primarily in overgeneralizing a common-sense belief. Once they came to recognize the roundness of the earth, the world continued to look flat. That apparent fact now required speculative qualification.

Tridentine Theology

A Tridentine theology of the sacraments of reconciliation and anointing illustrates how the development of more adequate theological frames of reference causes the qualification and reformulation even of authoritatively sanctioned doctrinal truths. In the early stages of the Council of Trent, many hoped for serious dialogue between Catholics and Protestants. The decree on justification reflected these irenic concerns²⁴. Once it be-

²⁴ *Enchiridion symbolorum*, ed H. Denzinger and A. Schönmetzer, 34th ed (Barcelona: Herder, 1967) nos. 1520–1583.

came clear to the assembled bishops that Protestantism had already solidified into entrenched orthodoxies, Trent set itself methodically to reform the Catholic Church and to draw the lines as clearly as possible between Catholic orthodoxy and Protestant heterodoxy.

The latter concerns—church reform and the exclusion of heterodoxy—shaped Trent’s decree on “penance and extreme unction.” The decree vindicates the sacramental character of both rituals against Protestant denials of their sacramentality and determines parameters for the Catholic reform of both rites. Trent advanced the theological transformation of extreme unction into the contemporary sacrament of healing. But when one reads its decrees in the light of contemporary liturgical history and theology, what it says about this sacrament sounds minimalistic and inadequate. Contemporary accounts of anointing correctly stress even more than Trent its healing intent. In handling both reconciliation and anointing, Tridentine sacramental theology also shows little awareness of the communal dimensions of both faith healing and the forgiveness of postbaptismal sins. Trent also treated the sacrament of penance in strongly juridical terms that contemporary sacramental theology would correctly deem inadequate and outdated.²⁵ In other words, the new light that contemporary liturgical theology and history casts on these rituals throws into relief the theological limitations inherent in a Counter Reformation approach to sacramental theology.

Rahner and Maréchal

Besides invoking norms of adequacy, intellectual conversion commits one to thinking with sound logical and methodological principles. In my judgment, Karl Rahner’s supernatural existential illustrates how sound logical and methodological principles can call a theological doctrine into question. Rahner’s doctrine of the supernatural existential rests on his theological anthropology, which he derived from blending the transcendental Thomism of Joseph Maréchal with insights from Martin Heidegger.

Rahner endorsed Maréchal’s attempt to use Kantian transcendental method against Kant in order to reground classical metaphysics. Classical metaphysics claims to yield a necessary and universal insight into the nature of Being. Kantian transcendental method deduces a priori the conditions for the possibility of scientific knowledge, morality, and esthetic experience. Maréchal argued that in his transcendental deduction of the conditions for the possibility of scientific knowing Kant had overlooked an important dimension of knowledge, namely, the judgment of being, which forms the centerpiece of Thomistic epistemology. A systematizing concep-

²⁵ Ibid. nos. 1667–1719; see Gelpi, *Committed Worship* 2.135–97.

tual nominalist, Kant had fallaciously reduced knowing to the subjective interrelation of concrete percepts and abstract concepts. Having included the judgment of being in the acts of the human mind, Maréchal deduced a priori from the mind's capacity to grasp sensible reality as being the essential orientation of the Thomistic agent intellect to Being-as-such. Since in Thomistic metaphysics, Being-as-such coincides with the reality of God, Maréchal discovered in every judgment of being an implicit affirmation of the existence of God and in the essential orientation of the agent intellect to God a natural desire for the beatific vision.²⁶

Rahner embellished Maréchal's metaphysical anthropology with the early Heidegger's distinction between objective, ontic meaning and relational, ontological meaning. In Heidegger's early philosophy, ontic meaning qualifies as existentiel and ontological meaning as existential. Accordingly, Rahner identified the a priori structure of the human spirit interpreted through the lens of Maréchal's Thomism with the existential, ontological structure of reality. For theological reasons Rahner objected to Maréchal's portrait of the human agent intellect as a natural desire for the beatific vision. A natural desire for a supernatural reality sounded too Pelagian in Rahner's ears. He therefore deduced a priori a supernatural gracing of the agent intellect which allegedly transformed it from a natural desire for God into a supernatural desire for union with the God revealed in the incarnate Christ. He called this a priori supernatural longing "the supernatural existential" and also deduced from it a priori his doctrine of the "anonymous Christian."²⁷

