

ABBÉ MIGNE AND CATHOLIC TRADITION

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CHRISTIANITY is essentially based on divine revelation, of which Catholics acknowledge two sources—Scripture and Tradition. By Scripture, Catholics mean the books enumerated as sacred and canonical by the Council of Trent. But what is Tradition? While authors are not quite agreed on the basic definition, it seems best all around to say that Catholic Tradition is the preaching of the magisterium of the Catholic Church. For we learn from the Synoptic Gospels that the magisterium received from Jesus Christ both the command to preach the whole of Christian revelation and the promise of perpetual divine assistance in the carrying out of this command.¹ History tells us that the magisterium has exercised this function through the centuries. Therefore, for us today, for theologians more especially, one source of revelation is the documents which contain the preaching of the magisterium during the past nineteen centuries.

But where are these documents? It is just about a hundred years since a French *abbé* asked himself the same question. Realizing that to locate and especially to acquire these documents was morally impossible for the ordinary theologian, let alone an impecunious *abbé* in an isolated mountain village, he decided to remedy the situation and place the documents of Catholic Tradition within reach of the average French priest. His name was Migne, and his unique endeavors in the service of the Church merit to be recalled after the lapse of a hundred years. His gigantic enterprise will be detailed in the first part of this paper. But his memory naturally suggests the further question whether and how his work could be brought up to date.

ABBÉ MIGNE

Jacques-Paul Migne was born at Saint-Flour in Auvergne, October 25, 1800. After early studies in his home town, he entered the seminary at Orléans in 1817. Since he was too young to be ordained at

¹ Mt 28:16-20; Mr 16:15-16; Lk 24:46-48; cf. Acts 1:1-8; 10:41-42.

the end of his course in theology, he went to the Collège de Châteaudun to teach, showing such remarkable pedagogical skill that the principal of the Collège offered to resign in his favor. Migne was ordained to the priesthood in 1824, but as he had been out of the seminary for three years, he reviewed the whole of his theology before ordination, devoting to it fifteen hours a day for six months.

He was given charge of three small parishes, but for reasons of health was soon transferred to Puiseaux, a town of some size. As parish priest he divided his time between the care of souls and study, already manifesting that combination of patience and energy which later stood him in such good stead. Owing to some local troubles arising out of the revolution of 1830, he was about to publish a brochure, *De la liberté*, on the relations of Church and State. When his bishop disapproved of it, Migne submitted, but soon after, in 1833, asked for his *exeat* from the diocese of Orléans and went to Paris.

Ventures in Journalism.—During his brief pastorate, Migne had experienced the power of the press and formulated plans for harnessing it to the service of the Catholic cause, especially to combat the unbelief and anti-clericalism of the day. Arrived at Paris, he set to work at once to put these plans into execution. He sent out two prospectus, one for a paper to be called *L'Univers religieux*, the other for *Le Spectateur*. Nothing more was heard of the latter, but the prospectus of the former already exhibited that flamboyant style of advertising which he retained till his last ventures: "We shall present," he wrote, "the most Catholic principles bearing on the outstanding events of the day: dances, balls, the theatre, fiction, interest-taking, taxes, divorce, priests' salaries, etc. . . . but with great reserve." His staff was to be picked from "the two religious factions which divide Catholic France"—the Gallicans and the upholders of the rights of the Holy See. He would be obligated to no party, political or religious. *L'Univers religieux* would be "Catholique, avant tout," Catholic, not partisan.

There was some initial success. The first issue of the paper appeared November 3, 1833, and in three weeks it gained 1,800 subscribers. But the success did not last. By trying to serve all parties, the paper alienated them all; besides, *Ami de la religion*, the semi-official organ of French Catholics, found much to criticize in it. In 1836, Migne turned it over to Bailly, who kept it going until Louis Veuillot made

it, under the name *L'Univers*, a first-class daily with which the French government had to reckon.²

Bibliothèque universelle.—By relinquishing *L'Univers* Migne became free to engage in a work of far vaster proportions. Put briefly, his aim was to gather all the treasures of Catholic Tradition and put them at the disposal of the French clergy. It was to be a *Bibliothèque universelle du clergé, ou Cours complet sur chaque branche de la science ecclésiastique*. The library was to consist of two thousand volumes to be issued at the rate of one a week. It was to be a "Bibliotheca universalis, integra, uniformis, commoda, oeconomica." The price was to be so modest that the ordinary French *abbé* could afford the whole set. Migne figured on 10,000 francs the set, or 7,600 francs in advance payment.³

A bold conception. The material which Migne proposed to make accessible lay scattered in the libraries of Europe in the shape of huge tomes, jealously guarded manuscripts, fragments barely catalogued. By no means unaware of the magnitude of the project, Migne in his flashy style compared it to the tunneling of Mont Cenis and to the building of ten cathedrals; it was to be the most colossal enterprise of the century. Would it be more than a dream? To anyone less sanguine it must have seemed fantastic. But Migne had push and vibrated with energy, and though not endowed with superior scholarship or blessed with worldly goods or befriended by wealthy patrons, he was a practical businessman and a born salesman. He was never at a loss for new schemes for raising funds; he knew the value of publicity and would have made his fortune in any trade by sheer dint of advertising skill. Yet, though his claims sounded extravagant, he knew that his wares were worth their price and more. If we add to this the personal traits of untiring patience, boundless self-confidence, and the enviable gift of gathering a staff of devoted collaborators,

² We may add here two more excursions into the field of journalism, which, however, came later in Migne's career. In 1846 he founded the *Voix de la vérité* to furnish legal advice to the French clergy and religious communities; in particular, it undertook to defend priests who had fallen out with their bishops. Since it was looked upon with disfavor by both civil and ecclesiastical authorities, Migne handed it over in 1860 to the then owner of *L'Univers*. But in 1861 he started another journal, meant exclusively for the clergy, *La Voix canonique, liturgique, historique, bibliographique, anecdotique*.

³ We may figure the franc at something less than our dollar.

we can understand how one individual almost realized the ambition of creating a library that would comprise all of Catholic Tradition.

