

New Trends in Ecclesiology

Stanley L. Jaki

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Foreword

When I first met Fr. Jaki, I was a graduate student at Catholic University of America pursuing a doctorate in Church history. During a visit to a local Catholic bookstore, I had stumbled upon Fr. Jaki's edition of St. John Fisher's *The Defence of the Priesthood*, published by Real View Books¹. I asked the clerk behind the counter if this publisher planned on publishing more sixteenth-century Catholic books. Although the clerk did not know, she said I could call the publisher and gave me its phone number. Later that day I called the number, which turned out to be Fr. Jaki's home phone number. He answered my call and brusquely asked who I was. I told him my name and that I was a graduate student in Church history. Before I could say anything else, he asked me for my phone number and ordered me, "Hang up the phone." Automatically I did as I was told, having no idea what had just happened. A minute later the phone rang; it turned out to be Fr. Jaki, who said he did not want a poor graduate student to pay charges for a long-distance call. We then had a long conversation about the state of Catholic higher education. From that day, I spoke with Fr. Jaki regularly until his death.

Over the years Fr. Jaki never ceased to amaze me. While working on my dissertation on St. Robert Bellarmine's Christology, I once asked him some questions about Bellarmine's interaction with Galileo, a very minor point in my dissertation. He answered with patience, and shortly thereafter he penned his brief booklet, *Galileo Lessons*². He was obviously brilliant, but he was also very kind. He once invited my family up to Princeton for a picnic. After the lunch, he took us on a tour of Princeton, driving us by the house where Albert Einstein lived and giving us a guided tour of Princeton Chapel and Firestone Library. Afterwards he bought ice cream for our then five children at a nearby ice cream shop. When I taught at

¹SAINT JOHN FISHER. *The Defence of the Priesthood*, Fraser, MI 1996.

²S.L. JAKI, *Galileo Lessons*, Pinckney, MI 2001.

St. Charles Borromeo Seminary in Philadelphia, I visited him frequently in Lawrenceville, New Jersey, and I never left his apartment without small, thoughtful gifts for my wife and children.

New Trends in Ecclesiology

Stanley L. Jaki was born in Győr, Hungary, in 1924. He was one of five children, and it is a testament to the piety of his home that his two brothers entered religious life. He was a voracious learner, in part because he wanted to be able to explain his faith to others. He believed he had a vocation to the priesthood at the age of seven or eight³. Upon graduating from Jedlik Preparatory School and Junior College, he entered the Benedictine Order in 1942. He completed his undergraduate training in philosophy, theology, and mathematics in 1947. In 1948, Bishop Giuseppe Placido Nicolini, O.S.B. (1877-1973) ordained him a priest in Assisi.

After finishing his undergraduate training, Fr. Jaki moved to Rome to attend the Benedictine Pontifical University of Sant'Anselmo to pursue his doctorate in theology. While at Sant'Anselmo he studied systematic theology under Dom Cipriano Vagaggini (1909-1999), the noted liturgical theologian. In 1949, a chance remark brought Fr. Jaki's mind to the issue of ecclesiology as a possible dissertation topic⁴. It was Vagaggini who insisted that Fr. Jaki write his dissertation on modern trends in ecclesiology and that he write it in French.⁵ The Benedictine Abbot of Ligugé extended his hospitality to Fr. Jaki, allowing him to finish his dissertation at the Benedictine abbey near Poitiers during the late summer and early fall of 1950⁶. In November 1950 he successfully defended his dissertation and received his doctorate in December of that same year.

His dissertation, *Les tendances nouvelles de l'ecclésiologie*, translated here as *New Trends in Ecclesiology*, was later published in Rome in 1957 by Herder⁷. In 1963, Herder reprinted the work on the eve of the Second Vatican Council; no doubt this was in view of the conciliar theme dealt with in the *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, known by its incipit, *Lumen gentium*. In *Lumen gentium*, the council sought to finish what had been left undone by the First Vatican Council, which had intended to promulgate a dogmatic

³S.L. JAKI, *A Mind's Matter: An Intellectual Autobiograph*, Grand Rapids, MI 2002, p. 18.

⁴*Ibid.*, p. 128.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 129.

⁶*Ibid.*, p. 223.

⁷S.L. JAKI, *Les tendances nouvelles de l'ecclésiologie*, Rome 1957.

constitution on the Church, *De ecclesia*, but was interrupted in its efforts by the Capture of Rome on 20 September 1870. The Second Vatican Council, however, was deeply influenced by the new trends in ecclesiology, and some of its essential insights made their way into the dogmatic constitution. In 1962, the American branch of Herder and Herder approached Fr. Jaki about an English translation of *Les tendances*. Fr. Jaki declined this offer for two reasons. First, he was already working on *The Relevance of Physics*⁸, the work for which he is perhaps best known. Second, he recognized that a new translation would involve an immense amount of work for him to account for the many developments that had occurred over the ten years since he first wrote it.⁹

Fr. Jaki's dissertation intended to explain the development and the accompanying strengths and weaknesses of these new trends in ecclesiology. In his Introduction, Fr. Jaki sets forth with balance and skill the precise problem that confronted Catholic ecclesiology in the 20th century. Ecclesiology as a distinct discipline in theology is a relatively recent phenomenon. It is striking that St. Thomas Aquinas did not even have a treatise on ecclesiology in either his *Commentary on the Sentences* (1252-1256) or in his *Summa Theologiae* (1265-1273).¹⁰ The first work in ecclesiology was James of Viterbo's *De regimine christiano*, which appeared around 1302.¹¹ His work was soon followed by others; these early ecclesiological works were written in the context of the conflict between Boniface VIII (r. 1294-1303) and Philip the Fair (r. 1284-1305). It was in the context of the subsequent controversies in the 15th and 16th centuries, such as those with the Franciscan Spirituals, John Hus, the Great Western Schism, conciliarism, and finally the Protestant Reformation, that ecclesiology continued to develop. These were largely conflicts over the external structures of the Church.¹² In response to these crises in the Church, theologians such as Juan de Torquemada, O.P. (1388-1468), Thomas Netter (c. 1375-1430), and St. Robert Bellarmine (1542-1621) constructed an apologetic ecclesiology, which as Fr. Jaki notes, concentrated on defending the visible and sacramental structures of the Church. The "Catholic masterpiece" of post-Tridentine ecclesiology

⁸S.L. JAKI, *The Relevance of Physics*, Chicago 1966.

⁹S.L. JAKI, *A Mind's Matter*, p. 131.

¹⁰YVES CONGAR, L'idée de l'Église chez S. Thomas d'Aquin, *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques*, 29 (1940), p. 32.

¹¹JAMES OF VITERBO, *De Regimine Christiano: a Critical Edition and Translation*, ed. and trans. R.W. Dyson, Boston 2009, p. xvi. JACQUES DE VITERBE, *Le plus ancien traité de l'église: Jacques de Viterbe, De regimine Christiano (1301-1302)*, ed. H.-X. Arquillère, Paris 1926.

¹²S.L. Jaki, *New Trends in Ecclesiology* [this book], p. 20.

was St. Robert Bellarmine's *Disputationes* (1586-1593), and in many respects Bellarmine set the tone for the next 400 years of ecclesiology, which culminated in the manualists of the late 19th and 20th centuries.

It cannot be stressed enough, however, that the ecclesiology of these authors is not reducible merely to a defense of the Church's juridical structures, which Fr. Jaki acknowledges. These works were not written as systematic accounts of the Church but were controversial works intended to defend that which was being denied. In all these controversies, both sides basically agreed about the underlying spiritual meaning of the Church, so ecclesiology remained preoccupied with the Church's juridical structures until the 19th century. Fr. Jaki is balanced in his examination of this structural emphasis of the earlier ecclesiologies. He does not, for example, ridicule Bellarmine's definition of the Church as overly concerned with the Church's juridical structures. Nor does Fr. Jaki criticize 18th and 19th century eccesiologists as "unreconstructed ossified manualists." Instead, he is able to recognize the value of the contributions of post-Tridentine ecclesiologists and to acknowledge that these insights were "entirely in keeping with the needs of the time."¹³ What he thinks needs to happen is that the insights of post-Tridentine ecclesiology need to be united to the "legitimate aspirations of modern thought."¹⁴

Despite the post-Tridentine focus on the external and juridical structures of the Church, Fr. Jaki holds that these theologians have been underestimated by those in the new tendencies. As Fr. Jaki notes, post-Tridentine ecclesiology wished to remain faithful to the existential element in the tradition, and recent research had shown precisely that. For Fr. Jaki, post-Tridentine ecclesiology was strictly apologetic only in appearance;¹⁵ these treatises retain an indisputable value, but there was also a "narrowing of the horizon" within these works.¹⁶

In any case, the proponents of these new trends desired to go beyond the confines of the post-Tridentine ecclesiology. What precisely was the aim of these new tendencies in ecclesiology? Fr. Jaki explains that the aim of these new tendencies in ecclesiology was

to remedy the unilateralism of post-Tridentine ecclesiology. The new ecclesiology under development is distinguished above all by an effort to integrate all that can enrich our knowledge of the

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 25.

Church. If this ecclesiology seeks a return to the sources, it no longer does it in the sense of positivo-scholastic theology: it does not limit the notion of “source” to Scriptures, the Fathers, or the current magisterium, “but in a broader way, to all the great works of Christian thought capable of fertilizing and nourishing theological reflection.”¹⁷

The heart of this new existential ecclesiology is what Fr. Jaki calls a “living ecclesiology.” If it is to be a living ecclesiology, then “it must embrace the existential, vital, concrete side of the revealed truth on the Church; it must reflect the unity of the objective and the subjective, the primordial aspiration of modern theological thought.”¹⁸ Or to put it in other words, the goal of the existential ecclesiology is “to make the mystery of the church a mystery lived by the faithful.”¹⁹ Fr. Jaki does not think that theology in general or ecclesiology in particular should be reduced to one’s subjective experience. He notes that to “reduce all the revealed data on the Church to this experience would be tantamount to a sort of modernism, but to ignore this ecclesial experience would lead one to become bogged down in abstraction.”²⁰

Fr. Jaki clearly thinks that these new trends are a positive development in ecclesiology, but he does not feel obliged to denigrate their ecclesiological predecessors in order to see the good in the new trends. Fr. Jaki sees within Catholic ecclesiology an internal logic that bridges the apologetic post-Tridentine ecclesiology and the new tendencies.²¹

In chapter one, Fr. Jaki surveys the genesis of the new trends in ecclesiology as it arose in the religious romanticism of the 19th century, where, for the first time in centuries, Christianity is presented in its “concrete and vital aspect.”²² In the 19th century, Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838) and St. John Henry Newman (1801-1890) gave ecclesiology a new tendency that emphasized both the internal reality of the Church and the Christian’s participation in this lived reality. Fr. Jaki notes that Newman and Möhler “approached the mystery of the church from the side of the ‘religious subjects.’”²³ To put it another way, Möhler and Newman were interested not only in the objective reality of the one true Church of Christ but also in how

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 26.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 91.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

²² *Ibid.*, p. 32.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

the Christian lived and appropriated this objective reality at the subjective level. The attacks of Feuerbach, Marx, and Nietzsche forced Catholics to come to a better understanding of the mystery of the Church and its interior life. It was not initially a reaction to post-Tridentine ecclesiology but rather an attempt to reinvigorate ecclesiology in light of new pastoral problems. As this new trend in ecclesiology continued to develop, theologians became increasingly critical of post-Tridentine ecclesiology, finding it hopelessly antiquated. The culmination of this new tendency took place in the 1930s²⁴.

In chapter two, Fr. Jaki discusses the attempt of Catholic ecclesiologists to integrate the insights of non-Catholic ecclesiologies. Here Fr. Jaki examines three movements within non-Catholic Christianity: the dialectical theology of the Swiss Reformed theologians Karl Barth (1886-1968) and Heinrich Emil Brunner (1889-1966), the Orthodox theology of the neo-Slav movement exemplified in the work of Aleksey Stepanovic Khomyakov (1804-1860) and Sergei Nikolaevich Bulgakov (1871-1944), and the theology of the Protestant ecumenical movement. Fr. Jaki admits that post-Tridentine ecclesiology as it evolved in the midst of controversy must be completed to become more fit for a dialogue with the separated Christianities in a contemporary situation. With this remark Fr. Jaki does not intend to imply any prejudice against an apologetic ecclesiology, but it must also be recognized that the ecclesiological problem in the early 20th century has changed in many ways. In post-Tridentine ecclesiology, historical or critical questions tended to dominate ecclesiology, but by the 20th century other questions arose. Perhaps chief amongst these was to show that the specific values of the non-Catholic Christians, however partial they may be, belong by right and in fact to the Catholic fullness.²⁵ Fr. Jaki, as always, is insightful, and his language anticipates both *Lumen gentium* and *Unitatis redintegratio*'s statement that there exist elements of sanctification and truth outside of the Church but which "belong by right to the Catholic Church."²⁶

In the third chapter, Fr. Jaki then explores the *resourcement* movement within Catholicism and its impact on ecclesiology. The effects of *resourcement* on ecclesiology were largely positive for Fr. Jaki. As he notes, ecclesiology is

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 28.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93.