Sound logic calls Rahner's doctrine of the supernatural existential into question by demonstrating the invalidity of any human attempt to deduce the nature of reality a priori or to grasp a priori the necessary and universal nature of any entity. Transcendental logic recognizes only one form of inference, namely, deduction. A sound logic of inference recognizes three irreducible kinds of inference: abduction or hypothetical inference; deduction or predictive inference; and induction or verifying inference. Sound logic allows the human mind to aspire to formulating a universal insight into the nature of reality, but it denies that insight any a priori necessity. Sound logic characterizes all human abductions as fallible, not as logically necessary.

In other words, Rahner's logical and methodological presuppositions cannot justify either his or Maréchal's claims to have deduced a priori the necessary and universal structure of the human spirit and of being-in-

²⁶ Joseph Maréchal, *Le point de départ de la métaphysique*, 5 vols. (Louvain: Museum Lessianum, 1926-1947) vol. 5.

²⁷ Rahner, *Schriften* 1.343-44; 4.227-34; English translation, *Theological Investigations* 1.309-11; 4.182-88.

general. In fact, both thinkers have only formulated a fallible hypothesis about the way in which the mind works and presented it as an induction while calling it a transcendental deduction. If, as sound logic requires, one seeks to verify their portrait of the human mind as a virtually infinite desire to know the whole of Being, the results of close scientific studies of human knowing call transcendental Thomism's inflated portrait of human cognitive longing into serious question. Since the virtual infinity of the human mind gives Rahner's theory of the supernatural existential its warranty, the fact that belief in the virtual infinity of the human intellect fails to pass the test of inductive verification consigns Rahner's supernatural existential to the same fate, and with it the doctrine of anonymous Christianity which the supernatural existential grounds.²⁸ Calling these particular Rahnerian doctrines into question does not, of course, negate Rahner's enormous positive contribution to contemporary theology. In my judgment, however, the action of God's Breath offers a more plausible explanation of the possibility of universal human salvation than the supernatural existential.

At a somewhat less technical level, intellectual conversion also calls into question all fundamentalistic formulations of Christian doctrine. Not everything fundamentalists say need qualify as error. Fundamentalism springs in part from a legitimate desire to conserve fundamental religious beliefs. But fundamentalists seek to accomplish this end by invoking a logical and methodological strategy that insures the misinterpretation of the very truths they are trying to preserve. Fundamentalism first of all illegitimately objectifies the truth into unchanging, literally true propositional certitudes sanctioned by divine authority. Protestant fundamentalists find that authority in the Bible. Catholic fundamentalists find it in dogmatic statements of the official pastoral magisterium.

The intellectually converted by contrast recognize that ideas become true when one verifies them in the relevant evidence and that, because the acquisition of truth changes the mind in the process of attaining true insight, one cannot objectify the truth as fundamentalism claims. The intellectually converted also recognize that the mind thinks in a variety of frames of reference and therefore knows more kinds of truth than literal truth. Finally, the intellectually converted look to shared systematic inquiry as the best means available to the human mind to attain truth. They therefore resist any attempt to impose truth on others through coercive authority. Because the incorrect presuppositions on which fundamentalism rests tend to endow even the truths that fundamentalists proclaim with false or misleading connotations, the intellectually converted hold fundamentalistic

²⁸ For a more detailed discussion of these issues, see Gelpi, *Grace as Transmuted Experience and Social Process* 67–96; *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology* (New York: Paulist, 1994) 91–107.

teaching suspect until verified by some other means than fundamentalistic appeals to literal truth and divine authority. Nor can sanction by the official pastoral magisterium preclude the need to authenticate a doctrine by verifying it in the events that reveal to us the triune God. As Vatican II correctly insisted, authentic church teaching must interpret and hand on those events to which Sacred Scripture testifies and that reveal God historically, eschatologically, and normatively.²⁹

Personal moral conversion invokes the norms of rights and duties in judging the morality or immorality of human interpersonal dealings. Rights and duties arise out of the mutual interdependence of human persons in society for the fulfillment of basic and humane growth needs. A right exemplifies a human need whose fulfillment depends upon and therefore makes a claim upon the conscientious decisions of another. A duty consists in the obligation to act conscientiously to fulfill the basic and humane needs of legitimate dependents.