Hell's Kitchen.—Having borrowed the necessary capital from well-wishers, lay and clerical, Migne began by erecting a small printing press called *Imprimerie catholique* or also *Ateliers catholiques* at Petit-Montrouge, a suburb of Paris, popularly known as Hell's Kitchen (*L'Enfer*). Modest at first, the establishment grew and eventually comprised printing-presses, bookshops, composing rooms, store-rooms, a type-foundry, a bindery, with all their appurtenances—everything necessary for quickly turning out books by the thousands. One of Migne's later catalogues concludes with the following boastful notice: "If you desire to see in operation all the arts and processes of typography, you are invited to visit the *Ateliers catholiques* at Petit-Montrouge. Type-founding, stereotyping, printing, binding are all going on at once within the walls of the establishment, and on a scale which is not rivalled by the Imperial Printing Office. In all the processes where it can be utilized, steam-power is employed. Our capacity of production is so huge that we can turn out two thousand quarto volumes every twenty-four hours. A monk of the Middle Ages could not copy in three years the number of pages printed in our establishment in one minute." By the side of his fully equipped printing establishment Migne put up a factory for church goods, where statues, altars, organs, etc., were made at break-neck speed.

Migne envisioned his future library as perfect from the standpoint of typography and bookmaking. The first volumes to leave his press fell far short of his ideal, as he later admitted in an "Avis important" prefixed to the 1863 edition of the *Theologiae Cursus Completus*. But he was not deaf to complaints. He discarded the steam-presses originally installed and returned to the old-fashioned hand-presses, which, while slower, gave better results. To proofreading particular care was devoted. On Migne's payroll were some three hundred men, among them a number of suspended priests whom he befriended and who assisted him as copyists, typesetters, and proofreaders. It was only after the proofs had been read five times that the pages were stereotyped; a copy of the stereotyped page was gone over a sixth time to spot the most elusive printer's mistake. As a result, the cost of proofreading equalled that of typesetting. In the "Avis important"

of 1863 already mentioned, he speaks rather disparagingly of editions similar to his own: they seem to have been proofread by blind men, either because the editors did not realize the importance of accuracy, or because they dreaded the expense. He himself was not afraid to offer twenty-five centimes for every misprint pointed out in the *Patrologia Graeca*.

Early in his career as head of a publishing house, Migne fell afoul of the ecclesiastical authorities. Monseigneur de Quélen, the Archbishop of Paris, while recognizing the value of the publications, thought the whole undertaking to be business pure and simple, and therefore unbecoming a cleric. He ordered Migne to resign as head of the plant. Migne, on his part, believed he saw in the order the jealousy of rival business interests, and since the royal patent was actually made out in the name of his brother, Victor Migne, not in his own, he felt justified in disregarding the Archbishop's injunction. Whereupon his faculties were withdrawn, and he was forbidden to say Mass within the archdiocese of Paris. Undismayed, he walked the five miles to Versailles to say Mass every day for ten years.

Migne is justly famous for his two Patrologies. But these formed only part, and not even the greater part, of his *Bibliothèque*, both as planned and as executed. Besides them he published several series of encyclopedias, dictionaries, collections, etc. In the following pages we shall give a brief account of his major publications. But seeing that the various series often appeared simultaneously, we shall not follow the exact chronological order but shall group them under four heads: *Cursus*, Patrologies, Complete Works of eminent Catholic writers, Encyclopedias.

Cursus.—The floodgates of Migne's Imprimerie opened in 1838, and volume upon volume poured from its presses for thirty uninterrupted years. The first series was *Scripturae Sacrae Cursus Completus*, which appeared between 1838 and 1840. Migne hated to see space wasted on the title page; he added as a sort of sub-title a long description, not too modest, of the contents, claiming that the *Cursus* contained the best commentaries on the Bible found anywhere, that they were selected by bishops and theologians with a European reputation, and that numerous notes would be added for priests to instruct the levites and nourish the faithful. Actually, the commentaries were

taken from such well-known Scripture scholars as J. Bonfrère, Cornelius a Lapide, Natalis Alexander, Dom Calmet, and others; dissertations on particular questions were borrowed not only from Catholic authors, but also from Lutherans, Calvinists, Anglicans, Jews, and others. The set was to consist of twenty-five volumes, but it finally had twenty-eight and sold for 138 francs. The last volume contained sixteen indexes and an atlas. The atlas was lost in later editions; the preface to it consists of a florid eulogy of the work accomplished and an avowal of unconditional submission to the Holy See.

Immediately after the *Cursus Scripturae*, Migne began the publication of the *Theologiae Cursus Completus*, again in twenty-eight volumes and at 138 francs. The method of selecting the works to be included was the same as in the former *Cursus*. The single contributions are given in Latin or in a French translation. With the exception of Tertullian's *De praescriptionibus* and St. Vincent's *Commonitorium*, all are taken from authors who wrote between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries. Some parts were added by "the editors."

Two hundred and thirty-eight writers were laid under contribution for the first two *Cursus*. Though not of uniform excellence, both are still valuable. Of course, one may smile a bit at Migne's evaluation: "Whoever possesses them, may say to himself: I care not what commentaries or treatises of theology are published, for I have the very best on my shelves." But discounting salesman's talk, scholars still find them handy because in them different authors can be conveniently consulted on the same subject.

Beginning with 1842, twenty volumes of *Démonstrations évangéliques* issued from the presses. The editor's avowed aim was to bring together in chronological sequence the best treatises on apologetics in their entirety (*intégralement*). If the series were anything like complete, it would be an invaluable collection of sources for following step by step the development of Catholic apologetics, and for studying its history at first hand. But after starting out bravely with Tertullian, Origen, Eusebius, and St. Augustine, the series suddenly jumps to Montaigne in the sixteenth century. Works of Protestants (Leibnitz), of Anglican divines (Warburton) and of French "philosophes" (Rousseau) are also included; but, in spite of the promise of quoting

“intégralement” (printed in big capitals on the title page), the passages in which the Catholic Church is impugned are generally omitted, and in Volume XVIII a special section, entitled “Révision des démonstrations évangéliques,” sets forth the errors of these non-Catholic authors. The Abbé Chassay wrote the last two volumes. The nineteenth was entitled *Préparation évangélique* and aimed, like its celebrated namesake, the *Praeparatio Evangelica* of Eusebius, to defend Christianity out of the mouths of its opponents. The twentieth volume contains the “Infidel Catechism,” in which modern rationalists and unbelievers, from Rousseau to Strauss and Feuerbach, are cited as involuntary witnesses to the truth of Christianity.

A new series, *Orateurs sacrés* or, with its full title, *Collection intégrale et universelle des orateurs sacrés*, began to appear in 1844. It was to comprise two hundred volumes, but till 1868 only ninety-nine had appeared. The first series, consisting of sixty-six volumes, covered the great French pulpit orators of the three centuries prior to the French Revolution; the second series, in thirty-three volumes, contained not only pulpit orators of the nineteenth century, but also outstanding pastorals of French and Belgian bishops, together with some notable treatises on the art of preaching. Two hundred and fifty preachers are represented in this Collection, and of these, two hundred, including the great masters such as Bossuet, Massillon, Bourdaloue, and others, are reprinted entire.