²⁶ *Lumen gentium*, 8. *Unitatis redintegratio*, 3. P. HÜNERMANN, H. HOPING, R.L. FASTIGGI, A.E. NASH, and H. DENZINGER, eds., *Compendium of Creeds, Definitions, and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, 43rd edition, San Francisco 2012, 4119, 4189.

not any longer an ecclesiology of controversy that seeks its biblical and patristic support; rather, its aim is to find the elements of a dogmatic, harmonious, and balanced treatise on the Church in the richness of Tradition.²⁷

These Catholic ecclesiologists sought to return to the sources, namely Scripture, the Fathers, the great Scholastics. Theologians such as Ferdinand Prat (1857-1938), Émile Mersch (1890-1940), Lucien Cerfaux (1883-1968), and Jean Daniélou (1905-1974) explored the idea of the Mystical Body as contained in the Scriptures, restoring that doctrine to its proper role in theology and insisting on the importance of our incorporation into Christ and His body. Fr. Jaki then turns to the works of Louis Bouyer (1913-2004) and Henri de Lubac (1896-1991) who, through a return to the Fathers, presented the richness of the patristic thought on the Mystical Body. Finally, Fr. Jaki explores Congar and de Lubac's attempt at a scholastic synthesis nourished by the Scriptures and the Fathers. These theologians argue that for Saint Thomas, the Church is a concrete and living reality intimately united to Christ, the Head of the Church. While Fr. Jaki finds this revitalization of the Tradition by a return to the sources an important insight of the trends, he also thinks any attempt to return to the sources carries with it many dangers. First, there is the danger of falling into a "romantic historicism";²⁸ for Fr. Jaki as for Pope Pius XII, a reinstated past is simply not possible. Second, one has to be careful in reappropriating the past, for there is a great difficulty in discerning what was and is an integral part of the Tradition from elements that are wholly temporally contingent.²⁹

In his fourth and final chapter, Fr. Jaki focuses on the new trends' attempts to systematically analyze the Church as a mystery. Fr. Jaki traces this trend back to its origin in the 19th century in the work of Möhler, Clemens Schrader (1820-1875), Johannes Franzelin (1816-1886), and Matthias Scheeben (1835-1888). Building on the work of these theologians, later theologians deepened the Christological aspect of the Mystical Body, particularly with respect to the unity between the Head and members. Karl Adam (1876-1966) and Charles Journet (1891-1975) desired to deepen the understanding of the internal and spiritual life of the Church. Other aspects of ecclesiology were influenced by these new trends as well, such as a new emphasis in the theology of the four notes or marks of the Church. In the wake of the First Vatican Council, Catholic theologians tended to focus

²⁷S.L. JAKI, *New Trends in Ecclesiology* [this book], p. 165.

²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 165.

²⁹*Ibid.*

on the Roman primacy, reducing in practice the *via notarum* to the *via primatus*. In the new trends, theologians began to emphasize the internal, rather than jurisdictional, aspects of the marks. Post-Tridentine theologians tended to emphasize the doctrinal, sacramental, and governmental aspects of the mark of unity as expressed in their visible dimensions. In the new trends, however, theologians emphasized the interior and mystical union of each Christian with Christ and other Christians. They also emphasized that the mark of holiness includes the need for subjective holiness. Finally, the problem of the Church as a mediator in which one finds salvation takes on a new importance. Here Fr. Jaki examines the works of theologians such as Joseph Fenton (1906-1969) and Karl Rahner (1904-1984).³⁰

Fr. Jaki and Physics

In 1950, after completing his doctorate, Fr. Jaki's superiors, rather than returning him to his monastery, in part due to the repressive policies of the Hungarian Communists, sent him to teach at the School of Theology of St. Vincent College in Latrobe, Pennsylvania.³¹ From 1951 he taught systematic theology at the major seminary there. While teaching, he also took courses in American history, literature, mathematics, and sciences in the same college in order to secure American recognition of his undergraduate training done in Hungary. He received his B.S. from St. Vincent College in 1954. His life appeared set as a systematic theologian.

Fr. Jaki's life, however, took a providential turn in December of 1953 when he lost his voice due to complications from a tonsillectomy. He had two major hemorrhages in the weeks following his operation.³² His laryngologist recommended that he refrain from speaking: a great difficulty for a Benedictine committed to daily hours of communal prayer in a Benedictine monastery and a professor teaching in a seminary. Rather than repine, Fr. Jaki took this opportunity to pursue one of his side interests: physics. He began doctoral research in the Graduate School of Fordham University, New York, under the mentorship of the late Dr. Victor F. Hess, the discoverer of cosmic rays and a Nobel-laureate. A condensed form of Fr. Jaki's thesis was published in the June 1958 issue of *Journal of Geophysical Research* (pp. 378-89) under the title, "A Study of the Distribution of Radon, Thoron, and

³⁰On the importance of Fr. Fenton see, of C.D. WASHBURN, (ed.), the *Introduction to J.C. FENTON, The Church of Christ*, Tacoma, WA 2016, pp. i-xviii.

³¹S.L. JAKI, *A Mind's Matter*, p. 20.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 21.

their Decay Products above and below the Ground.”³³

In 1965, Seton Hall invited Fr. Jaki to serve as lecturer, giving him a light teaching load because of his weak voice but allowing him much latitude in research. This was an ideal position for Father, and he flourished in it. His life took another turn when, ten years after losing his voice, he was able to speak again. With the growing recognition of his research, Seton Hall raised his position to Distinguished University Professor. He was able to lecture and did much of it throughout the world in prestigious ways, becoming a leading contributor to the philosophy of science and the history of science, particularly in their relationship to Christianity. He gave over fifty lectures at universities, colleges, and science institutes around the world, including the Gifford Lectures at the University of Edinburgh in 1974-1976. He served as an honorary member of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. His work was also recognized in 1970 when he was given the Lecomte du Nuoy Prize and in 1987 when he was awarded the Templeton Prize.

Fr. Jaki’s Later Ecclesiological Works

After decades of working on the relationship of science to religion, Fr. Jaki returned to the theme of his dissertation, existential ecclesiology, in the late 1990s.³⁴ In his dissertation, Fr. Jaki had noted that no “complete and synthetic” account Newman’s existential ecclesiology existed,³⁵ and it was Fr. Jaki himself who began to fill this lacuna four decades later, publishing seven books on Newman, and republishing four of Newman’s works. At the heart of Fr. Jaki’s works on Newman is the conviction that the professional “Newmanists” had fundamentally misread Newman, reducing him to a kind of country gentleman or Oxford don.³⁶ For Fr. Jaki, Newman was not only a gentleman and a brilliant theologian, but also at his core he was an evangelist most concerned with the salvation of souls.

In 2001, Fr. Jaki published his *Newman to Converts: an Existential Ecclesiology*, with over 500 pages dedicated to Newman’s existential eccle-

³³S.L. JAKI and V.F. HESS, “A Study of the Distribution of Radon, Thoron, and their Decay Products above and below the Ground,” *Journal of Geophysical Research* 63 (1958), pp. 373-390.

³⁴Fr. Jaki first takes up this theme in S.L. JAKI, *The One True Fold: Newman and His Converts*, Royal Oak, MI 1998. Reprinted in S.L. JAKI, “Convert and Converts: Existential Ecclesiology,” in *Newman’s Challenge*, Grand Rapids, MI 2000, pp. 79-106.

³⁵S.L. JAKI, *New Trends in Ecclesiology* [this book], p. 47.

³⁶S.L. JAKI, *Newman to Converts: an Existential Ecclesiology*, Pinckney, MI 2001, pp. 32, 65, 133, 220, 394. S.L. JAKI, *Apologetics as Meant by Newman*, Port Huron, MI 2005, p. 366.

siology. In this work, Fr. Jaki is at pains to demonstrate that Newman was primarily a Christian apologist concerned with the salvation of souls; he examines Newman's correspondence with about thirty individuals who were contemplating crossing the Tiber and becoming Catholic. To these souls, Newman was always insistent that the Catholic Church alone was Christ's one true fold of salvation and that one had an obligation to join her. In a vivid passage, Fr. Jaki discusses in what sense he considers Newman's ecclesiology to be existential:

His letters to converts convey his visceral conviction about a truth which was an existential truth in his eyes. It was not existential in the trivial sense which Sartre grafted onto that word, or even in that very incomplete supernatural sense which made Kierkegaard unduly famous. Nor would he have real use for some Newmanists' characterization of his thought as "existential" just because he expressed it vividly, rather than in a typical theological style. Newman's theological discourse was existential because he kept in focus that one's eternal existence was at stake in the decision about whether or not to convert. He singled this out as his *sole* reason for converting. As a Catholic he never ceased to underline this point by calling prospective converts' attention to the Roman Church as the "One True Fold," that is, the *only* legitimate framework of salvation.³⁷

For Newman, the Catholic Church is the "One True Fold"; it is therefore the duty for all men to enter into her.

According to Fr. Jaki, nothing is more foreign to Newman's mind than those ecumenical initiatives that come at the expense of truth. Newman was not like some contemporary ecumenists who speak of a partial realization of the Church in other Christian denominations or of the Catholic Church's need to be open to eventual transformations that can clear the path towards unity.³⁸ Of course, neither Newman nor Fr. Jaki denied that there were many elements of sanctification or truth within Protestantism, but they also held that the defects present in non-Catholic Christian bodies, especially those descended from the Protestant Reformation, were such that they could not be the one true Church of Christ. Fr. Jaki quotes Newman's explanation of the phrase, "Outside the Church there is no salvation":

³⁷S.L. JAKI, *Newman to Converts*, pp. 8-9.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 326.

there is no religious body but One in which is salvation. The contrast is between the Catholic Church and other bodies. We have grace through her, if we are her members; but we never can receive grace from the Church of England, though she had a dozen sacraments instead of two, any more than an infant could receive nourishment from the breast of its dead mother.³⁹

Newman was convinced that only the Catholic Church is the one true Church of Christ. One sees this most clearly, for example, in Newman's claim that the Catholic Church and the Anglican are "two different religions." Newman thought that the distinction between venial and mortal sin alone, "as carried out in practice, makes Catholicism a different religion from Anglicanism."⁴⁰ It was this stark contrast that led Newman, in part, to encourage conversion without delay.

In a second work, *Apologetics as Meant by Newman*, Fr. Jaki returned to Newman's existential ecclesiology.⁴¹ Fr. Jaki's work begins with a survey of the last century of research on Newman's apologetics, noting various lacunae in that scholarship which he seeks to fill. The remainder of the work is then divided into three parts. Fr. Jaki sets out to demonstrate that for Newman the central element in his apologetics is the enormity of sin. The first part is an extended discussion of perhaps Newman's greatest apologetic work, *Essay in the Aid of the Grammar of Assent*. Fr. Jaki argues that the "sense of sin" is critical to understanding Newman's apologetic. Most "Newmanists", according to Fr. Jaki, have focused to a great extent on the philosophical underpinnings of the work, such as the illative sense or probabilities. Indeed, the treatments by Sheridan Gilley and Ian Ker do just that. This aspect of Newman's thought is no doubt important, but Fr. Jaki emphasizes that the central idea of the text is really Newman's proof for religion based on "the great teacher of religion", conscience, which provides man with a sense of sin and guilt, from which other elements of religion then follow. This is why Newman refers to any apologetics that does not take into consideration man's sin as simply "counterfeit and hollow".⁴² As Fr. Jaki highlights, Newman thought that the apologetics in Giovanni Perrone's (1794-1876) *Praelectiones* was virtually absurd since the work "knew nothing of the reality of heretics as realities".⁴³

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 394.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 384.

⁴¹ S.L. JAKI, *Apologetics as Meant by Newman*, Port Huron, MI 2005.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

The second part of Fr. Jaki's *Apologetics as Meant by Newman* is concerned with Newman's existential treatment of the four notes of the Church in the *Anglican Difficulties*. Fr. Jaki emphasizes that Newman begins with the note of holiness, to which Newman devoted two lectures while he devoted only one to each of the other notes. Fr. Jaki cites a striking quotation of Newman on just how important the Catholic Church takes holiness:

The Catholic Church holds that it were better for sun and moon to drop from heaven, for the earth to fail, and for all the many millions who are upon it to die of starvation in extremest agony, so far as temporal affliction goes, than that one soul, I will not say should be lost, but should commit one single venial sin, should tell one wilful untruth, though it harmed no one, or steal one poor farthing without excuse.⁴⁴

In this way the Church takes her stand against sin and ultimately conquers it by lifting sinners “out of the mire,” by providing a supernatural solution to sin: forgiveness. The citations offered by Fr. Jaki are so powerful and plentiful that they cannot be dismissed. One can only wonder how the vast cadre of Newman scholars could have failed to address the matter. For each of the three other notes—catholicity, apostolicity, and unity—Fr. Jaki emphasizes that Newman begins with sinful human nature.

New Trends in Ecclesiology is an important work in ecclesiology. Cardinal Ratzinger—then head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith—personally told Fr. Jaki that his *Les tendances* held “a place of honor” in his library.⁴⁵ We all owe Fr. Jaki a great debt for writing *New Trends in Ecclesiology*, and we owe Caterino Tommaso, T.O.P. many heartfelt thanks for bringing it to a wider audience through his excellent and long-awaited translation.

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⁴⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 12, 182.

⁴⁵S.L. JAKI, *A Mind's Matter*, p. 17.

Introduction

It has become common for a few decades now to speak about the renewal of ecclesiology. In all areas of Catholic theology, an idea, certainly traditional, but neglected for a long time, has again received special attention: the idea of the Mystical Body of Christ.¹ It is not that the Church had ceased to live by this mystery, “but the recent movements of ideas brought it to the forefront of the teaching commonly imparted to the faithful.”² So it will not be surprising if one finds, in leafing a bit through any recent work on the Church, statements similar to that of Fr. De Lubac: “... the grace of the Holy Spirit. For it is indeed to this grace, in our opinion, that must be ascribed the present fervent propagation and the vigorous life of the traditional doctrine of the Mystical Body.”³ It is interesting to see that even non-Catholic circles have been quick to notice this change in our theology. “The chapter *De ecclesia*”, La Piana writes, “has become, in the systematization of modern Catholic theology, the central point from which the whole theology receives its light and in which finally converge all the lines of development.”⁴ But also outside the Catholic Church we see a reevaluation of the idea of the Church: we cite, for example, the name of S. Bulgakov among the Orthodoxes, who, while admitting that “for the exposition of the fundamental principles of orthodoxy, one may choose different starting points,” is also of the opinion that “in our times the doctrine on the Church seems to be, from the dogmatic viewpoint, the most important and essential.”⁵ Among the Protestants, the Lutheran bishop, O. Dibelius,

¹Cf. A. WIKENHAUSER: *Die Kirche als der mystische Leib Christi nach dem Apostel Paulus*, Münster (W) 1937, p. 2.