When a theological doctrine, either in what it affirms directly or in its consequences, leads to the violation of fundamental human rights, it fails the test of authenticity. Think, for example, of the argument defended in the 16th century by some colonizers of the Americas that, since the aboriginals in the new world could not have descended from any of the peoples named in the Bible, they exemplified a subhuman species that one could exploit in the same way in which one exploits an animal. Or think of the doctrine that some integralists at Vatican II defended, that "error has no rights." In its consequences, this doctrine meant that those in error have no rights, and it rationalized trampling on the consciences of non-Catholics in countries where Catholicism enjoyed political privileges. It also sanctioned the peremptory silencing of theologians without due legal process.

The sociopolitical convert invokes the norm of the common good in judging conscientiously issues in public morality. The norm of the common good requires that all the members of human society have reasonably equitable access to the shared goods of that society, as well as reasonably equitable access to contributing to the sum of those shared benefits. When invoked as a norm in authenticating theological doctrines, the norm of the common good calls into question the authenticity of any theological doctrine which violates the common good, either in what it states directly or in what it entails. Biblical rationalizations of apartheid would exemplify the kind of doctrine of which I speak. So would any theological rationalization of racism, sexism, classism, clericalism, or any other "ism" in human society or in the Church, no matter who teaches it.

²⁹ *Dei Verbum* no. 10.

Christian Conversion

Christian conversion both authenticates doctrines that correctly interpret the events that reveal the triune God historically and eschatologically and that foster lived fidelity to the moral dimensions of God's reign, and rejects as inauthentic those that do not.

The norms derived from natural conversion serve in and of themselves as negative criteria for judging theological doctrines because as natural norms they abstract from the historical self-revelation of God and from the events that reveal God to us historically and eschatologically. Since, however, grace elevates, heals, and perfects human nature, doctrines that violate human nature and rationalize human nature's vices, sins, and failures fail the test of authenticity.

Christian conversion, however, provides positive norms for authenticating theological doctrines because the Christian convert consents in faith to the historical events that reveal God eschatologically in space and time. The "eschaton" designates the last age of salvation that the paschal mystery begins. Jesus' death, Resurrection, and mission of the Holy Breath create the eschaton. The fact that the risen Christ sends the Holy Breath of God reveals his divinity. The divine Breath coincides with the reality of God, and any efficacious source of a divine reality must also enjoy divinity as a personal prerogative.

The revelation of Jesus' divinity in the paschal mystery causes the transvaluation in faith of the events of his life that led up to the paschal mystery. The revelation of Jesus' divinity also entails his sinlessness and reveals his death on the cross as the ultimate expression of his sinless obedience to the mission of proclaiming God's reign entrusted to him by the Father. That same revelation endows Jesus' proclamation of the divine reign with a unique normativity. When seen in the light of the paschal mystery, Jesus' religious vision contributes constitutively to his human experience of being a divine person. In no other religious founder does one encounter the religious self-understanding of a divine person incarnate. That self-understanding endows the events that reveal the Christian God with an initial and normative interpretation. Jesus incarnates in finite form the mind of God and reveals to us both how a saving God desires to relate to us and how that same God wants us to relate to one another and to the world. In other words, the apostolic witness to the paschal mystery discloses the eschatological, revelatory events that give Jesus' religious vision ultimate divine sanction.

In reflecting on doctrinal theology, Lonergan correctly distinguished among the normative doctrines expressed in the apostolic witness and enshrined in the New Testament, church doctrines that hand on and inter-

pret the apostolic witness, theological doctrines that reflect critically on both apostolic and church doctrines, and methodological doctrines that reflect critically on the way in which theologians pursue their craft. Together, church doctrines, theological doctrines, and methodological doctrines constitute what Yves Congar called "ecclesiastical traditions."³⁰

Within the development of doctrine, the apostolic witness functions as a *norma normans*. It provides the two norms that judge all subsequent doctrinal development. I formulate those norms in the following manner. First, all authentic doctrinal development must interpret accurately the events that reveal the Christian God: the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth and the paschal mystery. Second, since those events endow Jesus' proclamation of the reign of God with divine normativity, all authentic doctrines must foster practical fidelity to the vision of the kingdom enshrined in the New Testament.