The last big collection of this kind was the *Summa aurea de laudibus B. Virginis Mariae* in thirteen volumes: “Omnia quae de gloriosissima Virgine Maria Deipara scripta praeclariora reperiuntur,” as the title page announces. Twelve volumes appeared in 1862 and contained the most important works on the Blessed Virgin which had found no place in the two Patrologies, by then almost complete—works by Albert the Great, Canisius, Suarez, Trombelli, Benedict XIV, and others.

Patrologies.—In 1844, Migne set about publishing the work for which scholars have never ceased to bless him. It is the world-famous *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, the pride of his achievement, meant as an easily accessible storehouse of whatever had been written or printed in the cause of the Catholic Church for fifteen hundred years.

The *Cursus* was divided into two series, a Latin and a Greek. Migne

says on the title page of each Greek volume: "Patrologia, ad instar ipsius Ecclesiae, in duas partes dividitur, alia nempe Latina, alia Graeco-Latina." The Latin Fathers were published between 1844 and 1855, and came down to Pope Innocent III (died 1216)—all in all 2,614 writers. This series numbers 220 volumes and four volumes of indexes. The Greek series contains some eight hundred writers, known by name or anonymous, coming down to the Council of Florence (1439). It numbers 161 volumes but originally lacked an index. Between 1857 and 1866, the Greek text appeared with the Latin translation on opposite pages; but from Volume LXIV on, Greek and Latin were placed in parallel columns on the same page. The Latin translation also appeared separately in eighty-one volumes (1856-1867).

There had been many editions of the Fathers before 1844.⁴ Why this new one? Migne gave as one reason the excessive cost of the older editions, which entailed their inaccessibility. A contemporary of Migne estimated that it would require ten years of research and 200,000 francs to acquire a complete set of the Fathers. Other reasons were the growing practice among students of going back to the original sources, the revival of interest in Catholic theology, the new outlook of Catholic historians. To make both series accessible to all, Migne cut the price to the bone. If one subscribed for both, the price was five francs for a volume of the Latin Patrology and eight for the Greek. It was almost like giving them away.

But we had better listen to the good *abbé's* own appraisal: "This work," he says, "is preferable to any other on account of its paper and printing, the convenience of its format, the accuracy of the texts, the cheapness of the volumes, and the inestimable advantage of having in one collection, completely indexed and arranged chronologically, the works of *all* the ecclesiastical writers, including the smallest fragments, hitherto scattered through multitudinous books and manuscripts, very difficult, and in some cases impossible, to obtain." Or again: "Is there any complete edition of the Fathers but ours? Is there any, giving all the authors, complete as to substance, uniform in size and format, correct as to text, cheap in price? Can any priest now say honestly that the Fathers are hard to get or dear to buy?"

⁴ Cf. F. Cayré, *Précis de patrologie* (Paris, 1927) I, 12 f.

Is it not clear that the priest who does not possess them is lacking either in Christian intelligence or in practical faith?"

That the two Patrologies could appear at all is cause for astonishment, seeing that Migne stood alone, without support from governments or the hierarchy. His courage appears still more remarkable when we hear that, a few years previously, a similar project ended in complete failure, though it had the backing of the Pope and of several Catholic rulers, and was guaranteed the use of the Propaganda presses. But to carry out his bold enterprise, Migne needed the co-operation of mature scholars. He applied to Dom Guéranger, abbot of Solesmes, for advice and help. Dom Guéranger suggested Dom Pitra, then prior of Saint-Germain-des-Prés; this young Benedictine, thirty years of age, had taken the Fathers for his favorite study during his seminary days, and his love for them had grown during his stay at Solesmes. He accepted enthusiastically. Both he and Migne agreed that it would be utopian to prepare new critical editions of the Fathers: such a project would consume endless time, and they were in a hurry. It was judged more practical to reprint the best editions already existing but to correct them in accordance with the best manuscripts and to note the more important variants. Three days after his acceptance, Dom Pitra handed Migne an outline of the whole work as well as three lists: one, of the authors to be included; another, of the editions to be used; and a third, of dissertations to be added to the text.

Dom Pitra did a good deal of the basic work of selecting the material. Even after he was made cardinal and went to Rome, he kept sending notes for later volumes. Among the other collaborators were Monseigneur Malou, bishop of Bruges; Forbes of Glasgow; H. J. Floss, professor in the University of Bonn; Oehler, professor at Halle; Nolte of Vienna; H. Denzinger, professor in the University of Würzburg, who supplied Migne with many fragments of patristic texts hitherto unpublished; Caillou, who lent manuscripts from the Benedictine archives; and others. Dissertations on special questions were copied from Baronius, Mabillon, Ballerini, Ruinart, and others. At the suggestion of Dom Pitra, the editions which the Maurists had published in the course of two hundred years were drawn upon considerably; but also Fabricius, Mansi, and Mabillon were utilized.⁵

⁵ For a list of sources cf. L. Marchal, "Migne," *DTC*, X, 1732 ff.

In both Patrologies, the authors follow one another in chronological order, and each is preceded by a sort of introduction, with biographical notes taken from the earliest sources and literary notes culled from the better editions. One of these introductions, P. D. Huet's essay on the life and teaching of Origen, fills 651 columns in Volume XI of the Greek Fathers. In addition, the *Encyclopédie théologique*, of which we shall speak presently, contains a set of five volumes entitled *Patrologie*, published between 1851 and 1859. Arranged alphabetically, it was conceived as a general introduction to the two *Cursus Patrologiae*.

The two *Cursus*, numbering almost four hundred volumes and over half a million pages, were completed in twenty-two years. It is hard to estimate the physical labor involved on the part of editors and collaborators. But we can appreciate Migne's bold pioneering spirit, the extraordinary power of organization, and the genius of order which guided the huge undertaking to a successful conclusion.

Migne was particularly proud of the four volumes of indexes to the Latin Fathers, which appeared between 1862 and 1865. In the generous style of our modern blurbs, he called them the most extraordinary index ever compiled since books began to be written: "What are the twelve labors of Hercules when compared to our 231 Indexes?" he asks challengingly; "what are all other literary undertakings? Child's play. Even the biggest of them is nothing beside ours." The truth is that the indexes demanded the labor of fifty men for ten years and cost half a million francs, not counting the printing. Nevertheless, they have not proved quite satisfactory. There are too many of them, and it is often necessary to consult several before one finds what is wanted. In the end, Migne saw himself forced to compile an "Index Indicum" or "Table des Tables."