²P. GALTIER: *L'Encyclique sur le corps mystique du Christ et la spiritualité*. RAM 22, (1946), p. 44.

³Catholicisme. *Les aspects sociaux du dogme*. Paris 1941. 2nd ed., p. 251. Eng. tr., *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*. San Francisco 1988, p. 324.

⁴Recent Tendencies in Roman Catholic Theology. HTR 15, (1922), p. 267.

⁵Thesen über die Kirche, in *Procès Verbaux du premier Congrès de théologie orthodoxe à Athènes*, 26 nov.–6 déc. 1936, published by H.S. Alivisatos, 1939, Athens, p. 127.

rightly called our century the century of the Church⁶, and the words of the theologian of Zürich, E. Brunner, are no less meaningful with regard to the orientation of Protestant theology: “The question of the essence of the Church is a decisive question for theology”⁷. The Catholic theologian Brinktrine was therefore right to say that no theme is as current *intra et extra muros* as that of the Church⁸.

In short, the existence of new trends in ecclesiology is now an indisputable fact. As a confirmation, let us mention the vast literature, of course not always of equal value, but which nevertheless imposes itself on those who intend to approach the mystery of the Church as theologians. What is most characteristic of these new trends is the intention to go beyond the limits of post-Tridentine ecclesiology. This reaction so dominates these tendencies that, without knowing the structure of treatises on the Church written with an apologetic aim, one cannot penetrate their true meaning.

It should also be noted that post-Tridentine ecclesiology is only one phase, although the most decisive, of a long theological development starting from the late Middle Ages and ending in the 19th century. Under the pressure of the Church-State struggles, the Protestant Reformation, and the progressive secularization of Western civilization, theological thought had to become more deeply aware of the mystery of the Church and in distinguishing it from the “Christian culture,” had to elaborate better its correct relation to the natural order. It seems to us, then, that the new tendencies of ecclesiology, despite the apparent opposition between them and post-Tridentine ecclesiology, are only the culmination and realization of the internal logic which has been at work in Catholic ecclesiology for many centuries. To discover and retrace, at least in broad outlines, this internal logic is one of the valuable results of the new research in ecclesiology.

Fr. J. Leclercq revealed this underlying idea while studying the first phase of the long development leading to the current trends. His research on the ecclesiological thought of John of Paris⁹ draws our attention to the imbalance which has characterized the relationship between the two orders, natural and supernatural, with the overly accentuated predominance of the latter. The Augustinian tradition has in fact presented the state, having solely in mind the supernatural order, as a punishment for original sin. A more objective estimation of the natural order—in short, the influence

⁶Das Jahrhundert der Kirche, Berlin 1926.

⁷Das Gebot und die Ordnungen, Zürich 1932, p. 508.

⁸Von der Struktur und dem Wesen der Kirche. TG 26, (1934), p. 21.

⁹Jean de Paris et l’ecclésiologie du XIII^e siècle, Paris 1942.

of Aristotle's philosophy¹⁰—penetrates at first only the theological schools; “ecclesiasticity” dominates the medieval atmosphere so much and for so long that theologians do not consider the mystery of the Church as the object of a particular analysis. This is one of the main reasons why one would seek in vain in St. Thomas a separate treatise on the Church, although his theological work is a treasure-trove of profound ecclesiological ideas.

The conflict between Philip the Fair and Boniface VIII was a symbol for the theologians of the radical changes in the structure of medieval ecclesiasticity and provoked their reflection on the Church, seen as opposed, if not *de jure*, at least *de facto*, to secular society¹¹. Thus, already the first drafts of an ecclesiology, distinct from the other treatises, justify the comparison of Fr. Congar: the treatise of the Church was elaborated as the Temple of the Jews was built after the Exile: sword in hand.

At first sight, the works produced during this conflict are focused around the problem of the temporal power of the Roman pontiffs, but in fact the dogmatic ideas determine the solution. To defend the idea of direct power, Gilles of Rome relies on the Augustinian tradition;¹² Giacomo da Viterbo, who is the first to elaborate the marks of the Church as a supernatural kingdom, hesitates to take a clear-cut position in the quarrel¹³, but John of Paris favors clearly the idea of indirect power¹⁴. His reasons are rooted in the Christological consideration of the Church: the latter must reproduce and prolong the humanity of Christ, which has not exercised secular power, so the two hierarchies, ecclesiastical and secular, must be distinct, in practice too. Likewise, since the unity of the Church resides above all in an attachment to the Head of the Mystical Body, the temporal factors of unity can only play a secondary role in it. But, regarding the practical way of establishing a balance between the Pope and the king, John of Paris yields to a wisdom that is too human: it is to a third party, the Council, that he assigns the role of referee.

The first to see “that the regime ceases to be sacred,” John of Paris wants “to substitute, as a means of influence of the Church on the State, the power of order and of the magisterial authority to the power of jurisdiction. What he proposes... is the Christian formation, by faith and the

¹⁰The Politics of Aristotle, translated in 1260, served as a basis for the secular tendencies.

¹¹Cf. J. RIVIÈRE: *Le problème de l'Église et de l'État au temps de Philippe le Bel*. Paris 1926.

¹²*De ecclesiastica potestate libri tres*. Ed. at Florence, 1908.

¹³*De regimine christiano*, reissued recently by X. ARQUILLIÈRE: *Le plus ancien traité de l'Église*. Paris 1926.

¹⁴Cf. J. LECLERCQ: *Op. cit., passim*.

sacraments, of the laity, who will themselves make a Christian politics, or more exactly, who will make as Christians a truly human politics, which will apply in contingent matters the immutable principles of human rights restored by Christ and respected by the Church”¹⁵. Unfortunately, the tranquil development of these ideas has been made impossible by the exaggeration of the “spirituals” of the Franciscan order¹⁶ which is also at the base of the ecclesiological work of Ockham¹⁷. Later Wyclif¹⁸ and Hus¹⁹ only broaden and synthesize these errors and force theologians to focus on the outward appearance of the Church. In this sense the ideas of the Carmelite Thomas Netter²⁰, the most prominent opponent of these heresies, move. The conciliar theories in vogue during the 15th century did not take long to help in rendering suspect the interior aspect of the Church, to such an extent that cardinal Torquemada limits his *Summa de Ecclesia* to the following points: the universal Church, the Roman Church, the primacy of the Sovereign Pontiff, ecumenical councils, schismatics, and heretics²¹. While posing as the defender of the Roman primacy, Torquemada, with his doctrine on the *potestas ex consequenti* of the chair of Rome, joins those who had already desired a certain restriction of the pontifical power in civil matters²². In short, we can say that the major results of this first phase of Catholic ecclesiology can be reduced to two: a strong emphasis on the external aspect of the Church and the tendency to distinguish it from the whole of the medieval civilization²³.

The ecclesiological work of Luther, which determined the position of his Catholic adversaries and also the path of Catholic ecclesiology, is closely

¹⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 164.

¹⁶Cf. E. BENZ: *Ecclesia spiritualis Kirchenidee und Geschichtstheologie der franziskanischen Reformation*. Stuttgart 1934.

¹⁷“Dialogus” of 1343; *Super potestate Summi Pontificis octo questionum decisiones*, (between 1339 and 1342), ed. by M. Goldast: *Monarchia romani imperii*, 3 Vol. Amsterdam 1631. Cf. also A. HAMMAN: *La doctrine de l’Église et de l’État chez Occam*. Paris 1942.

¹⁸*Tractatus de Ecclesia*, 1378-9. Ed. by J. Loserth, London 1886; *De potestate Papae*, ed. by J. Loserth, London 1908.

¹⁹*Liber egregius de unitate Ecclesiae*, 1413. Printed in Mainz in 1520. The Church by J. Hus, translated with notes and an introduction by D.S. Schaff. New York 1915.

²⁰*Doctrinale antiquitatum Fidei Ecclesiae Catholicae adversus Wiclevitas et Hussitas*, compiled in 1415-1429.

²¹*Summa de Ecclesia*, Romae 1489.

²²Cf. J. LECLERCQ: *L’idée de la Royauté du Christ pendant le Grand Schisme et la crise conciliaire*. AHDLM 17, (1949), pp. 249-265.

²³See P. THEEUWS: *Jean de Turrecremata. Les relations entre l’Église et le pouvoir civil d’après un théologien du XV^e siècle*, Louvain 1943.

related to the problems of the previous epoch we have just seen. He was the heir of an Augustinianism interpreted under the specter of nominalism and could not avoid the influence of the heretical spiritualism of Hus, whose *De Ecclesia* he read, as it turns out, in October 1519. Luther, in fact, pushed to the extreme the distinction between the exterior and the interior. The former will be identified with the natural order, corrupted by sin, while the latter will stand for the totality of the supernatural order. Thus, Luther remained faithful to his principles when he compared the Mystical Body to a soul, to a strictly invisible society, as W. Wagner shows us in his study of the idea of the Mystical Body in the young Luther²⁴.

So the Reformation with its ferocious denial of all mediation of the sacraments, of the priesthood, of the episcopate, of the Roman primacy, could not fail to inspire on the Catholic side an ecclesiology where the hierarchy and the apologetic demonstration of the visible Church override any other problem. The Catholic masterpiece of this period, the *Disputationes* of Bellarmine²⁵, already betrays by its very structure how polemical problems take priority. The Sovereign Pontiff, the Church assembled in council, the members of the Church militant, suffering, and triumphant, are the principal aspects of a book which has not ceased to exert a profound influence on Catholic ecclesiology.

Admittedly, it would be an exaggeration to say that this epoch knew only the exterior aspect of the Church. J. Willen, in a study on the idea of the Mystical Body in Catholic theology of the 16th century²⁶, concludes that, even if one cannot find a systematic exposition of the Mystical Body in most of these theologians, their thoughts are nonetheless as valuable as the writings of our time²⁷. It is true that these theologians, anxious to show that sinners do not cease to remain members of the Mystical Body, could not explore the deepest aspect of this mystery; we can also say that they too often gave free rein to their fantasy by seeking a meticulous parallelism between the members of the human body and the various functions of the Church. But it is no less true that these authors wanted to remain faithful to the tradition and that their doctrine has often been underestimated or

²⁴Die Kirche als Corpus Christi Mysticum beim jungen Luther. ZKT 61 (1937), pp. 29-98, see especially pp. 84-85.

²⁵Disputationes de controversiis christianæ fidei adversus hujus temporis haereticos. Course taught at the Roman College, 1576-1588.

²⁶Zur Idee des Corpus Christi Mysticum in der Theologie des 16. Jahrhunderts. Ca 4 (1935), pp. 75-86.

²⁷*Art. cit.*, p. 76.

depreciated by the current trends²⁸.

Willen's wish²⁹ that Fr. Mersch's somewhat general inquiries on that era³⁰ be supplemented by special studies has been achieved at least to a certain extent. These researches, led for the most part by Fr. Tromp, yielded varied results. With regard to the ecclesiology of A. Pigge, L. Pfeifer³¹ duly noted that one would find in him neither the outline of a theology of the Mystical Body nor a systematic consideration of the mystery of the Church, against the opinion of H. Jedin who sees precisely in the idea of the Mystical Body the gist of the theology of Pigge³². Another study on F. Toledo³³ illustrates rather the distinctions sought by the School of Salmanticenses regarding the relationship between the Head and the members. Again, the theological work of Suarez has offered the most abundant material in this respect. But here too, F. Spanedda's conclusion³⁴ reflects only a rather general idea. It is a pity that his work neglected a very important duty: to point out the influence of Suarez on Passaglia and Franzelin and through the latter on the Schema *De Ecclesia* of the Vatican Council.

In conclusion, one could not show more clearly that traditional ideas survived in this era. Even if one takes the Roman Catechism, the writings of St. Peter Canisius, of the Franciscain J.A. Delfini³⁵, of Cardinal Hosius³⁶ and the most beautiful parts of Bellarmine's controversies³⁷, the judgment of Fr. Mersch on this period remains more or less definitive: "All in all, they have spoken little, and with little emphasis, of the Mystical Body"³⁸.

²⁸*Art. cit.*, p. 86.

²⁹*Ibid.*

³⁰É. MERSCH: *Le Corps Mystique du Christ. Etudes de théologie historique.* Paris 1951. 3rd ed., vol. 2, pp. 159 ff. Eng. tr., *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*, Milwaukee 1938, pp. 451 ff.

³¹Ursprung der katholischen Kirche und Zugehörigkeit zur Kirche nach Albert Pigge. Würzburg 1938, p. 54.

³²Studien über die Schriftstellertätigkeit Albert Piggés. Münster (W) 1931, p. 74.

³³J. UDVARDY: *Doctrina Francisci Toledo de Corpore Christi mystico.* Coloczæ 1939.

³⁴L'Ecclesiologia di Francesco Suarez. Sassari 1944. "Tanto la *Defensio Fidei*, quanto il trattato *De Fide*, benché non abbiano una trattazione speciale della teoria mistica, ne sono intimamente pervasi." p. 73.

³⁵De Ecclesiae natura et constitutione doctrina Joannis Antonii Delphini OFM Conv. (1506-1560), eximii theologi in concilio Tridentino. Padua 1943, by A. Garani.

³⁶G.M. GRABKA: *Cardinalis Hosii doctrina de Corpore Christi mystico.* Washington DC, 1945.

³⁷S. TROMP: *De bifirmi conceptu tum Christi mystici tum Corporis Christi mystici in controversiis S. R. Bellarmini.* Gr. 23 (1942), pp. 279-290.

³⁸*Op. cit.*, Ed. 3, Vol. II, p. 298. Eng. tr., p. 529 — This is also the conclusion of the study of M. Ramsauer on the teaching in post-Tridentine catechisms on the Mystical

The following centuries were not more favorable to a better understanding of the Church. Against Jansenism, in love with a chimerical restoration of the early days of the Church, emphasis was placed on the central power³⁹. The clumsy revival of St. Augustine's ideas by the Jansenists⁴⁰ discredited for a long time the restoration of honor to the interior aspect of the Church. In fact at the Vatican Council several bishops denounced the phrase "Mystical Body" because of "its Jansenist flavor"⁴¹. The secularism and state absolutism of the 18th century in turn brought a strong emphasis on the Church as an autonomous and perfect society. This tendency was completed in the definition of the infallibility of the Roman Pontiff and in a particular emphasis on the magisterium against modernism.