The development of Yves Congar's ecclesiology illustrates how the first criterion authenticates some doctrines and calls others into question. In his early ecclesiological writings, Congar liked to speak of two distinct causal principles of the Church: one hierarchical, the other pneumatic. He derived what he called the hierarchical principle from Jesus and his ministry. The hierarchical principle allegedly endows the Church with its institutional, hierarchical structure. The pneumatic principle inspires justifying faith, sanctification, and charismatic ministry in the Church. The documents of Vatican II reflect an analogous approach to ecclesiology.³¹

As his thought matured, however, Congar came to realize that his theory of the two principles failed to interpret what the apostolic witness has to say about the origins of the Church. Jesus did give rudimentary shape to the movement he headed when he called the Twelve and when he associated them with him in the proclamation of the kingdom. The New Testament makes it clear, however, that the first apostolic college included many more people than the Twelve. The original apostolic college consisted of all those who, like the apostle Paul, had seen the risen Christ and who had experienced Jesus' divine commission to testify to that experience. Paul proclaims that Jesus appeared on one occasion to over 500 disciples at once (1 Corinthians 15:6-7). We shall never know how many of them functioned as apostles in the apostolic Church; nor can we rule out the real possibility that some of them did. In the Fourth Gospel, Mary Magdalene functions as

³⁰ Yves Congar, O.P., *Tradition and Traditions: An Historical and a Theological Essay*, trans. Michael Naseby and Thomas Rainborough (New York: Macmillan, 1963) 396-407.

³¹ Yves Congar, O.P., *The Mystery of the Church*, trans. A. V. Littledale (Baltimore: Helicon, 1960); *Lay People in the Church: A Study for a Theology of the Laity*, trans. Donald Attwater (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1959). See also *Lumen gentium* nos. 18-47.

an apostle to the apostles (John 20:17–18). Did she function as an apostolic witness to the risen Christ? The recurring references to her in both the synoptic and the Johannine traditions suggest that she enjoyed some prominence in the apostolic Church (Mark 15:40–41, 16:1, 9–10; Matthew 27:55–56; Luke 8:2–3; John 19:25–26, 20:11–18). Moreover, both the Acts of the Apostles and the Pastoral Epistles give ample witness to the fact that the apostolic Church made up its structures as it went along.

We shall probably never know in any detail the answers to many questions about the leadership structures in the apostolic Church. But the evidence we do possess makes it clear that one cannot derive church structures from Jesus rather than from the Spirit. Toward the end of his career, Congar recognized that his theory of the two principles of the Church offered an inadequate and bifurcated account of church origins, and he publicly abandoned it. Congar may also have realized that his theory of the two principles suffered under the same inadequacies as Irenaeus's theory of the two hands of God. If one ascribes a divine activity to one person of the Trinity and not to another, one begins to move trinitarian theology in a subordinationist direction.

Congar seems also to have recognized tardily that the hierarchical structuring of church institutions took shape in the postapostolic Church and therefore qualifies as an ecclesiastical rather than as a strictly apostolic doctrine. In a strictly hierarchical vision of the Church, all movement proceeds from the top of the hierarchy to the bottom. The mature Congar conceived ordained leaders standing within the community rather than over it and as both ministering to the community and receiving the community's ministry in return.³²

In other words, closer study of the events that reveal the origins of the Church caused Congar to scrap this theory of the two principles of church origins and replace it with one that better accords with the events to which the New Testament testifies. The development of Congar's ecclesiology illustrates how the first principle for authenticating theological doctrines supplied by Christian conversion allows one to reject one doctrine as inauthentic and to endorse another as authentic.