Complete Works.—The colossal collections so far enumerated did not exhaust Migne's energy or resources. While publishing the different *Cursus* more or less simultaneously, he also edited, between 1840 and 1868, nearly 150 volumes of the works of eminent Catholic writers. Of these volumes we mention only the more important.^{5b}

Oeuvres de sainte Thérèse appeared in 1841 in four volumes containing not only St. Theresa's own writings, some of them never published or translated before, but also the "Acts" of her canonization and medita-

^{5b} For a complete list of these volumes cf. *ibid.*, col. 1736 f.

tions on her virtues by Cardinal Lambruschini. To meet the wishes of students of mysticism, Migne also incorporated the works of St. John of the Cross, St. John of Avila, St. Peter of Alcantara, and Alvarez, so that the set constitutes a complete library of the flower of Spanish mysticism. Notable also are the three volumes on the history of the Council of Trent by Pallavicini, the *Summa Theologica* of St. Thomas in four volumes, his complete works in twenty-six volumes, the complete works of Bossuet in eleven volumes, the complete works of St. Francis de Sales in nine volumes.

Encyclopedias.—Almost simultaneously with the Latin Patrology Migne began his *Encyclopédie théologique* or *Série de dictionnaires sur toutes les parties de la science religieuse*. J. M'Clintock, a Methodist minister from New Jersey, who visited the Migne plant in 1867, calls this "a literary enterprise so vast that an ordinary publishing house would find its hands full in accomplishing it if it attempted nothing else."⁶

As with most encyclopedias, the articles are arranged alphabetically and were, of course, for the most part, newly written. There were three distinct series. The first began to appear in 1845 and grew to fifty volumes; the second, published between 1851 and 1859, reached fifty-two; the third, appearing at the same time, numbered sixty-six. If a whole series was subscribed to in advance, each volume cost only six francs. The three series are, of course, all in French, and the title page claims that they are "la plus claire, la plus facile, la plus commode, la plus variée et la plus complète des Théologies." Modern scientists will squirm at the titles of some of the volumes; e.g., *Botanique chrétienne*, *Zoologie chrétienne*, *Géographie sacrée*, etc. Professors of apologetics may be interested in two volumes entitled *Dictionnaire des apologistes involontaires* (1853), where the truth of the Catholic religion is proved from its opponents, and where atheism is refuted by atheists, skepticism by skeptics, materialism by materialists, paganism by pagans, Protestantism by Protestants, unbelief by infidels. In 1855, there appeared another *Dictionnaire apologétique* in two volumes, which contain a critical examination of modern scientific systems.

As none of the three series was ever overhauled and brought up to date, the *Encyclopédie* now has little more than antiquarian interest.

⁶ *Methodist Quarterly Review*, 1867, p. 422.

The Reverend Mr. M'Clintock just mentioned called them even in his time "the least valuable and reliable portion of the Abbé Migne's numerous publications."⁷

In 1849, Migne began the publication of a *Cours complet d'histoire ecclésiastique* in twenty-seven volumes. Like the *Encyclopédie*, this compilation has no scientific standing.⁸

Results and Outlook.—As we saw, Migne's *Bibliothèque universelle du clergé* was to consist of two thousand volumes. While this figure was never reached, Migne succeeded in publishing, within the comparatively short space of thirty years (1838–1868), almost eleven hundred volumes. A. Bonnetty, editor of the *Annales de philosophie chrétienne*, did not hesitate to say that the work accomplished amounted to a veritable miracle. Migne himself, when nearing the end of the Greek Patrology, felt like exclaiming with St. Paul: "Cursum consummavi"; with the two Patrologies in his hand, he thought he could appear confidently before his Maker.

From the beginning, the public for whom the *Bibliothèque* was primarily meant accompanied the venture with rare sympathy. Tokens of approval and encouragement came from educated laymen, *abbés*, bishops, cardinals, from Rome itself. In 1856 a provincial synod recommended the Patrologies to the clergy. Migne himself once alluded to his seventy thousand customers; and in 1867 he promised a catalog that was to contain a thousand letters of commendation from bishops. A sign of this universal goodwill may be seen in the fact that in one year (1864) four hundred volumes had to be reprinted, while one hundred others, already set up and stereotyped, were waiting to be issued for the first time. Of incalculable service were the advertisements and write-ups of A. Bonnetty in the *Annales*, who kept encouraging Migne to persevere in his laborious task. On the other hand, Catholics of the English-speaking countries do not seem to have patronized the Migne publications. Newman, a zealous student of the Fathers, never mentions them in his extensive correspondence.

As for the business end of his concern, Migne was sure that no better

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 423.

⁸ The modern successor of this *Cours* is the *Histoire de l'Eglise*, published under the direction of Fliche and Martin, which is to contain twenty-four volumes; only seven had appeared before the outbreak of World War II.

savings bank for loans existed in France. "Under no circumstances," he claimed, "not even a total destruction of our stock by fire, can investments made with us be imperilled. We are fully insured in twenty different companies. Again, were it necessary for us to close our business, our sheet-stock, sold as wastepaper to the grocers, and our stereotype plates sold as metal, would more than pay all our debts." Migne was convinced that money invested in his concern was as safe as in the Bank of France.

In 1868, when the printing of the Greek Patrology was nearing its end, Migne began to lay plans for fresh undertakings. He dreamt of a collection of all councils and synods (ecumenical, provincial, plenary) in eighty volumes, more than twice the number of Mansi's huge tomes; he also had in mind to reissue all ecclesiastical writers from Innocent III (with whom the Latin Patrology closes) to the Council of Trent; finally he thought of gathering for the first time the innumerable manuscripts, Latin and Greek, which now lie buried in the great libraries of Europe.