Instigated by the Reformation, post-Tridentine ecclesiology seemed to take a strictly apologetic position. But it was only in appearance. In reality this ecclesiology was a rather heterogeneous set of dogmatic and apologetic viewpoints. The clear separation of these two aspects took place only after a long development—motivated, on the one hand by the changes effected within Protestantism and, on the other hand, by the uninterrupted efforts of Catholic ecclesiologists regarding the marks of the Church⁴². In fact, since the 17th century, there has been a continual narrowing of the content of these marks, considered as apologetic proofs. As for the mark of sanctity, a considerable number of apologists have found it expedient to eliminate the sanctity of the teaching and the means, to rely instead on the heroism of the canonized saints. In the mark of unity, the unicity, the exclusivity, and the Roman primacy predominate. With regard to the notion of catholicity, it is preferred to speak of the qualitative catholicity, and a decisive importance is no longer attributed to quantitative and spatial catholicity. Similarly, the triple apostolicity of origin, doctrine, and hierarchical succession is narrowed down more and more, as an apologetic mark, to the succession of the Roman Pontiffs.

Is it necessary to attribute these changes, which have only exacerbated during the last hundred years, solely to the influence of the modern mental-

Body. (*Die Kirche in den Katechismen*. ZKT 73 (1951), pp. 129-169; pp. 313-345).

³⁹A decree from Rome on January 24, 1645, condemns two writings of the Jansenist M. de Barcos: "De l'autorité de Saint Pierre" and "La grandeur de l'Église romaine," Paris 1645—cf. DB. 1091. Among the refuters it is enough to note I. Habert: *De cathedra seu primatu singulari S. Petri in ecclesia catholica apostolica et romana, libri duo*. Paris 1645.

⁴⁰Cf. the condemned theses (72-77) of P. Quesnel on the Church of the just and of the predestined. DB. 1422-1427.

⁴¹See in Mansi, Vol. 51, col. 761.

⁴²G. THILS: *Les notes de l'Église dans l'apologétique catholique depuis la Réforme*. Gembloux 1937.

ity, so suspicious of apologetic discussions and so inclined to a sort of symbolism and relativism? Or is it necessary to add to these causes, no doubt important, the new interconfessional situation, namely, the large Protestant groups that have become adogmatic during the last century: the unionist movement and the indisputable renaissance of certain non-Catholic communities? Without wishing to downplay the importance of these motives, we should not forget that the need to insert the ecclesiological topic, removed from many of our apologetic treatises, into a dogmatic system has gone parallel with a clearer increasing awareness of the supernatural mystery. It is not by chance that this theological revival is partly a reaction against the past century, so strongly dominated by naturalism.

But at the same time the scholarly exposition of the idea of the Church, as it is presented in the *De Ecclesia* manuals, has remained in the traditional, thus mostly apologetic, framework since the Reformation. Let us take a look at some randomly selected recent textbooks. J. Bainvel⁴³ divides his treatise into two parts: the Church in itself and the Sovereign Pontiff. In the first part he distinguishes a rather apologetic section, concerning the institution and the marks of the Church⁴⁴, and another, rather scholastic, section, which deals with the nature, the members, and the powers of the Church and its relations with civil society⁴⁵. The topic of the mystery of the Church itself is restricted to a few pages⁴⁶. The second part of the book is devoted entirely to the Roman primacy, a uniquely apologetic development⁴⁷. It can be said without exaggeration that the *De Ecclesia* manuals reflect, almost without exception, Bainvel's position: developments mostly on the external, hierarchical, sociological aspect of the Church, with some notes on its mystery. In other words: besides the detailed developments on the structure of the Church, life, which this structure must serve, is almost entirely neglected.

Some of the manuals that boast of having followed the Angelic Doctor are not an exception either: they are far from having penetrated his true thought about the Church. Without discussing in detail the intention of J.V. de Groot, who thought he could find in the works of St. Thomas all the elements of an apologetic treatise of the Church⁴⁸, it seems to us that

⁴³*De Ecclesia Christi*. Paris 1925.

⁴⁴Pp. 23-81.

⁴⁵Pp. 82-176.

⁴⁶Pp. 91-98: the Church in her relationship to Christ, to the Spirit, to Mary. See also pp. 111-118 on the communion of saints.

⁴⁷Pp. 177-233.

⁴⁸*Summa apologetica de Ecclesia catholica ad mentem S. Thomæ Aquinatis*. Ratisbonae

the book by G. Paris⁴⁹ does not show as well a sufficient understanding of the ecclesiological ideas of St. Thomas. This judgment will not seem too severe when one sees that the author relegates the doctrine on the Mystical Body to a brief appendix⁵⁰. Among the manuals published in recent years, it is sufficient to mention the one of Zapelena⁵¹ and the one of Vellico⁵², to become persuaded that the horizon of the manuals has not become broader. In addition to the apologetic developments, there are some remarks, at most some theses, on the mystery of the Church.

This insufficiency of the current treatises on the Church has been noted many times in the recent ecclesiological literature. We do not make the exaggerated criticisms condemned by the encyclical *Humani Generis* ours⁵³, but with Mgr. Journet⁵⁴ and with Fr. Congar⁵⁵, we are of the opinion that the desire to retain faithfully the indisputable values of these treatises cannot close the eyes of the theologian in the face of their incontestable defects and that this narrowing of the horizon of our treatises on the Church has also taken place on other treaties, which was quite in the logic of things. With regard to the unifying power of the Eucharist within the Church, Dom J. Simon was to point out, not without profound disappointment, that “if the *Année Liturgique* (of Guéranger) and some rare mystical works had not taken care to put it back into circulation, today it would be a doctrine completely forgotten.”⁵⁶ In any case, what Dom Simon sought in vain in the treatises on the Eucharist, he would have found even less in the manuals on the Church.

This is, however, also the judgment of Fr. Tyszkiewicz, who, after having reviewed the most remarkable manuals, had to note that the idea of the divino-humanity of the Church, i.e., its mystery, is not yet sufficiently clarified by these authors, or its exposition is still too vague⁵⁷. That is why

1906. Ed. 3.

⁴⁹Ad mentem S. Thomæ Aquinatis tractatus de Ecclesia Christi. Taurini 1929.

⁵⁰*Op. cit.*, pp. 63-64.

⁵¹T. ZAPELENA: De Ecclesia Christi, Romæ. Pars apologetica 1946. — It must be noted that the revised and expanded edition of the second volume of this book presents the mystery of the Church much more adequately: De Ecclesia Christi, Pars altera apologetico-dogmatica. Ed. altera emendata. Romæ 1954. Ed. 4. Pars dogmatica (ad usum auditorum) 1940.

⁵²A.M. VELLICO: De Ecclesia Christi. Tractatus apologetico-dogmaticus. Romæ 1940.

⁵³AAS 42 (1950), p. 563.

⁵⁴L'Église du Verbe Incarné I. Paris 1941, p. XVII. Eng. tr., The Church of the Word Incarnate: The Apostolic Hierarchy, Volume 1, London 1952, p. XVI.

⁵⁵Bulletin d'ecclésiologie. RSPPT, 31 (1947), p. 275.

⁵⁶Un bien social: L'Eucharistie, sacrement d'unité. RT 20 (1912), pp. 583-603, pp. 583-4.

⁵⁷S. TYSZKIEWICZ: Où en est chez nous la doctrine de la divino-humanité de l'Église?

we cannot unreservedly subscribe to the qualification of these manuals made by this same Father, when he defines them “our good *De Ecclesia* scholarly treatises”⁵⁸, because they are excellent only from an apologetic viewpoint. And even in this apologetic aspect, Fr. Tyszkiewicz must admit that “our *De Ecclesia* treaties do not bring the Orthodoxes closer to the Catholic Church”⁵⁹.

What is then missing from our textbooks? To answer this question, we borrow from the epilogue of Bainvel’s work a very characteristic passage in which he confesses what he did not say about the Church: “Sed quis dicat pulchritudinem sponsæ Christi, qualis nobis et ostenditur in Scriptura et intuentibus apparet: Pulchra ut luna, electa ut sol, terribilis ut castrorum acies ordinata; qualis ostensa est Joanni: mulier amicta sole et luna sub pedibus ejus et in capite ejus corona stellarum duodecim; vel qualem eam describit idem: civitatem sanctam Jerusalem novam descendentem de cœlo a Deo, ornatam sicut sponsam viro suo... Quis ejus utilitatem... quis maternam in suos amorem?”⁶⁰. Reading these lines is it still exaggerated to repeat with Fr. Congar that the eschatological meaning is lacking in our manuals?⁶¹.

This is the aim of the new tendencies in ecclesiology: they propose to remedy the unilateralism of post-Tridentine ecclesiology. The new ecclesiology under development is distinguished above all by an effort to integrate all that can enrich our knowledge of the Church. If this ecclesiology seeks a return to the sources, it no longer does it in the sense of positivo-scholastic theology: it does not limit the notion of “source” to Scriptures, the Fathers, or the current magisterium, “but to in a broader way, to all the great works of Christian thought capable of fertilizing and nourishing theological reflection”⁶². Our duty will therefore be to delineate all that characterizes these new trends. We will see what their fundamental inspiration, starting point, course, progress, defects, and points already achieved are.

Before undertaking such a work, it must be realized that these new tendencies presuppose a new idea of theological science, quite different from that of positivo-scholastic theology. It is impossible to judge fairly the new tendencies of ecclesiology without taking a stand on the methodological problem. We believe that theological science is not limited to the method

OOP 7 (1941), pp. 370-405.

⁵⁸S. TYSZKIEWICZ: La sainteté de l’Église christoconforme. Rome 1945, p. 4.

⁵⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 6.

⁶⁰*Op. cit.*, p. 235.

⁶¹Bulletin d’ecclésiologie, RSPT 31 (1947), p. 275.

⁶²Bulletin d’ecclésiologie, RSPT 31 (1947), p. 81.

of scholastic theology, although it essentially assumes it as its foundation. Without wishing to characterize scholastic theology superficially as “supernatural metaphysics,” no one will deny that positivo-scholastic theology was correct in going back more resolutely to the texts of the Fathers and to introduce a historical method into theology. Moreover, it should be admitted that the theological renewal has been going on for a few decades, and that the legitimate aspirations of modern thought have also made a significant contribution to the elaboration of a broader synthesis on the Church. The theologian cannot ignore the fact that the different sciences are now analyzing reality not only in itself, but also considering how it manifests itself in subjective consciousness. Moreover, besides the immutable essence of truth, the laws of its engagement in history, in action, are also being researched today, bringing about its development and continual enrichment. Science, conceived either as theological or secular, will therefore comprise many more objects than in its “classical” definition. Consequently, it will also need a greatly renewed method⁶³.

All this is of paramount importance in understanding recent ecclesiology, for it is not only about the elaboration of a dogmatic treatise on the Church; this dogmatic treatise must, moreover, be a living ecclesiology. It must embrace the existential, vital, concrete side of the revealed truth on the Church; it must reflect the unity of the objective and the subjective, the primordial aspiration of modern theological thought. To avoid any misunderstanding and eliminate the accusation of anti-intellectualism, we must emphasize that this existential, vital, concrete aspect has nothing in common with the position of non-Christian existentialist philosophy.

This conception of theological work is opposed to three deviations: it wants to exclude, in the words of the encyclical *Mediator Dei*, not only the attitude of the inert and backward, but also that of those who, “over-eager in their search for novelty, are straying beyond the path of sound doctrine and prudence”⁶⁴. Then, in principle, it disapproves of any relativism under the pretext of the integration of new values, while it remains open to a continual perfecting of sacred science⁶⁵.

Our work then will not resume the critical studies of Oehmen⁶⁶, Koster⁶⁷,

⁶³Cf. Y. CONGAR: *Vraie et fausse Réforme dans l'Église*. Paris 1950, pp. 8-12. Eng. tr., *True and False Reform in the Church*. Collegeville, MN 2011, pp. 11-15.

⁶⁴Eng. tr. on the Vatican website, §8.

⁶⁵Cf. The encyclical *Humani Generis*. Eng. tr. on the Vatican website, §15-21.

⁶⁶N. OEHMEN: *L'ecclésiologie dans la crise. Questions sur l'Église et son Unité*. Gembloux 1943, pp. 1-11.

⁶⁷M. D. KOSTER: *Ekklesiologie im Werden*. Paderborn 1940.

Deimel⁶⁸, Lialine⁶⁹, Holzer⁷⁰, and Bouyer⁷¹ on current ecclesiology. These studies, even if well written, embrace only one aspect of the ecclesiological renewal. Deimel limits himself to the ecclesiology of St. Paul; Lialine only considers the discussion regarding the expression “Mystical Body”; Oehmen speaks only of the tension between the juridical and the mystical Church; Bouyer’s article covers only a part of French-language publications; Holzer’s criticism is restricted to a certain exaggerated tendency in German works of secondary importance. Our research will not be a continuation of Koster’s developments, because on the one hand we try to give a complete picture of these trends and on the other hand our criteria for analysis are quite different from those of Koster. In other words, we will not limit ourselves to criticism, especially since, after having accepted this broader notion of the theology we have just proposed, we will find much less to criticize in these new trends than one may suppose. Moreover, as far as criticism is concerned, it is necessary to distinguish carefully between the criticism of an isolated author and the general ecclesiological movement which has been going on for several decades, if not since Möhler.

Theology, it is readily admitted, is not the work of one or two authors; therefore, to judge equitably about a great renewal, it is not permitted to speak of particular works without considering the general direction of the new and legitimate aspirations. If the theological work requires a certain delay to confront and clarify the ideas, it is the same for the criticism. The words of Newman warn us: one of the greatest mistakes of some critical minds in the Church is the lack of patience... This patience, a condition by which we can arrive at objective and broad information on all the new trends in ecclesiology, will keep us from talking too easily about a crisis in recent ecclesiology. The encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, in our opinion, is above all the culmination of this ecclesiological renewal. The errors it denounces almost never touch the “great ecclesiology”⁷².