The second norm functions in an analogous fashion and may have contributed to Congar's replacement of a hierarchical vision of ordained leadership with one which better accords with the New Testament witness. As we have already seen, Jesus did not say much about the shape of leadership in the new Israel he was founding. But the New Testament does lay down one clear principle of divine law that almost certainly derives from Jesus himself, namely, that those who lead in the new Israel must never ape the

³² Yves Congar, O.P., "My Path-Finding in the Theology of Laity and Ministries," *Jurist* 32 (1972) 169–88.

ways of the kings of the Gentiles. Instead, all those in leadership positions in the new Israel have to take Jesus himself as the *only* model of religious leadership. Leaders must make themselves the willing servants of the rest of the community, especially of the neediest and most marginal, even to the point of laying down their lives for those they serve in the image of the servant Messiah.

One finds evidence in the Gospels of both Matthew and Luke that already in the subapostolic era, church leaders were beginning to succumb to the allure of "clericalism." By clericalism I mean the sinful abuse of a position of responsible leadership in the Church for the purpose either of self-aggrandizement or of oppressing others through some form of coercion. All three Synoptic Gospels condemn modeling church leadership on the model of the kings of the Gentiles (Mark 10:41–45; Matthew 20:24–47; Luke 22:24–27). Matthew especially castigates the leaders of the church in Antioch for aping the clericalizing ways of the Pharisees who led the Jewish community in Antioch (Matthew 23:1–12). Luke's Jesus shows analogous concerns (Luke 12:41–48). Since both Matthew and Luke took shape during the subapostolic era, when church institutions were solidifying, they give evidence that from the beginning the clericalization of leadership structures constituted an institutional abuse in Christian communities.

The systematic clericalization of the episcopacy took place in the fourth century, but one finds its seeds sown in the preceding centuries.³³ The most systematic institutionalization of clerical leadership structures in the Latin Church took place during the Middle Ages. The acquisition of the papal states transformed the papal office into something that Jesus urged his followers not to become, namely, one of the kings of the Gentiles. The rise of the imperial papacy in the eleventh and twelfth centuries patterned the papacy on the Roman emperor. Corruption in the head of the Latin Church spread to the bishops who transformed themselves into medieval barons with extensive estates and even personal armies. One can make a plausible argument that the rise of the imperial papacy contributed significantly to the final estrangement between the Eastern and Western churches and that the clericalization of papacy and episcopacy in the high Middle Ages motivated in significant way the fragmentation of the Church in the Protestant Reformation.³⁴

The theological doctrines of hierarchicalism and sacerdotalism provided

³³ Ray Robert Noll, *Christian Ministerial Priesthood: A Search for Its Beginnings in the Primary Documents of the Apostolic Fathers* (San Francisco: Catholic Scholars, 1993); Kenan Osborne, O.F.M., *Priesthood: A History of Ordained Ministry in the Roman Catholic Church* (New York: Paulist, 1989) 89–160.

³⁴ Eamon Duffy, *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes* (New Haven: Yale University, 1997); Richard P. McBrien, *Lives of the Popes: Pontiffs from St. Peter to John Paul II* (San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1997); Yves Congar, O.P.,

two important ideological rationalizations of the clericalization of ordained church leadership during the high Middle Ages. Sacerdotalism, which took systematic shape the fourth century, imagines church leaders as the Christian equivalent of Levitical priests. In such an interpretation of Christian leadership, ordained priesthood separates one from the people and sets one over the people, instead of identifying one with the people and consecrating one to serve them in the image of a servant Messiah. As the Letter to the Hebrews correctly argues, Jesus on Calvary exercised a priesthood of identification with humanity and with the poor and the marginal, not a clericalized, Levitical priesthood of separation (Hebrews 5:1–10). In an analogous manner, hierarchicalism rationalizes the abuse of ecclesiastical authority by equivalently patterning it on the behavior of the kings of the Gentiles. In a hierarchical vision of the Church, all movement begins with those in authority and descends from on high to those they rule. Authoritative decisions taken without the consultation of those they affect with moral inevitability oppress.

In other words, the teachings of Jesus concerning the conduct of leadership in the new Israel, teachings that the paschal mystery transforms into divine law, stigmatize the sacerdotalist and hierarchicalist rationalizations of the abuse of clerical authority for self-serving and oppressive ends as unauthentic theological doctrines.³⁵

A Third Principle

So far I have examined two fundamental principles for authenticating doctrines or calling them into question. One needs, however, to supplement them with a third principle: When transvalued in faith, the norms provided by the natural forms of conversion can also make a positive contribution to the authentication of doctrines.