An Act of God.—It was not Migne's fault that his dream of a *Bibliothèque universelle* never came true. In the early morning hours of February 12, 1868, a fire broke out in the press building and quickly spread to the workshops, the store-rooms, even to the factory for the manufacture of church goods. The loss was staggering and for the most part irreparable. The stereotype plates for the *Cursus* and dictionaries, to the number of almost seven hundred thousand, were melted by the heat, and all that was recovered from the ashes was 600 tons of lead. Migne felt especially the loss of a fifth volume of index for the Latin Patrology, an "Index generalis Scripturæ," an "Index patristicus" by Cardinal Pitra, a catalog of Western theologians from Innocent III to the Council of Trent, a catalog of all ecclesiastical writings from apostolic times to the sixteenth century. Also Volume CLXII of the Greek Patrology, containing supplementary material, seems to have disappeared in the fire. From the financial standpoint, the loss of the church goods factory was very trying; organs, statues, altars, carvings—all went up in flames. One organ, valued at 30,000 francs and ready for shipment, was a total loss. To a friend who found him seated amid the ruins, he said with a deep sigh: "Ils ne sont plus." With R. L. Stevenson he might have exclaimed: "I put my heart into the building, and there it lies among the ruins."

According to the last inventory taken, the total loss amounted to six million francs. Since the insurance companies would pay him only a little over a million, Migne instituted a lawsuit, which dragged on for three years. In the end, he recovered three million francs, scarcely half his losses.

The End.—Migne was sixty-eight years old when he saw his dream shattered overnight. But instead of yielding to despair and retiring, and in spite of the utter discouragement which came over him at first, he was determined not to leave his work a torso. A new obstacle came with the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71, but when peace was made, he set to work with his old-time vigor.

The immediate problem to be faced was one of finances. Since the insurance money was slow in being paid and was not enough in any case, he devised a new scheme for raising funds. He not only took up again the manufacture and sale of church goods, but also organized a novel traffic in Mass stipends, accepting them in payment of merchandise and books. When the Archbishop of Paris heard of it, he ordered Migne to discontinue the practice. Migne disobeyed and was suspended.⁹ These new trials, coming on top of the conflagration and all the fatigue and worries which his vast enterprises entailed, undermined his robust health. Also his eyesight was so weakened that he became almost blind. He died at Paris, October 24, 1875, aged seventy-five years less one day.

In 1876 the firm of Garnier Frères bought from Migne's heirs what was left of his business. The Migne editions are still in favor, and in 1929 their annual sale amounted to half a million francs, though not at the original mark-down prices or with the franc at the same level.

Appreciation.—If we take into account the magnitude and rapidity of Migne's publications, we shall not expect perfection. There are notorious defects: misprints, illegible figures, doublets, etc. There are also annoying differences of pagination between the first and the later editions of the Patrologies.¹⁰ Quite fair-minded critics have complained of the absence of an over-all plan, of errors respecting authorship, etc., though Bardenhewer defends Migne against Schwartz's charge of having mixed a good deal of trash with valuable material.

⁹ In 1874 Rome officially declared all such arrangements with Mass stipends illicit.

¹⁰ O. Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* (Herder, 1913), I, 53.

In the "Avis important" of 1863, already mentioned, Migne refers to these charges and refutes them as regards later editions.

The chief complaint always was and is that Migne is not critical enough. Objectively, that is true. At the same time, we must remember two things: first, when Migne began his publication, the science of historical and literary criticism was still comparatively young; secondly, if Migne and Dom Pitra had decided on getting out really critical editions of the Fathers, we should still be without a complete Patrology. No doubt, the Latin *Corpus* of Vienna and the Greek *Corpus* of Berlin are superior to Migne so far as the consistent application of critical methods goes; but both are still far from complete, though the former was begun in 1867 and the latter in 1897.

Migne's staunchest friend, A. Bonnetty, criticized the division of the Fathers into two camps, Latin and Greek, "as if there were two Catholic traditions, that of the Latin and that of the Greek Church." He would have preferred a division in accordance with the place of origin, that is, the place where the individual Fathers taught and wrote. Neither his criticism nor his suggestion is taken seriously by theologians. Migne's division is the usual one and has been adhered to in the patristic publications of Vienna and Berlin. Nor does it imply two Catholic traditions.

But theologians have a juster grievance. It is that Migne has stereotyped, as it were, the confusion regarding the title "Father." To the theologian, the title "Father of the Church" has a very definite connotation, including antiquity, orthodoxy, sanctity, and above all the approbation of the Church, that is, the conferring of the title by the Church. Migne disregarded all those qualifications. His Patrologies are a congeries of whatever has been salvaged from early and later Christian literature, including even some rather unorthodox writings. It was useless for Dom Pitra to object that therefore the title "Patrologia" did not fit the content; Migne could be stubborn.¹¹

In spite of these shortcomings, Father Hurter calls the Patrologies a collection for which we can never be sufficiently grateful, and F. Cayré describes them as "une oeuvre immense, sans égale, et d'un prix inestimable." Not only theologians, but also historians and

¹¹ Cf. F. Cayré, *op. cit.*, I, 1-4; J. M. Campbell, *The Greek Fathers* (New York, 1929), p. 5 ff.

philologists will agree with the following evaluation: "The great value of the collection lies in the fact that, at a moderate cost and in a handy form, a great work of reference was produced, and a whole series of rare and scattered writings gathered together and made easily accessible to the learned world."^{11b}

MIGNE IN MINIATURE

Though access to Migne's library is fairly easy, not every theologian or historian has the thousand volumes within arm's reach or even the four hundred volumes of the two Patrologies. But compendia or enchiridia exist today which can serve as first-aid to the student as well as to the mature scholar. They are gotten out in a much handier format than Migne's tomes but confine themselves of necessity to the bare essentials of Catholic Tradition—just the opposite of Migne's grandiose conception. At present, there are four or five, known all over the world.

The best-known as well as the earliest is undoubtedly the one by Henry Joseph Denzinger (1819–1883), almost a contemporary of Migne and his collaborator on the Patrologies. Denzinger taught dogma at Würzburg in Bavaria for thirty years and in his very first year published *Enchiridion Symbolorum et Definitionum* (1854). Meant as a handy summary of the "symbola definitioesque Conciliorum atque Pontificum," it was to contain only "documenta definitivae auctoritatis." But Father Bannwart, who took care of the tenth edition (1908), added the word "declarationum" to the title of the book, because not all the documents listed were definitive pronouncements of the Church. The *Enchiridion* reached its twenty-third edition by 1937. The order of the documents quoted is chronological; they are not as a rule given in full, but the salient doctrinal passages are selected.¹²

Encouraged by the favorable reception of Denzinger's compendium, C. Kirch, S. J., professor of church history at Valkenburg, Holland, published an *Enchiridion Fontium Historiae Ecclesiasticae antiquae*. In the preface to the first edition (1910), he tells us his conception of

^{11b} J. P. Kirsch, "Migne," *Catholic Encyclopedia*, X, 290 f.