Our work will thus be neither a new theory, nor a history of these tendencies, nor a kind of bulletin of ecclesiology; we aim to study this new orientation in what characterizes it: its general mentality, the theological

⁶⁸L. DEIMEL: *Leib Christi*. Freiburg (Br) 1940.

⁶⁹C. LIALINE: Une étape en ecclésiologie. *Réflexions sur l’Encyclique Mystici Corporis*. Ir 19 (1946), pp. 129-152; pp. 283-317; 20 (1947), pp. 34-54.

⁷⁰O. HOLZER: “Christus in uns”. Ein kritisches Wort zur neueren Corpus-Christi-Mysticum Literatur. WW 8 (1941), pp. 24-35; pp. 64-70; pp. 93-105; pp. 130-136.

⁷¹L. BOUYER: Où en est la théologie du Corps Mystique? Rev. SR 22 (1948), pp. 313-333.

⁷²By this expression we distinguish scientific works from popular works.

ideal that it assumes, the objective that it wants to achieve, the problems with which it is interested, its contributions for an enrichment of our theology on the Church, its deficiencies, too, and the dangers it presents. These new trends have been intensifying especially since the First World War. A clairvoyant spirit like A. Palmieri predicted then, in an almost prophetic way, the advent of a new epoch in ecclesiology. “*Mea quidem sententia ætas veniet...*”, he wrote in 1913⁷³; in fact, the new trends reached their peak around 1930. This era is the essential object of our work.

To succeed in characterizing these trends, the points of crystallization had to be found. Above all, it was essential to note the starting point. That is why we start from considering Romanticism, especially Möhler. Closely related to Romanticism, perhaps the most decisive element in the new trends is a vital need that wants to make the mystery of the Church a mystery lived by the faithful. The answer to this interior need is found in the works which intend to give an explanation of the role that the Church holds in Christian life. It is also in this context that deviations and the “crisis” of ecclesiology find their logical place. This is the object of the first chapter of our investigations.

In addition, ecclesiologists have been faced with a renewal of ecclesiology within separate Christianities, in the context of the ecumenical movement. The answers to be given have called for a new position in ecclesiological matters. This new orientation of our ecclesiology, evoked by the need for an ecumenical confrontation, will constitute the second chapter of our work. The third main concern of the new trends is the return to the sources. The works which present to us one or another aspect of the ecclesiology of the Bible, of the Fathers, and of the Scholastics show a remarkably common aspiration, and their analysis will form the third part of our research. Finally, we will speak of studies that rather speculatively address the mystery of the Church.

Understandably, any systematization does some violence to reality. Especially in our case, where we had to assign the works and the authors to one group or the other. Sometimes the historical viewpoint was to be sacrificed to one of systematization; sometimes we were forced to distribute the ideas of an author into several chapters. The source of these difficulties and repetitions lies in an extremely rich literature, and is inevitable, we believe, in a work of this kind.

⁷³Theologia dogmatica ortodoxa. Florentiae 1913. Vol. II, p. 166.

Chapter 1

The origins of the current trends in ecclesiology

1.1 Romanticism. The Tübingen School. Möhler.

We have just said that the most decisive element in the ecclesiological renewal is of a vital order, and we have called it an experience of the Church. It is indeed a quite universal fact that all ages have their own ideas about the Church. Thus, the patristic epoch saw the Church through the idea of the new people and that the same Church is reflected in the thought of the Middle Ages, as the principle of order and peace. The post-Reformation era developed the idea of a militant church, which was entirely in keeping with the needs of the time¹. No doubt the reason for these diversities must be sought in the spiritual attitude peculiar to each of these great periods in the history of the Church. Likewise, every revitalization is rooted intimately in a new experience and therefore, if we live the mystery of the Church differently than the preceding epoch, it is because of a change of mentality that is produced in this domain².

If we seek the origin and the properties of the modern experience of the Church—of this experience which is dominated by the inner, even mystical element and by a desire to sum up into the Church all created values—we must certainly go back to Romanticism. This romantic root of recent ecclesiology has often been brought to light, both on the Catholic and on

¹Cf. P. LIPPERT: *Die Kirche Christi*. Freiburg (Br) 1931, pp. 29-48: “Die geschichtliche Entwicklung des Kirchnerlebnisses”. It is also present in C. FECKES: *Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche*. Paderborn 1934, pp. 8-13.

²C. FECKES: *Op. cit.*, p. 8.

the Protestant side. It has been seen at the same time as the source of its values³ and as the cause of its deviations⁴. Moreover, it is easy to understand that Romanticism, a very complex phenomenon, could become the object of such opposed interpretations. However, these different interpretations are in agreement about the essence of romantic thought: its concept of life. Precisely by this concept of life, Romanticism has exerted an immense influence on modern thought. This influence, according to M.F. Sciacca, is so great that it constitutes four-fifths of contemporary philosophy under the names of vitalism, voluntarism, subjectivism and irrationalism⁵.

The notion of life is the central notion of Romanticism. Superior to theoretical reason, it draws into its orbit the intuitive, mystical, indefinable spheres of human existence. It also rejects geometric rationalism with its rigid ideas and sees reality as an inner force, hidden under phenomena. What is important is that Romanticism intends to give to the notion of life not only a psychological and practical meaning, but also a metaphysical one, resolving into a superior synthesis the opposition between the external and the internal, between unity and multiplicity, etc.⁶. By this notion of life, Romanticism approaches society, history, and the problem of evolution, and instead of separating the various objects of human thought, seeks the organic links between them.

Religious Romanticism, which is our particular interest, is part of this orientation of the modern spirit. Without continuing the rationalist discussions on the problem of faith, on the supernatural in general, religious Romanticism seeks to present Christianity in its concrete and vital aspect, as the existential unity of the revealed datum. This Romanticism, taken in a rather religious sense, constitutes the fundamental inspiration of all the theoretical and practical efforts aiming to restore to honor the vital aspect of the idea of the Church.

³See especially: J.R. GEISELMANN: *Geist des Christentums und des Katholizismus. Ausgewählte Schriften katholischer Theologie im Zeitalter des deutschen Idealismus und der Romantik*. Mainz 1940.

⁴Cf. E. PRZYWARA: *Corpus Christi Mysticum: Eine Bilanz*. ZAM 15 (1940) pp. 197-215. On the Protestant side: E. WOLF: *Communio Sanctorum. Erwägungen zum Problem der Romantisierung des Kirchenbegriffs*. Theologische Blätter 21 (1942) pp. 12-25.

⁵La filosofia oggi. Dalle origini romantiche della filosofia contemporanea ai problemi attuali. Verona 1945, p. 15.

⁶Cf. W. BIETAK: *Lebenslehre und Weltanschauung der jüngeren Romantik*. Leipzig 1936. See especially the chapters: "Lebensgefühl und Lebensphilosophie" and "Katholische Glaube". This valuable volume of the "Romantik" section of the "Deutsche Literatur" collection, edited by P. Kluckhohn, begins its investigation of the romantic idea of life with an analysis of romantic "oppositions" (*Gegensätze*).

The fruits of these efforts are different, depending on whether the modern mentality or Christian inspiration has prevailed in the development of ideas. This explains the fact that the ecclesiological ideas that we are going to analyze in this chapter do not all have the same value, although they always reveal the same fundamental inspiration. It seems to us, then, that by treating in the same chapter ecclesiologists that are separated from each other by a whole century, we are doing no injustice either to the method or to the facts. This is why the reader will find here theologians who knew each other relatively little, such as Möhler and Newman, or theologians who, without ever having formed a school, nevertheless represent the same orientation.

To better understand Möhler's thought, it is necessary to briefly review his immediate predecessors, the first theologians of the Tübingen School. They were the ones that first introduced Romantic thought into theology. It is not difficult to perceive that such a theological orientation should be ecclesiocentric. When they search for the "spirit" (*Geist*) of Christianity, they only penetrate the communal existence of the revealed datum, i.e., the mystery of the Church. The *Geist* indeed is the living truth, the deep feeling (*Gemüt*), the very life of a community extended in space and time. In their view the essence of Christianity consists in the union of objective data and subjective experience. Thus, the mystery of the Church becomes for them the concrete synthesis of the transcendent and immanent element, of thought and real-life experience⁷.

We find already in J.M. Sailer the insistence on the notion of life, its continuity, its novelty, and its strength⁸. The Church in his eyes is nothing more than the continuity and communication of the divine message, i.e., the living Tradition. It is characteristic that Sailer, the initiator of this new way of understanding the Church, was more a spiritual director than a theologian. Through him, says Goyau, "German religiosity, both Protestant and Catholic, relearns to pray"⁹. This remark highlights once more the

⁷J. GEISELMANN has united the studies that characterize these theologians into the large volume entitled: *Geist des Christentums und des Katholizismus. Ausgewählte Schriften katholischer Theologie im Zeitalter des deutschen Idealismus und der Romantik*. Mainz 1940, published in the series: *Deutsche Klassiker der katholischen Theologie aus neuerer Zeit*. Band V, introduced and explained by J. Geiselmann. One can profitably consult the articles of Fr. Chaillet on this work in *RSPT* 26 (1937), pp. 483-498; pp. 713-726.

⁸See his speech of 1813: "Die Lehre von dem Heile des Menschen, ein schönes Ganze"; in Geiselmann, pp. 39-44.

⁹G. GOYAU: *L'Allemagne religieuse. Le catholicisme 1800-1848*. Paris 1905. I Vol., p. 294.

role exercised by the romantic commitment to concrete Christian life over theological reflection.

Gügler's pamphlet "Some Words on the Spirit of Christianity and Literature"¹⁰ is also full of romantic themes about the Church. The law of the permanence and organic growth of the Church, which lies at the basis of the conditions of true orthodoxy, should especially be mentioned. According to him, orthodoxy is essentially linked to an ecclesial unity, a unity which is both a living continuity in time and a mystical link in space. Not exclusively on the intellectual level does the heretic commit his error, but rather by breaking with the community he detaches himself from those who possess the living truth. So, instead of the excessive individualism of the previous era, Romanticism considers the Christian primarily as belonging to the communal organization. There and only there can the individual participate in the living continuity of the Church¹¹.

The idea of the Church conceived in such a way could not fail to extend the methodological role of ecclesiology to the entire field of theology.

Moreover, Romanticism, as a transition period, called for a self-examination in all areas of thought¹². As for theology, Drey, Möhler's master, attempted to propose new methods in his essay *Revision of the Present State of Theology*¹³. He starts by assuming that the theology of the Middle Ages was the science of the Christian life and not that of pure speculation¹⁴. Only later, especially after Kant, theology was compromised entirely, by losing its contact with Christian life. In short, Drey's main grievance against the theology of his day boils down to the fact that sacred science no longer fulfills its essential function: to present the life of the Church. The only remedy, he concludes, is to make the idea of the Church dominate theology.

Drey continued his reflections in his *Journal*¹⁵, where he tackles, in turn,

¹⁰Written in 1810. "Einige Worte über den Geist des Christentums und der Literatur"; in Geiselman, pp. 63-93.

¹¹Geiger's article "Die katholische Kirche" highlights above all the living continuity of the Word of God in the Church; in Geiselman, pp. 45-52.

¹²For example: "Lessons on the method of Academic Studies", course taught by Schelling in Jena in 1803. Similarly, Schlegel's "A Course of Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature" and Fichte's "Characteristics of the Present Age" in 1803-1804.

¹³"Revision des gegenwärtigen Zustandes der Theologie"; in Geiselman, pp. 83-97.

¹⁴Cf. p. 92. "Jetzt konnte es nicht mehr das lebendige Christentum sein, wie es sich mit dem Laufe der Zeit unter der Leitung des göttlichen Geistes entwickelt hatte, wie es in der Kirche lebte und lebte was die Theologie als Wissenschaft und System wiedergeben sollte...".

¹⁵"Aus den Tagebüchern über philosophische, theologische und historische Gegenstände"; in Geiselman, pp. 99-192.

the question of unity¹⁶, the principle of opposition between Catholicism and Protestantism¹⁷, the progressive formation of the hierarchy¹⁸, the idea of dogmatic development¹⁹, the living tradition²⁰, the relations between religion, revelation, and the Church²¹, problems of primary importance that will give rise to much discussion a century later. The text also shows that the central point of his thought is the reality of the Church, which for him, as well as for other Romantic theologians, is the synthesis par excellence of several different currents, such as idealism and realism, rationalism and empiricism.

To the two ideas of a living and ecclesiocentric theology a third is attached: the vital relationship of the present Church with the early Church. In his article on “The Spirit and the Essence of Catholicism”²², Drey emphasizes that neither philosophy nor archaeological research ensures that continuity, but the awareness that the Church has of herself. Tradition is not limited to ancient texts; it embraces the whole Church. But it must be pointed out that this insistence on consciousness of a community, as the inner essence of the Church, does not lead Drey to a kind of immanentism. The same postulate, which we will discover in Möhler as well, makes him say that Revelation finds its adequate expression only in the visible Church, and thus the Church’s unity cannot do without a central and supreme authority.

It was necessary to review the ideas of Möhler’s predecessors, not only because of their own value, but also to understand better the principal representative of the Tübingen School and the most important inspiration for current trends in ecclesiology. His works show us a thinker for whom historical research and systematic deepening always go hand-in-hand. Already his courses on ecclesiastical history²³ betray a researcher in the theology of the history of the Church. His two masterpieces, *Unity in the Church or the Principle of Catholicism: Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of*

¹⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 105.

¹⁷In Geiselman, *op. cit.*, p. 130.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 141.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 165.

²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 141.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 187.

²²“Vom Geist und Wesen des Katholizismus”; in Geiselman, pp. 193-234.

²³Histoire de l’Église (published by P. B. Gams OSB; translated by P. Bélet) Paris 1868.