One transvalues a reality or perception, when, having interpreted it in one frame of reference, one reinterprets it in a novel frame of reference that gives those earlier realities and perceptions new connotations. Since divine grace heals, perfects, and elevates human nature, it requires the transvaluation in faith of all four forms of natural conversion. Once thus transvalued, the normative insights yielded by the four natural forms of conversion can make a positive contribution to the authentication of doctrines. In what follow, I give examples of how that happens.

In Peirce's logic of the normative sciences, esthetics decides the ultimate ideals that rule the human conscience by comparing and contrasting them

L'écclésiologie du haut moyen âge: De Saint Grégoire le Grand à la désunion entre Byzance et Rome (Paris: Cerf, 1968).

³⁵ Gelpi, *Committed Worship* 2.70–132.

with the perception of ultimate beauty and excellence. This logical insight throws light on how an initial Christian conversion mediates between affective conversion and moral conversion. One form of conversion mediates between two others when it puts them in a relationship with one another which they would not otherwise have.

Initial Christian conversion begins in the heart with a confrontation with one's conscious and unconscious emotional resistance to consent to the divine excellence revealed in God incarnate. Normally, the negative emotions (fear, anger, shame, and guilt) motivate the resistance. One may fear what God might demand of one, or find it difficult to believe that God loves or forgives one, or resent the religious hypocrisy of self-professed believers. As one brings these negative feelings to conscious healing and creative integration into the conscious ego, one grows in the capacity to respond esthetically to embodied religious excellence. Enhanced esthetic sensitivity, when transvalued in initial faith, opens one to the divine beauty incarnate in Jesus and in people's lives that resemble his. That attractiveness motivates the initial consent of justifying Christian faith, for that consent commits one to a life of discipleship, to embodying and proclaiming the reign of God in Jesus' incarnate image.

In other words, when one invokes Peircean esthetics in analyzing the dynamics of Christian conversion, then consent to the divine excellence incarnate in Jesus and in people whose lives resemble his, by motivating justifying faith, discloses to graced, intuitive perception that Jesus and the realities and ideals that he embodied define the *summum bonum*, the supreme excellence and beauty that measures all other finite, human expressions and embodiments of beauty and excellence.³⁶

Similarly, by teaching one to invoke sound logical principles in authenticating and rejecting specific Christian doctrines, the insights born of natural intellectual conversion contribute significantly to what Lonergan called methodological doctrines. I have, for example, argued elsewhere that the Peirce's logic requires significant revisions in the presuppositions that ground Lonergan's own theory of method.³⁷

Finally, when transvalued in faith the ethical insights yielded by both personal moral conversion and political conversion function in the development of Christian moral theology. The ideal of the kingdom that Jesus

³⁶ See Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., " 'Incarnate Excellence': Jonathan Edwards and an American Theological Aesthetic," *Religion and the Arts* 2 (1998) 423-42; "Conversion: Beyond the Impasses of Individualism," in *Beyond Individualism: Toward a Retrieval of Moral Discourse in America*, ed. Donald L. Gelpi (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame, 1989) 1-30.

³⁷ Donald L. Gelpi, S.J., *Inculturating North American Theology: An Experiment in Foundational Method* (Atlanta: Scholars, 1988); Gelpi, *The Turn to Experience in Contemporary Theology* 107-17.

embodied, proclaimed, and transvalued in the light of the paschal mystery endows the committed Christian with the ultimate ideals that both lure and judge the deliberating Christian conscience. The ideal of the kingdom gives ultimate orientation to the Christian conscience, but it does not provide any simple formula for resolving every moral conundrum which Christians must face and resolve. As a consequence, Christian moral teachers correctly invoke the insights born of personal moral conversion and of political conversion in authenticating and rejecting specific moral doctrines.³⁸

³⁸ See William C. Spohn, *Go and Do Likewise: Jesus and Ethics* (New York: Crossroad, 1998).

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