¹² In 1920 E. Cavallera published a *Thesaurus Doctrinae Catholicae*, which contains the same texts as Denzinger's *Enchiridion*, but with additions and in systematic order.

the purpose of the new *Enchiridion*. It was to provide students with documents "de primis Ecclesiae fundatoribus, de eius propagatione, de persecutionibus, de hierarchia, de doctrina christiana, de haeresibus et schismatis, de sacramentis et liturgia, de moribus et institutis christianis, de Ecclesiae cum potestate civili commercio." An ambitious program. Yet it was not all: "Quibus accedunt Conciliorum canones et epistulae circulares, Summorum pontificum decreta, imperatorum leges et rescripta ad doctrinam, constitutionem, gubernationem, disciplinam ecclesiasticam spectantia." Finally, to overlook nothing: "Dantur denique specimina actorum martyrum, epitaphiorum, libellorum papyro conscriptorum." Except that Kirch restricts himself to the age of the Fathers (down to 750), these headings summarize almost the whole of Catholic Tradition.¹³

Stimulated likewise by the success of Denzinger's *Enchiridion*, M. J. Rouet de Journel, S. J., then professor at Ore Place, Hastings, published in 1911 an *Enchiridion Patristicum*. As Denzinger's idea had been to furnish a solid basis for the theological argument *ex magisterio*, so Rouet de Journel wished to provide the textual foundation for the argument *ex Patribus*. As a rule, the texts already contained in Denzinger and Kirch are not quoted. The *Enchiridion* reached the twelfth edition by 1942.¹⁴

Rather a supplement to Denzinger is the *Enchiridion Biblicum* published in 1927 by the Biblical Commission at Rome. It is a collection of the more important ecclesiastical documents bearing on Scripture, especially on its divine origin and inerrancy.¹⁵

MIGNE'S DREAM

On the title page of each volume of the two Patrologies, the claim is made that they are a "recusio chronologica omnium quae exstiterunt monumentorum Catholicae Traditionis," a reprint, in chronological

¹³ Similar to Kirch's *Enchiridion* is a Protestant work, *Quellen zur Geschichte des Papsttums und des römischen Katholizismus*, by Carl Mirbt, professor at Göttingen; it appeared first in 1895 and reached the fourth edition in 1924. C. Sylva-Tarouca, S.J., published *Fontes Historiae Ecclesiasticae Medii Aevi* (1930); the first volume covers the period from the fifth to the ninth century.

¹⁴ The same author also published an *Enchiridion Patristicum Asceticum* (1930).

¹⁵ It was partially translated into English by the Benedictines of St. Meinrad, Ind., under the title *Rome and the Study of Scripture* (2d ed., 1937).

order, of all the extant documents of Catholic Tradition. Whatever may have been Migne's concept of Catholic Tradition, his program, as expressed in this sub-title, was only partially realized. But supposing the true concept of Tradition as the preaching, explicit and implicit, of the magisterium, we may ask whether Migne's program was at all feasible. If one were intent upon gathering up all the extant documents of Tradition, where would he have to go? Or supposing that the collection were a reality, what would it contain?

Catholic theology answers this question, at least in a general way, in the treatise *de locis theologicis* or *de fontibus revelationis*. Bearing in mind its teaching, we may group the documents to be gathered into five sections.

1) *Ecclesiastical Documents*.—The official documents emanating from popes and bishops would evidently occupy the first place in such a collection. For a document of Catholic Tradition is one which forms a link in the long chain of witnesses by which Catholic doctrine has been handed on through the centuries and can therefore be traced back to the Apostles. Now, the official documents of the magisterium, which contain its explicit teaching, primarily constitute these links. Therefore, whatever documents of this kind have been preserved would have to be accorded first place in such a *corpus Traditionis*.

But which are the official documents of the magisterium?

Without aiming at completeness or careful distinctions, we may group them under five heads: (a) doctrinal definitions, dogmatic decrees of ecumenical councils, symbols of faith, etc.; (b) papal bulls, briefs, encyclicals, apostolic letters, allocutions, sermons, etc.; (c) official catechisms for the universal Church; (d) decisions of the Holy Office, the Congregation of the Index, the Biblical Commission; (e) pastorals of bishops, official diocesan or provincial catechisms, statutes of diocesan, provincial, plenary synods, etc.

As we saw, it was only toward the end of his publishing career that Migne conceived the plan of gathering these documents into a huge collection. For him, as for many theologians of his day, Catholic Tradition meant the "teaching of the Fathers," with the meaning of "Fathers" left rather vague. Moreover, while the two Patrologies include writers as late as the twelfth and fifteenth centuries, he seems

to have drawn a line at the Council of Trent. But if we accept the modern definition of Catholic Tradition, such a line is inadmissible. The preaching of the magisterium of the twentieth century has as much weight and authority as that of the magisterium of the second or the fifth century. Christ, in His parting command, set no limit to its preaching, nor to the time when He would be with His apostles and their successors.

Therefore a *Cursus Traditionis Catholicae*—to adapt Migne's terminology—would have to contain all ecclesiastical documents issued from the first to the twentieth century. It would be an expansion of Denzinger's *Enchiridion*, but would certainly comprise more than the eighty volumes Migne figured for it.

2) *Fathers*.—The word "Fathers" in a wide sense includes all Christian writers—known by name or anonymous—of the earlier centuries, so that "patrology" becomes the equivalent of early Christian literature. Migne, deaf to the protests of Dom Pitra, actually took the term in this wide sense. But so do Bardenhewer, Rouet de Journel, Cayré, and others. Bardenhewer says explicitly: "The science [of patrology] may well be defined as the history of early ecclesiastical literature," though he then goes on to explain that "it is not so much the profession of Christianity on the part of the writer as the theologico-ecclesiastical character of his work that brings it within the range of Patrology."¹⁶

But then, as far as Catholic Tradition is concerned, the writings pertaining to this vast literature must be further classified.

a) First of all, there are the works of the early popes and orthodox bishops. Up to the fourth century, these were called "Fathers," and it is to them that the word generally refers in ecclesiastical documents;¹⁷ even today the bishops assembled at synods or councils are called "Fathers"—a title which harks back to that earliest usage. If official, the writings of this first group pertain to the ecclesiastical documents, our first section.

b) In the strict theological sense, as already noted, Fathers are early Christian writers—prior to the seventh or eighth century—distinguished for their sanctity and the excellence of their doctrinal

¹⁶ *Patrology* (Herder, 1908), p. 5.