*the First Three Centuries*²⁴ and *Symbolism*²⁵ strive to give a synthesis both of historical scholarship and of theological analysis. This strength of synthesis explains not only its indisputable originality, but also its permanent influence, which is being felt today more than ever²⁶. It is true that many of his ideas can be found among other theologians of Tübingen, as we have just seen, but it is in him alone that we encounter all these particular ideas unified in a single principle, upon which all his thought about the Church is built.

For Möhler the mystery of the Church is above all an existential reality, an experience of the supernatural life coming from a superior supernatural force, ultimately from the Holy Spirit himself, given in full to the faithful²⁷. This mystical life, like life in general, wants to be communicated in a homogeneous way to others. This is the foundation of the unity and of the unicity of the Church: its members are alive only by being united with each other, thus uniting with the unique stream of life, communicated from one member to another. Supposing the uniqueness of revelation, there can be only one community in supernatural life²⁸. The fulcrum for the communication of the supernatural life, work par excellence of the Spirit, is the *Gemüt*, that is to say, an existential experience of supernatural realities. Assuming the authenticity of this experience, life can follow its own laws of development: to formulate the intellectual notions of this experience and to realize the external contact with all those who participate in the same life. This notion of life, of an existential experience, governs the four main themes of *Unity*:

²⁴Die Einheit in der Kirche oder das Prinzip des Katholizismus dargestellt im Geiste der Kirchenväter der drei ersten Jahrhunderte. Tübingen 1825. French tr.: L'unité dans l'Église. Paris 1938. Eng. tr., Unity in the Church, or, The Principles of Catholicism: Presented in the Spirit of the Church Fathers of the First Three Centuries. Washington DC 1996, (cited: *Unity*).

²⁵Symbolik oder Darstellung der dogmatischen Gegensätze der Katholiken und Protestanten nach ihren öffentlichen Bekenntnisschriften. Mainz 1832. 7th ed., 1864. We use this edition (cited: *Symbolism*). Eng. tr., Symbolism: or, Exposition of the Doctrinal Differences Between Catholics and Protestants as Evidenced By Their Symbolical Writings. New York 1844; 1906 5th ed.: <https://archive.org/details/symbolismorexpos00mhuoft>.

²⁶The best example is the collection of studies “L'Église est Une — Hommage à Moehler”, published by Fr. Chaillet, with the collaboration of German and French ecclesiologists. Paris 1939. (cited: *EU*). The same collection was also published in German under the direction of H. Tüchle: Die eine Kirche. Zum Gedenken J. A. Möhlers 1838-1938. Paderborn 1939.

²⁷Unity, par. 1. In a note, Möhler rejects in advance the interpretation of those who wanted to discover in his statement the traces of immanentism.

²⁸Unity, par. 2.

the ecclesial unity in time and space, the schism, the diversity in the Church, and the structure of the Church.

According to Möhler, unity in space, therefore the profession of the same truth, depends essentially on the identity of the *Geist* in Christians and is only the notional expression of it, though necessary and indispensable. Therefore, unity in faith is above all a moral fact and cannot exist without the mutual permeation with truth and love. As such, it analogically reproduces the Trinitarian unity where Truth and Love are inseparable. Similarly, according to Möhler, the miracle of the diffusion of the Spirit would be the appearance of a feeling of affinity, in those who participate in the same truth, for the same Spirit. “Faith or Christian knowledge and the love begotten in the community of believers are fully related to one another. Wherever, thanks to the coming of the Holy Spirit, the faith has developed, there, too, the same divine force is uniting men”²⁹. Passages of this kind abound in *Unity*, but they are found even in *Symbolism*, which, by the way, is dominated by another idea: “Christ, the eternal truth, has built the Church: in the communion of the faithful, truth transformed by his spirit into love becomes living among men”³⁰.

Unity in time, or tradition, also derives from the notion of life. Christianity, as a communication of life, remains always active and, at the same time, identical to itself. Since this communication of life is exclusive and unique, it will be understood that outside the Church there cannot be a properly so-called tradition. Moreover, because tradition is a thing that belongs to the moral order, it can only be proved to those who first participate in it. In this sense we must take some unbalanced sentences from *Unity* where faith based on authority is to be distinguished from the inner testimony of the Holy Spirit³¹.

The Möhlerian theory of the organic unity of the Church is therefore only another aspect, as we have just stated, of the unity in space and in time. With regard to unity in time, G. Goyau correctly writes that “Möhler wants to acquire the feeling both of what the church is and the identity of his consciousness as a believer with the collective consciousness of the primitive Church”³². Unity in space also leads to the idea of an organic communion. According to Möhler³³,

a human being is set in a great whole, to act and to view him-

²⁹Unity, p. 94.

³⁰Symbolism, p. 337 (§ XXXVII).

³¹See especially the chapter entitled “Der Katholik zur Zeit Cyprians”, par. 13.

³²Textes choisis de Moehler. Paris *s.d.* 2nd ed., pp. 25-26. 1st ed., 1905.

³³Unity, p. 153.

self or herself as a *member* in it. One must acknowledge this relationship and dare neither oppose oneself to the whole nor set oneself above it...—This oneness with the *universal whole* is at the same time true existence in God, the source of true knowledge of God, of the Creator of the *universal whole*, because the *universal whole* as such is grounded in God, and is his total revelation. Thus just as each individual in the whole is grounded in God, one can truly know Him only in the whole.

This organic unity of the Church can be destroyed in two ways: either by an exaggerated intellectualism that replaces the priority of love by that of reason³⁴, or by a kind of egoism that is not satisfied with the condition of being a member of the Church. Consequently, the sin of heresy, for Möhler, is not in the first place the refusal of a formula, of a power, but the egoism of an inorganic experience which does not want to know anything about the primacy of the fraternal communion in love. In other words, the disjunction established between the vital element and the intellectual principle constitutes the essence of heresy. “In general, heresy is the attempt to discover Christianity by mere thought... without consideration for the common Christian life and that which arises from it. As a result it develops as a doctrine calling itself Christian, but separated from the continuing common life of believers”³⁵. So the heretic takes Christianity as a system, which he wants to understand before he believes it; he wants to be free before submitting to the conditions of that life. The heretic disregards the concrete and vital character of Christianity and forges arguments of textual and historical criticism. The Church, in turn, constantly refers to the principle of organic continuity in faith, an argument that forces Protestants to abandon the position taken by the Reformation.

The notion of life is refractory not only to heresy, but also to an abnormal uniformity. It is not uniformity alone that constitutes unity: legitimate diversity in worship, in discipline, and in doctrine manifests it with equal force, because both also converge to the mystical principle of unity. The latter is a principle of life and as such does not always and everywhere produce the same forms, but thrives on the richness of diversity. Therefore, the individual, entering the community, cannot lose his personality, since it is connatural to his community aspirations. The vitality of the experience of the Church allows thus a double evolution, which does not entail a separation; namely, it allows the free development of personalities, of particular

³⁴See especially paragraphs 19-25.

³⁵Unity, pp. 123-124.

initiatives, of different groups and times, along with a firm tendency toward the visible exterior unity.

Lastly, let us see how this existential experience, which is at the core of the essence of the Church, explains the visible structure of the Church. To better understand the position of *Unity* in this matter, let us first quote the most characteristic text from this viewpoint: “All believers, as soon as the forming, holy principle was active in them, felt themselves so drawn to one another and so striving for union that this inner movement was not satisfied until it saw itself formed in an image. The bishop is thus the unity of believers made visible in a specific place”³⁶. This ecclesial experience, part of the essence of Christianity, constitutes the Christian’s major duty: “By direct contemplation one is to make the experience of the Church one’s own”³⁷. As a consequence, the structure of the Church, its internal and external aspect, are explained in a new way, seen through this fundamental experience. The magisterium and the ecclesiastical functions are subject to the absolute predominance of the principle of Love, of which they are only the necessary manifestations. The Church body is the form of an experience, of a force acting within, and therefore she organized herself from within and not from outside, not as an inorganic block devoid of life and soul. It would be equivalent to destroy the true idea of the Church, in the same way as trying to explain the mystery of life by external and accidental causes³⁸.

Thus the external side of the Church, the hierarchy primarily, is only a necessary effect of this experience produced by the Spirit. The supernatural principle, lived in the intimate experience, must “be fully visible according to a model penetrating all orders of its being and life”³⁹. One would look in vain in *Unity* for the justification of this axiom on the necessity of this visible manifestation. There is only a very marked insistence on the following principle: “Where powers of a certain kind are always found, they present themselves visibly, expressing their character. Thus, with the entrance of the divine Spirit into humanity, with the establishment of this new power, a new external manifestation must be given, one expressing that power, and one previously not anticipated.”⁴⁰

We have already seen how this organic, vital principle is embodied in the bishop, which thus becomes the image of the mystical love of the faithful. For Möhler the church in its structure “is much more an offspring of

³⁶Unity, p. 217-218.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 87.

³⁸*Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 210.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 210.

this [Christian] faith, an action of love living in believers through the Holy Spirit”⁴¹. Consequently, he cannot avoid presenting the power of order and that of jurisdiction as the flourishing of the mutual love of Christians. From this viewpoint, ordination presupposes the communication of grace and expresses rather the judgment of the community on the dignity of the ordinand. He is now considered worthy to “represent the love of a specific number of believers and to join them with the whole Church”⁴².

All of this obviously raises a serious question: where does the criterion of truth lie in the Church? The answer offers itself by virtue of the basic assumptions: rather than the teaching magisterium, the organic and vital link, common experience, the role of the criterion of revealed truth. But it would be unjustified to think that Möhler simply rejects the primacy of the magisterium. He has in view only the full form of the faith, its full development, where there is no difference between the attitude and the aspirations of the faithful and the directives of the magisterium. Möhler repeatedly points out that two factors contribute to the knowledge of supernatural truth: the Spirit, participated through ecclesial experience, and the hierarchy. Without categorically subordinating the latter to subjective experience, he does not sufficiently clarify in *Unity* their correct interrelation in detail.

Certainly his preoccupation makes him “somewhat” leave behind the importance of the hierarchical structure of the Church. He writes, protesting against his being placed among the false idealists⁴³:

As the divinity and, with it, the truth is in Christ, so we only participate in his divine life and only *receive* the truth that must be, as such, *given* to us; and we are *not* able, if it is not given to us externally through the Church, *to develop it* from ourselves. Both come to us at the same time. The communication of the higher life expanding in the Church links itself to an acceptance of truth in the Church. Thus *hearing* precedes slightly, but *convinced possession and propagation* can only *follow* the new life already begotten in us.

This passage shows well that Möhler’s concern to represent the life of the Church in its full, mystical form ultimately leads to a position where the relationship between the hierarchy and the work of the Holy Spirit is not sufficiently clarified. So we must admit that *Unity* does not seem, despite its

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 209.

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 252.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, p. 96.

undeniable values, to present with a proper balance the two sides, internal and external, of the Church.

The ecclesiological system of *Unity*, based on ecclesial experience, has been the subject of much debate over the past few decades. Among other things Möhler was accused of having been completely influenced by Schleiermacher, and E. Vermeil rightly calls him “the father of Catholic modernism”⁴⁴. In the article “Mœhler” in the *Dictionnaire de Théologie catholique*, A. Fonck also denounces the alleged modernism of *Unity*⁴⁵. K. Eschweiler, in his turn, in a study distinguished above all by the subtlety of its analysis of the philosophical currents of Romanticism, comes to the conclusion that *Unity* is a kind of Hegelianism, kept in Catholic orthodoxy by many of its happy inconsistencies⁴⁶. All these critics did not fail to draw attention to the words of Möhler, who later himself confessed his dissatisfaction with his early work. “This book,” he wrote, “left me with an unpleasant memory. It is the work of an enthusiastic youth who used it freely with God, Church, and the world; but it contains many things, for which I no longer would like to vouch; everything is not properly digested nor expressed very pleasantly.”⁴⁷

On the other hand, a good number of prominent theologians correctly see in this work the starting point of ecclesiological renewal. Thus, the criticism of Vermeil and Fonck was rejected by L. Grandmaison⁴⁸, followed in this direction by Loisy himself⁴⁹. Lösch shows, in turn, that German idealism is not the immediate source of Möhler, but rather J.B. Kastner⁵⁰. Eschweiler’s criticism also soon received an irrefragable answer from J. Geiselman⁵¹. Against the interpretation of several neo-Slavophile theologians, which, evoking Khomyakov’s admiration of the author of *Unity*, tried to contrast Möhler’s youthful work with Vatican dogma, is Fr. Tyszkiewicz, who highlighted the deeply Catholic inspiration of Möhler⁵². Surely such a favorable judgment can rightly rest on the fact that the first Schema on the Church of the Vatican Council quotes Möhler among its sources⁵³.

⁴⁴Jean Adam Möhler et l’école catholique de Tubingue. Paris 1913.

⁴⁵DTC. Vol. X. 2. col. 2048-2063.

⁴⁶Joh.-Adam Möhlers Kirchenbegriff. Braunsberg 1930.

⁴⁷Cited by A. Fonck DTC X. 2. col. 2063.

⁴⁸Jean-Adam Möhler. RSR 9 (1919) pp. 387-409.

⁴⁹A. LOISY: Mémoires pour servir à l’histoire religieuse de notre temps. Paris 1931. Vol. III, pp. 267-270.

⁵⁰L’organisation visible de l’Unité. EU, pp. 230-231.

⁵¹J.A. Möhler und die Entwicklung seines Kirchenbegriffs. TQ 112 (1931) pp. 1-90.

⁵²La théologie moehlérienne de l’Unité et les théologiens pravoslaves. EU, pp. 270-294.

⁵³Mansi, Vol. 51, col. 553.

But while admitting Möhler's entirely Catholic inspiration, it is undeniable that *Unity* poses a number of problems, whose solution is not easy. In our opinion, it does not suffice to say that *Unity* does not propose the relationship of the two sides of the Church in a thorough enough way. It is true that precisely this relation constitutes the main problem there, but it must also be added that this problem cannot be framed in the *status quaestionis* of scholastic or positivo-scholastic theology. *Unity*, we think, has introduced a new nuance about the method of dealing with a theological idea, and this new nuance gave due priority to highlighting the existential, experiential side of the revealed datum.