¹⁷ As, for instance, *DB*, 254-74, 303, 320, 336, 783.

expositions, especially of their biblical exegesis. It was for these two qualities that they received the personal approbation of the magisterium, which may have been general or special or very special. Not all popes or orthodox bishops of the early centuries are numbered among the Fathers of the Church in this sense; neither, vice versa, are all Fathers of the Church bishops or popes. Since, however, the vast majority of the Fathers did belong to the magisterium, the bulk of their writings, too, would fall under our first section.

c) There is a third group, *viz.*, the writings of those early Christians who find no place in the two preceding groups. Outstanding among them are some—not all—of the “Apostolic Fathers” (e.g., the *Didaché*) and all so-called “ecclesiastical writers” (e.g., Clement of Alexandria, Origen, Tertullian). They did not belong to the magisterium, nor do they have the personal approbation of the magisterium.¹⁸

3) *Theologians*.—The “age of the Fathers” or the “patristic age” was succeeded by the “age of the theologians.” Theologians, in the technical sense, are those Catholics—men or women, cleric or lay—who, after the Fathers, devoted themselves under the supervision of the magisterium to explaining, confirming, defending the Catholic faith. The title applies primarily to the Scholastics of the Middle Ages, who were supposed to be masters of philosophy and all branches of theology, above all, of scripture exegesis. While the upper limit of the age of theologians is generally said to be the age of the Fathers, there is no unanimity on the lower limit. Some would close the age of theologians with the Council of Trent or, at the latest, with the French Revolution. But, in accordance with what has been said on the magisterium, it seems preferable to deny that the lower limit has yet been reached and that it will ever be reached as long as there is a Catholic theology.

¹⁸ We may add here a list of the English translations of the Fathers: the *Oxford Library of the Fathers*, as it is briefly called, or with its full title *The Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church anterior to the division of East and West* (1838–1885). Inaugurated by Keble, Newman, and Pusey, it consists of forty-three volumes and five unattached numbers. *The Ante-Nicene Christian Library*, begun in 1866 under the editorship of Roberts and Donaldson, contains twenty-four volumes; it was republished in America under the editorship of A. C. Coxe. In 1886, Philip Schaff inaugurated *A Select Library of Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, of which twenty-seven volumes appeared.

Migne set a precedent for a *Corpus Theologorum* in several of his publications: *Scripturae Cursus completus*, *Theologiae Cursus completus*, *Démonstrations évangéliques*, *Oeuvres de sainte Thérèse*, etc. Many works of theologians are contained in the later volumes of the two patrologies, because Migne took the term "Fathers" in a wider sense. But to be fully representative, a *Corpus Theologorum* would have to comprise the works of Catholic theologians of all centuries since the close of the age of the Fathers. It would, of course, include all branches of Catholic theology: dogmatic, moral, and pastoral theology, mystical theology, exegesis and canon law, missiology, apologetics, and controversial literature; church history, too, would find a place in it: history of dogma, of councils, of theology, of heresies and schisms, of the relations between Church and State.

4) *Doctors of the Church*.—The official doctors or teachers of the Church are the popes and bishops, and they alone; for they alone are the legitimate successors of the Apostles, and it is through them that Catholic doctrine is handed on officially from generation to generation. But "Doctor of the Church" has also a special technical meaning; it is a title bestowed on certain Catholic writers who greatly excelled in sanctity and theological learning. Among the Doctors of the Church are Fathers and theologians, popes, bishops, and ordinary priests. Their number was always small; at present (1946) it is twenty-eight.

The works of the earlier Doctors of the Church are, of course, contained in Migne's patrologies or in his *Cursus* or in separate editions. But no complete *Corpus Doctorum Ecclesiae* exists as yet.

5) *The Faithful*.—Though consisting of the magisterium and the "faithful," the clergy and the laity, the *Ecclesia docens* and the *Ecclesia discens*, the Catholic Church is one. It is one because its faith is one, the faith handed down from the Apostles. No doubt, the principal or active share in this tradition belongs to the magisterium; yet the faithful, too, contribute toward it. Many are the documents of Catholic faith which originated with the faithful rather than with the magisterium. Such are hymns and religious songs, devotions, prayers, pious customs, inscriptions, pictures and statues, etc. Here belong, though not exclusively, the "acts" of the saints and especially the "acts" of the martyrs, many of whom were laymen. Their life and

death in accordance with their faith testify to the preaching of the magisterium. Hence, these manifestations of Catholic faith, too, are documents of Tradition.

No *Corpus Fidelium* exists as yet; none has even been attempted; the material for one is scattered far and wide and is difficult of access.

A NEW MIGNE

With the true idea of Catholic Tradition in mind, we may now ask ourselves: If the *Corpus Traditionis Catholicae* ever became a reality, in what would it differ from Migne's *Patrologies*, *Cursus*, etc.? What should be the qualifications of a twentieth-century Migne?

1) The editor of such a *Corpus* would need first of all a wider outlook than Migne had. Migne's *Patrologies* and *Cursus* bring us, for the most part, writings of the Latin or Greek or French authors. But early Christian literature contains also works in Syriac, Armenian, Coptic, etc. Hence the new series, *Patrologia Syriaca* (1894) by R. Graffin, and its continuation, *Patrologia Orientalis* (1903); also the *Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium* (1903) by Chabot; and others. For Catholic Tradition in later centuries and especially today, the outlook would have to be world-wide—as wide as the extent of the Catholic Church in the various centuries.

This fact would confront the editor with a problem which Migne had to face in his Greek Patrology—that of language. Undoubtedly, to be scientific, the new Migne would bring the original text, whatever be the language (e.g., a Chinese catechism). But since it would be futile to presume that all modern theologians are familiar with all the languages spoken within the Catholic Church, we should need translations, as Migne provided his customers with a Latin translation of the Greek Fathers. Besides, as we shall see presently, every contribution to the *Corpus* should be accompanied by a modern introduction. What should be the language of both translations and introductions?

Apart from the Latin translation of the text of the Greek Fathers, Migne could employ the French language in his *Patrologies* and *Cursus*. Of the four reasons for this choice which he gives in the first volume of indexes to the Latin Patrology the first was the most cogent: the Patrology was printed in France, and the French were

by far his best customers. If we abstract from the particular country in which the new corpus would be published, arguments might be brought forward today for English, French, German, or Italian. Each would have its advantages but also serious disadvantages. It seems that these modern languages must yield to Latin. The *Corpus Traditionis* would no doubt appear in a definite country, but it would appeal to the hundreds of thousands of Catholic priests of the Latin rite, who, though widely differing in their mother tongue and in the extent of their linguistic studies, are one in knowing Latin.

2) Of prime necessity would be an over-all plan, such as Migne neglected to draw up before undertaking his *Bibliothèque universelle*. The *disiecta membra* of Catholic Tradition should be joined in a *Corpus*. An all-embracing plan would not only comprise all sections of Catholic Tradition, but also co-ordinate them without overlapping or duplicating. Perhaps it would be best to retain the chronological order of the documents, as do Denzinger and the modern compendia. Such an order would enable the student to see the progress of dogma and theology, so much valued today.

3) While Migne has proved the possibility of including in one *Corpus* all the Fathers, the literary output of theologians has been so enormous that a *Corpus* of all theologians seems a physical impossibility. If we consult Hurter's *Nomenclator* or the index to Cayré's *Précis de Patrologie* or Grabmann's *Geschichte der katholischen Theologie*, we shall find that the number of Catholic theologians who have left us their writings, printed or in manuscript form, is truly staggering. A choice imposes itself. It would be unwise and untheological to gather everything written on the different theological branches since the age of the Fathers. Quality should replace quantity. There would be no sense in perpetuating third-rate and fifth-rate work. While probably no two scholars would agree on every name and title that deserves immortality from the standpoint of Catholic Tradition, yet, apart from works whose standing in theological literature is disputed, agreement on the vast majority would not seem impossible. Migne's own *Cursus* could hardly serve as models, because many of the authors incorporated in them are decidedly inferior in quality.

4) To be of scientific value, the origin, integrity, and nature of the works contained in a *Corpus Traditionis* would have to be established as far as possible. Consequently, there would have to be introductions,

abreast of modern scholarship and written anew to acquaint the student with the scientific standing of the single documents inserted. Models of such introductions are those found in the *Bibliothek der Kirchenväter* published by Kösel and Pustet between 1911 and 1931.

5) As theologians are aware, neither all five sections nor all documents of any one section have the same dogmatic value. It would therefore be a welcome innovation if a new Migne would contain an appraisal of each of the documents listed. This is done nowhere, not even in our enchiridia like that of Denzinger, yet a document of Catholic Tradition receives its standing from its dogmatic value. A few general principles on the relative importance of the documents of Tradition must here suffice.¹⁹

First place in this respect must be accorded to ecclesiastical documents, because, if official and juridical, they contain the explicit teaching of the magisterium; the dogmatic value of the other four sections, as distinct from the magisterium, rather rests on their more or less close connection with the magisterium. On the other hand, not all documents of the magisterium, not even of popes, contain doctrines to be held *de fide*.

By right, the works of the Doctors of the Church, whether Fathers or theologians, deserve second place among the documents of Tradition. For these writers earned the special approbation of the magisterium, either because they rendered unique services to the Church in the controversies with heresy, or because they advanced the science of theology in an unusual degree. It is for these reasons that their works, generally speaking, have a high dogmatic value, higher than those of the ordinary Fathers and theologians. But again, not all the works of the Doctors of the Church are of the same weight.

The dogmatic value of the Fathers who belonged to the magisterium, or who have been officially declared Doctors of the Church, must be judged in accordance with what has just been said. But if we take the Fathers of the Church without distinction, their dogmatic value is rated in accordance with well-known theological principles; it is only their firm consent that makes their testimony to Catholic doctrine a certain source of revelation. The writings of "ecclesiastical writers,"

¹⁹ Cf. H. Dieckmann, S.J., *De Ecclesia* (Herder, 1925), Tract. III, cc. 2-4; L. Choupin, *Valeur des décisions doctrinales et disciplinaires du Saint-Siège* (Paris, 1912).

deficient in orthodoxy or sanctity, have no dogmatic value in themselves. But they have a historical value which accrues to them from their proximity to the apostolic age. In them we have the earliest witnesses—after the New Testament—to the faith, the hierarchy, the practices and institutions of the early Church. This is especially true of the Apostolic Fathers.

There is more than a difference of age between Fathers and theologians. First, while most of the Fathers belonged to the magisterium, very few theologians did; and those who did, generally wrote their works on theology before they were made bishops or popes. Secondly, all Fathers are recognized by the Church as saints, but comparatively few theologians have been canonized. Above all, theologians, with few exceptions, lack that individual approbation which the magisterium bestowed on the Fathers. It is for these reasons that only the combined voice of all the theologians has a decisive doctrinal value, not the pronouncements of this or that theologian, of this or that age, of this or that school.

Most difficult to judge is the dogmatic value of those documents in which the laity have expressed their faith in the past. Of greatest value are the genuine "Acts" of the martyrs, which contain a profession of that faith for which the martyrs were ready to die. As for the other documents, judgment on their doctrinal value must be left to expert theologians.

6) The least satisfactory publications of Migne are his encyclopedias. Nor do they really pertain to Catholic Tradition. But during the last half century, French scholars of the first rank have brought out encyclopedias far superior in scholarship and of lasting value: *Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique* (d'Alès), *Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Vigouroux) with a *Supplément* (Pirot), *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* (Vacant, Mangenot, Amann), *Dictionnaire d'Archéologie chrétienne* (Cabrol, Leclercq), *Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie* (Baudrillart), *Dictionnaire de droit canonique* (Naz), etc. American Catholics brought out the *Catholic Encyclopedia*; German Catholics, the *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche*.

CONCLUSION

What are the chances of this dream of a *Corpus Traditionis* coming true? Catholic scholarship of the middle of the twentieth century is

certainly in a far better position to realize it than was Migne a hundred years ago. No doubt, the initial cost would be considerable; but there are today advertising geniuses as bold as Migne, and Catholics with ample means might be found to aid the project financially. Nor need the size of the new Migne be a deterrent either to the publisher or the buyer. A full-size *Corpus Traditionis* would, of course, dwarf the *Encyclopedia Britannica* with its 160 miles of words; it would probably double and treble Migne's own *Bibliotheca universalis*. But the mechanical problems of producing such a library would be hardly as great as Migne had to face, and there now are microfilms by which tomes can be reduced to less than vest-pocket size.

More important would be the choice of a competent board of editors. Yet with Catholic scholars from all countries to draw on, this task does not seem hopeless. What is needed above all to make the new *Corpus Traditionis* a reality, is a man, cleric or lay, with Migne's own unbelievable vision and courage.