This is why we cannot fully subscribe to the solution proposed by Mgr. Journet, who, without challenging Möhler's Catholic intuition, adds to it some speculative clarifications. According to him, some distinctions should be made in Möhler's "obscure" concept of the supernatural virtue of charity. This, understood by the Holy Spirit, includes all the gifts bestowed on the Church, but cannot be identified as a supernatural virtue with the other spiritual gifts and the charisms. With regard to the inner force of the Church, a distinction should also be made: referring to the whole Church, the Magisterium and the faithful, it encompasses supernatural virtues and hierarchical powers; in the other case, if one deals with the believing Church, it is charity, but in its sacramentally oriented form⁵⁴.

As insightful as they are, these remarks do not reach the roots of the Möhlerian problem, but they are not just "simple clarifications". Möhler's ecclesiology in *Unity*, as a methodological position, escapes the perspective of theological science, as conceived by positivo-scholasticism. Theological work must integrate in itself the concrete, vital aspect of the revealed datum. The proof is simple and the whole evolution of secular science attests to it: being—concrete existence, its experiential manifestation—can be the object of scientific knowledge. To attempt to solve the ecclesiological problems posed by Möhler by means of classical distinctions would be to enclose their development in a system which can scarcely assimilate them. This remark pretends to belittle neither the value of Scholastic theology nor the inaccuracies of Möhler; it only points out the fact that Möhler has brought out the vital aspect of the Church, without having managed to reconcile it with the results of traditional theology.

According to Möhler the vital, experiential aspect of a supernatural truth

⁵⁴L'Église du Verbe Incarné. Paris 1941. Excursus XI : "La hiérarchie dans le livre de Möhler sur *L'unité dans l'Église*", pp. 630-641. Eng. tr., *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, London 1955, Excursus XI, "The Hierarchy in Möhler's Book on *Unity in the Church*", pp. 516-525.

can be better studied than in its full, mystical realization. Here, everything becomes interiorized, experienced, and spontaneous, and here we can best observe the radication and the psychological manifestation of the revealed datum. The path chosen by Fr. Rouzet therefore seems to us to be better adapted to penetrate the problem of which we speak⁵⁵. Möhler, he writes, while respecting the institutional aspect of the Church, never tires of asserting that this aspect does not reveal the divine idea of the Church in its full meaning. To get a rough idea, he continues, we should think of the nomination by acclamation of some bishops in the early Church, where the vital unity of the bishop with his people was expressed in a very impressive way. As for the bishops, he continues, the history of the ancient Church furnishes us with abundant examples; with regard to the primacy of the pope, its awareness had a slower evolution, due to the nature of things. “All Möhler’s genius has been to seek, under the sign and in this sign, the absolute reality which founds it. In his language, it is the *noumenon* delivered by the directly perceptible expression of the *phenomenon*, sacred and real expression, but which must not, in its necessary fixity, rob us of the adorable presence of the Spirit”⁵⁶.

Nothing better characterizes the new paths pioneered by current trends in ecclesiology than the large number of studies on the idea of the Church in *Unity*. It was above all the centenary of Möhler’s death that awakened theological interest in his work⁵⁷. The collection of studies already quoted, *L’Église est une — Hommage à Moehler*, is an important documentation which well shows the principal directions in which, according to the affirmation of these studies, *Unity* can contribute to surpassing post-Tridentine ecclesiology. First of all, we must mention the restoration of the mystical aspect of the Church⁵⁸, then the more interiorized concept of the unity of the Church in space and time⁵⁹, the structure of the Church seen through its invisible essence⁶⁰, the question of a non-schismatic decentralization in the Church⁶¹, a new plan for ecumenical dialog⁶² and finally the return to

⁵⁵G. ROUZET: L’unité organique du catholicisme d’après Möhler. Ir. 12 (1935), pp. 330-350; pp. 457-485.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 469.

⁵⁷Cf. P. CHAILLET: Centenaire de Möhler. RAp 61 (1938) pp. 513-540.

⁵⁸P. CHAILLET: Le principe mystique de l’Unité. EU, pp. 194-220.

⁵⁹S. LÖSCH: L’organisation visible de l’unité. EU, pp. 221-233.

⁶⁰J. RANFT: La tradition vivante: Unité et développement. EU, pp. 102-126.

⁶¹Y. DE MONTCHEUIL: La liberté et la diversité dans l’Unité. EU, pp. 234-254.

⁶²Y. CONGAR: Le déchirement de l’unité. EU, pp. 255-269. J. GEISELMANN: J.A. Möhler. Die Einheit der Kirche und die Wiedervereinigung der Konfessionen. Ein Beitrag zum Gespräch zwischen den Konfessionen. Wien 1940.

the Fathers, which we will discuss in detail later.

But the influence of Möhler extends also to other renowned theologians, who, without mentioning it explicitly, follow closely the path he traced. Emphasizing the mystical aspect of the Church is certainly a Möhlerian position in Fr. Mersch⁶³, no less than the way of correlating the two sides of the Church in the famous work of K. Adam⁶⁴. The latter takes not only the ecclesial experience as his starting point⁶⁵, pointing “to our own unforgettable Möhler”⁶⁶, but in addition he largely uses *Unity* when he deals with the progressive development of the exercise of pontifical power in the course of history⁶⁷. As it is the case for Möhler, for Adam too the “evolution” of the exercise of the power of the popes is due to an ever more explicit awareness of the Church of its basic unity.

To see this profound influence of Möhler, should we accuse with Fr. Przywara these theologians and others of not having sufficiently weighed the corrections that Möhler himself made to his ecclesiological system as we find in his *Unity*?⁶⁸. In our opinion the fact that ecclesiologists today have turned to *Unity*, rather than to *Symbolism*, should be explained in another way. They found in *Unity* what is lacking in post-Tridentine ecclesiology. This does not mean that *Symbolism*, as we will see, is less valuable from an ecclesiological viewpoint, but it was never intended by Möhler to substitute the so touching and original pages of *Unity* whose fundamental intuition “is profound, as old as Christianity and eternally fruitful”⁶⁹.

The contributions of Romanticism have opened up, as a matter of fact, new horizons for ecclesiology, but at the same time exposed it to the danger of confining objective and supernatural truth to the often vicious circle of religious psychology. Surely, ecclesiology conceived in such a way can no longer possess a reliable criterion for distinguishing between the essential “structurings” from those conditioned by history. Möhler himself soon discovered that the guiding idea of *Unity* is exposed to the danger of Schleier-

⁶³La théologie du Corps Mystique. Paris 1946. 2nd ed., see especially the chapter “L’Église et ses fonctions” in Vol. II, pp. 241-273. Eng. tr., The Theology of the Mystical Body. St. Louis 1951, ch. XVII, “The Functions of the Church”, pp. 520-545.

⁶⁴Das Wesen des Katholizismus. Düsseldorf 1946. 11th ed. Eng. tr., The Spirit of Catholicism. New York 1929 — available online at <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/spirit-of-catholicism-10177>.

⁶⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 12. Eng. tr., p. 4.

⁶⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 27. Eng. tr., p. 16.

⁶⁷*Op. cit.*, pp. 50-52. Eng. tr., pp. 42-45.

⁶⁸E. PRZYWARA: Corpus Christi Mysticum. Eine Bilanz. ZAM 15 (1940)

⁶⁹CH. JOURNET: L’Église du Verbe Incarné. Paris 1941. Vol. I, p. 640. Eng. tr., The Church of the Word Incarnate, London 1955, p. 524.

macher's system, in which the desire to reduce the Church to a supernatural or simply to a religious experience logically leads to pantheism. He therefore abandoned the position he held in his youth, by endeavoring to restore to honor the visible aspect of the Church in a work that Soloviev called "admirable"⁷⁰ and that Newman regarded as identical with the main ideas of his theory on the development of dogma⁷¹.

In contrast with the primacy of love, Möhler insists in *Symbolism* on the fact of the Incarnation, to highlight the dual character of human existence and the inclusion of the invisible in a visible structure. By virtue of a general law, an organic and necessary link exists between inner truth and external reality, doctrine and action, idea and history, intrinsic and extrinsic testimony; similarly, religion as an interior experience and the Church as a visible structure are inseparable, following the principle of the Incarnation⁷². The visibility of the Church is thus rooted in the humanity of Christ, the instrument of divine communications. The visible side of the Church continues in its turn the mediation of the Humanity of Christ; it is an extension of it. As a result a sort of communication of idioms is established between Christ and the Church. Thus, religion, more precisely the Christian religion, must present itself essentially in the form of the visible Church, a concrete expression of the inner unity of the faithful.

The ecclesial experience, the central idea of *Unity*, receives little consideration in such a setting. But there are clues in *Symbolism* that show that Möhler did not entirely give up his romantic inspiration. For example, he writes about the visible side of the Church that it corresponds perfectly to the feelings and to the creative faculty of the Christian, showing him the universe reconciled with its Creator in the beauty of the union of diverse and multiple elements. Then he satisfies his reason: the divine truth was to incarnate itself in Christ, to effectively lift the human race out of pagan skepticism. And also, it fulfills the promises of unity of the mankind torn by disagreements⁷³. Thus the relationship between the visible and invisible Church is in the opposite sense to the one he presented in *Unity*. In *Symbolism*, the invisible Church arises out of the visible Church. In the place of the universal community of Love, in the romantic sense, is the Church as an authoritarian institution, which "...must train up souls for the kingdom of God,"⁷⁴. An orientation toward the objectivity of revelation is drawn

⁷⁰V. SOLOVIEV: *La Russie et l'Église universelle*. Paris 1922. 4th ed., pp. 34-35.

⁷¹Cf. *Essay on the Development of Christian doctrine*. Ed. Longmans p. 37.

⁷²*Symbolism*, p. 340 (§ XXXVII).

⁷³J. GEISELMANN: *Art. cit.* EU, p. 179.

⁷⁴*Symbolism* pp. 337 ff. (§§ XXXVII-XLII)

through *Symbolism*, where the experience of love gives way to the idea of a moral body subjected to the authority by virtue of a strict obedience.

Möhler did not have the opportunity to establish a synthetic ecclesiology inspired equally by the leading ideas of *Unity* and *Symbolism*. The environment of the theological and philosophical sciences at that time hardly favored the success of such an attempt; yet his ecclesiological work, in spite of its incompleteness, makes him the great initiator of the ecclesiological renewal. Of course, this is not due in the same measure for *Unity* and for *Symbolism*. In *Unity* we possess the first elaboration of the concrete vital aspect of the Church. It bears witness to an effort to integrate everything that seemed appreciable to him in modern thought. *Symbolism*, on the contrary, identifies the deficiencies and dangers of a one-sided vitalism. Möhler gives there a lesson for recent ecclesiology by his energetic rejection of vague interiorism; by his appraisal of the visible side of the Church, and finally by his scientific integrity, which makes him considerably modify his previous system. That is why Möhler represents in his person the real problem facing our recent ecclesiology: finding in a unique synthesis the right balance between the subjective and objective aspects of the Church. Some clues show that he thought he could try to achieve this synthesis⁷⁵, but his premature death prevented him from doing so.

1.2 J.H. Card. Newman

Mgr. Journet once stated that Möhler and Newman were “sensitive to the vibrations” of the new ecclesiology⁷⁶, and we have just seen how true these words are regarding Möhler. The pages that follow will try to show that Newman’s ideas about the Church are no less meaningful. Although Möhler’s *Symbolism* enjoyed Newman’s greatest esteem, so much so that Newman identified his own viewpoint with that of Möhler⁷⁷, however, as H. Tristram showed, we would search in vain for direct relations between both of them⁷⁸. Nevertheless, it remains undeniable that Newman, like Möhler, approached the mystery of the Church from the side of the “religious subjects”⁷⁹, in trying to show how the life of the Church is revealed in

⁷⁵Cf. the chapter added to the 2nd edition of *Symbolism*.

⁷⁶CH. JOURNET: L’Église du Verbe Incarné. Paris 1941, pp. XVII-XVIII. Eng. tr., p. XXVIII.

⁷⁷Cf. note 71, below.

⁷⁸Cf. “J.A. Möhler et J.H. Newman”. RSPT 27 (1938) pp. 184-204.

⁷⁹Y. CONGAR: Vraie et fausse réforme dans l’Église. Paris 1950, p. 9. Eng. tr., True and False Reform in the Church. Collegeville, MN 2011, p. 10.

personal and existential experience.

While the ecclesiology of Möhler has been the subject of a great number of studies, that of Newman has not yet received a complete and synthetic formulation. Those who devoted themselves to the task of retracing its essential lines, even when they gave valuable contributions, are far from having said the last word in this matter. Thus, the study by W.H. van de Pol⁸⁰ deals chronologically with Newman's thought and moves within the framework of apologetics. O. Karrer, who collected and translated Newman's passages regarding the Church⁸¹, in the introductions that precede the two volumes, had to limit himself to rather general developments⁸². It is even more curious that the centennial of Newman's conversion, while having stimulated a good number of studies on Newman's theology, saw no study devoted to his ecclesiology. This is true not only of the two collections of essays published in English⁸³, but also of the "Newman-Studien"⁸⁴, whose almost complete list⁸⁵ of books and articles published so far on Newman does not contain any title of importance regarding his ecclesiology, except the aforementioned book by W.H. van de Pol⁸⁶. This absence of an in-depth study of Newman's ecclesiology is all the more regrettable, as the work of Fr. Bouyer⁸⁷ powerfully highlighted how much Newman's thought was fundamentally ecclesiocentric.⁸⁸

It would be futile to attempt to compose a treatise on the Church using passages from Newman. Karrer is also of the opinion that some parts would be completely missing⁸⁹. The reason is simple: Newman has never system-

⁸⁰De Kerk in het Leven en Denken van Newman. Nijkerk 1936. 2nd ed.

⁸¹KARDINAL NEWMAN: Die Kirche I-II. Einsiedeln-Köln 1945-46.

⁸²"Newmans persönlicher Weg zur Kirche" Vol. I, pp. 35-88. "Newmans Weg in der Kirche" Vol. II, pp. 9-26.

⁸³"American Essays for the Newman Centennial", edited by J.K. Ryan and E.D. Bénard. Washington DC 1947. "A Tribute to Newman", edited by M. Tierney. Dublin 1945.

⁸⁴Newman-Studien. Erste Folge. Nürnberg 1948, edited by H. Fries and W. Becker.

⁸⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 301-326.

⁸⁶The study of W. BECKER: Newman und die Kirche (pp. 236-250) is obviously too short for such a subject.

⁸⁷Newman. Sa vie. Sa spiritualité. Paris 1952. Eng. tr., Newman: His Life and Spirituality. San Francisco 2011.

⁸⁸We cite Newman's works according to the Longmans edition. His letters, written until his conversion, are found in "Letters and correspondence of John Henry Newman during his life in the English Church", edited by A. Mozley, 2 vols. London 1903 (cited: *Lett.*). Since Newman's idea of the Church is closely linked to the story of his conversion, his biography, composed by W. WARD, is also of great value: "The Life of John Henry Cardinal Newman," 2 vols. London 1913.

⁸⁹*Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 30.

atically addressed the mystery of the Church. How is Newman, then, the initiator of a new understanding of the Church? Firstly, by his vitalism, his concreteness, his mysticism about the Church. For him, the search for the authentic idea of the Church is rooted in his personal mystique. “[To] rest in the thought of two and two only absolute and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator...”⁹⁰, he writes in his *Apologia*. These famous words, despite all appearances, should not be interpreted in favor of a “splendid isolation” with respect to the spiritual life. On the contrary, they contain the key to discover the ecclesiological importance of Newman. For Newman the sacramental structure of the Church and the personal religious sense are not two things independent from each other, but are two equally indispensable factors in leading to the perfection of supernatural life.

This primordial intuition of Newman about the fundamental unity of religious meaning and of revelation in its full form explains why his personal mysticism goes hand in hand with a passionate love for the Church. His motto “Myself and my Creator” is not the expression of an abstract religiosity; for him “everything takes place in the concrete. Neither himself nor his Creator are abstractions. He is born into a Christian society, and his Creator is that same God who became Incarnate to facilitate the entrance of souls into the kingdom of heaven. In the most simple affirmation of his conscience, Newman indirectly discovers, not only the doctrine of the Trinity, as we remarked above, but the existence of the Church”⁹¹.

This experience teaches Newman the reality of a concrete God who reveals himself in some determined way. “We may have a sense of the presence of a Supreme Being, which has never been dimmed by even a passing shadow, which has inhabited us ever since we can recollect any thing, and which we cannot imagine our losing.”⁹² This intimate union between the idea of God and that of revelation is of paramount importance for understanding Newman. It makes us understand why Newman puts all his efforts into the search for Revelation in its concrete full form; a dilemma arises before him: either a concrete, present, actual revelation, or nothing⁹³. One of his letters shows us how much this dilemma was existential to him: “I see no resting place for the sole of my foot between all and none”⁹⁴.

⁹⁰Apologia pro vita sua, p. 23.

⁹¹H. BRÉMOND: Newman. Essai de biographie psychologique. Paris 1906, p. 397. Eng. tr., The Mystery of Newman. London 1907, pp. 337-338.

⁹²Grammar of Assent, p. 178.

⁹³VAN DE POL: *Op. cit.*, p. 3. “Het dilemma was: of geen Openbaring of een concreet-gegeven Openbaring...”.

⁹⁴Correspondence of J.H. Newman with J. Keble and others 1839-1845. Ed. Longmans

Together with the existential, concrete aspect of Newman's thought, the problem for him of the holiness of the Church must retain our attention. When in 1839 he was struck by the words of St. Augustine on Catholicism against the Donatists⁹⁵, a double work had already been accomplished by him: besides a severe criticism of the Anglican Church, he had developed a new idea about the Church, which he called *Via Media*. Until that year he had thought that it was possible to bring the Anglican Church back to the ideal of the early Church and thus save the Anglican faithful from the cancer of liberalism⁹⁶. While his *Parochial Sermons* criticizes with no soothing words the bourgeois spirit and the worldly religion of Anglicanism⁹⁷, his studies on the Church of the Fathers draw a complete picture of the holiness of the primitive Church. "Sanctity is the great note of the Church," he wrote to the Bishop of Oxford to justify his criticism of Anglicanism in *Tract 90*⁹⁸.

It can therefore be said without exaggeration that the works of his Anglican period are building-blocks for the magnificent edifice of the idea of the Christian Church based on the notion of holiness. This is true not only for the works mentioned above, but also for a work that has so far been underestimated, the *Lectures on Justification*. These conferences, as Fr. Bouyer writes, "prepare, even if they do not already produce in advance, all that the developments of the theology of the Mystical Body in the 20th century would have revealed as most fruitful"⁹⁹.

As the justification by the Church and holiness inside the Church are closely correlative notions, so life in the structure of the Church is essentially a life of holiness. The *Lectures on the Prophetic Office of the Church* aim to reestablish precisely the fact that the tradition, the *sensus ecclesiae*, can be possessed only by adopting the spirit or the *ethos* of the apostolic

p. 25. Van de Pol rightly sees in this passage the manifestation par excellence of Newman's mystical realism. *Op. cit.*, p. 176.

⁹⁵"Securus judicat orbis terrarum bonos non esse qui se dividunt ab orbe terrarum in quacumque parte orbis terrarum". Contra Epist. Parmen. M.L. 43. col. 101. Lib. III. cap. 4. n. 24. Passage quoted by N. Wiseman in his response to *Tracts for the Times*. 4 vols. London 1833-38. DE 7 (1839) pp. 139-180.

⁹⁶Cf. W.R. LAMM: *The Spiritual Legacy of Newman*. Milwaukee 1934, pp. 1-28: "Newman's problem and purpose".

⁹⁷Cf. Vol. I, pp. 32, 115-116 and especially sermon X, pp. 359-364. "Holiness is the great end" in Lett. I, p. 76. "No one will deny that most of my sermons are on moral subjects, not on doctrinal, still I am leading my hearers to the primitive Church, but not to the Church of England". Letter written in 1840, reproduced in *Apologia*, p. 229.

⁹⁸"Sanctity is the great note of the Church..." letter reproduced in *The Via Media*, Vol. II, p. 422.

⁹⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 222.

Church. Thus, it is an essentially moral duty. Once more, the sanctity of a small group of Anglicans became the last refuge for Newman against the increasingly threatening need to enter the Church of Rome. The *Sermons on Subjects of the Day* show us the Anglican Church as schismatic beyond doubt, but having, like Samaria, a right of existence because of the remnant, “the seven thousand, which have not genuflected before Baal”¹⁰⁰.

If Newman is very much concerned with the historical continuity of the Church, he does so only in relation to its holiness. As it is the case for the romantic ecclesiologists, for Newman also, the historical problem of the Church is a problem of vital continuity and not just a matter of apologetics. Guitton rightly says that it was not apologetics that converted Newman, but “the silent lessons from history”¹⁰¹. Here lies the true meaning of a work, perhaps autodidactic from the viewpoint of historical research, such as *The Arians of the Fourth Century*. It is a vision of the Church that is always alive, “firstly traceable in Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, which Newman will try to define in order to re-infuse it into contemporary Anglicanism”¹⁰².

Newman never ceased to insist on the holiness of the Church. For him, this note par excellence of the Church settles the question of knowing where the true society founded and animated by Christ is. This concern of Newman also makes us understand why Newman, even in his Anglican period, could only but profess Catholic doctrine on deification. In his autobiographical notes we find the following remark on this point: “...forgiveness of sin is conveyed to us, not simply by imputation, but by the implanting of a habit of grace”¹⁰³. Consequently, he ensures a preponderant place to the sacramental aspect of the Church. The Church is essentially the instrument for the continuity of the life of grace. The apostles are just the channels of grace, and since they alone are able to communicate grace, they also possess the power to govern¹⁰⁴. The simple believer, in turn, although he cannot see or touch Christ, nevertheless enjoys the spiritual possession of Christ, because the holiness of the actual Church testifies to the presence of Christ. It is the great gift of the heavenly Father to the Church, the presence of Christ, as a source of holiness, invisible to the senses but grasped by faith, thanks to

¹⁰⁰BOUYER: *Op. cit.*, p. 278. Eng. tr., p. 125.

¹⁰¹La philosophie de Newman. Paris 1933, p. XV. “Newman faced the problem that for the 19th century seemed to constitute the crux of all the others: that of the meaning of history”, p. XXXVI. A problem, we would say, more specific to Romantic thought.

¹⁰²BOUYER: *Op. cit.*, p. 210.

¹⁰³Lett. I, p. 106.

¹⁰⁴Cf. Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. VI, p. 197.

the operation of the Holy Spirit¹⁰⁵.

In pointing out the two aims of the Oxford Movement, the struggle for the doctrine of apostolic succession and for the integrity of the *Book of Common Prayer*¹⁰⁶, he only defends this sacramental continuity of the supernatural life in the Church. “Every Bishop of the Church whom we behold, is a direct descendant of St. Peter and St. Paul in the order of a spiritual birth”¹⁰⁷. The bishop represents the past of the Church, and he is the basis of its future: “The presence of every Bishop suggests a long history of conflicts and trials, sufferings and victories, hopes and fears, through many centuries. His presence at this day is the fruit of them all. He is the living monument of those who are dead. He is the promise of a bold fight and a good confession and a cheerful martyrdom now, if needful, as was instanced by those of old time”¹⁰⁸. It is in and through the bishops that Christ fulfills his promise to always remain in his Church¹⁰⁹.

Such an emphasis on the role of the bishop obviously presupposes an unambiguous faith in the sacraments. The efficacy of the sacraments, according to Newman—while he was still Anglican—is a truth based on the testimony of the Scriptures: *Scripture truth*. They are the channels of Christian privileges and not only the seals of the Covenant¹¹⁰. The presence of the grace of God is then incarnated specially in the liturgy; through the liturgy the unity of the heavenly and earthly Church takes place: “we come to Church,” he says, “to join them [the saints]”¹¹¹. According to him, the main duty of the Church consists in a communal and continual prayer¹¹². This is how the Church truly becomes the dwelling-place of believers, where they find the presence of the living God¹¹³. So the Church is for Newman a kind of incarnation of holiness, a sacramental-mystical reality, centered around the presence of the historical and Eucharistic Christ. Even his Anglican friends have spontaneously recognized that “this high ideal of a living Church, in its reality and its power, is among the best memorials that he be-

¹⁰⁵Cf. Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. VI, pp. 121-127.

¹⁰⁶Cf. Lett. I, p. 379.

¹⁰⁷Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. III, p. 247. In a letter to J.W. BOWDEN, we find the same idea: “Our objects are... to inculcate the Apostolical Succession and to defend the Liturgy”. Lett. I, p. 394.

¹⁰⁸Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. III, p. 248.

¹⁰⁹*Ibid.*

¹¹⁰Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. II, p. 310.

¹¹¹Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. VIII, p. 12.

¹¹²Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. III, p. 306.

¹¹³Parochial and Plain Sermons, Vol. IV, p. 196.

queathed to us”¹¹⁴. And one also understands why the ecclesiological work of his Anglican period could retain its validity almost entirely even after his conversion.

We have just seen how Newman was pushed toward Catholicism by the idea of the holiness of the Church. It is not surprising, therefore, that Newman’s conversion manifests the same adherence to the principle of practical vitality that can be found in the entire ecclesiological construction of his Anglican period. Certainly one must not underestimate the importance of the historical and theological research he did in his search for the true Church. But fundamentally the vital aspect of the question dominates everything. Newman himself confesses, shortly before his death, in a private letter to Mozley, that he always thought the essence of Christianity consists above all in a moral system. Contrary to what happened in Protestant communities, this living principle of holiness remained predominant only in the Catholic Church “both because without it Catholicism would soon go out, and because through it Catholicism makes itself manifest and is recognised”¹¹⁵.

In fact, his writings from *Tract 90* (1841) until his entry into the Catholic Church in 1845 reveal a fundamental concern for the holiness of the Church. In *Tract 90* he defends the sacramental aspect of the Church with the doctrine of transubstantiation¹¹⁶. The basic inspiration of this *Tract*, as it is given to us in one of these letters, is that *ethos* of the Christian spirit which can be found only in the Catholic Church. “She alone, amid all the errors and evils of her practical system, has given free scope to the feelings of awe, mystery, tenderness, reverence, devotedness, and other feelings which may be especially called Catholic.”¹¹⁷. In a sermon, in May 1840, he noted that the Anglican Church no longer possessed the note of persecution, but only the note of the love of earthly prosperity¹¹⁸. Later, he deplores the distress of his Church, pointing out that the life of his Church hardly bears witness to the presence of the Savior¹¹⁹. The only question for him is: “Is He here?”¹²⁰.

¹¹⁴Letter from Dean Lake to The Guardian, August 27, 1890, the day after Newman’s death; in Brémond p. 403. Eng. tr., pp. 342-343.

¹¹⁵Published by Mozley in the Contemporary Review, Sept. 1899; in Brémond p. 403. Eng. tr., p. 345.

¹¹⁶*Tract 90* is titled: Remarks on Certain Passages of the Thirty-nine Articles—it is inserted into the Longmans edition in the second volume of *Via Media*, pp. 259-356.

¹¹⁷“A letter addressed to the Rev. R.W. Jelf, DD., in explanation of the Ninetieth Tract”. In the *Via Media*, Vol. II, p. 386.

¹¹⁸Sermons on Subjects of the Day; Sermon XVIII, p. 272.

¹¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 316, p. 354.

¹²⁰*Ibid.*, p. 323.

Even in his *Essay on the Development*, he searches not so much for a logical demonstration as for a living organism, a holy Church. Newman himself made, after his conversion, a clear allusion to this aspect of his *Essay*: “I was always asking myself what would the Fathers have done... I had made a good case [of a restored Anglicanism] on paper, but what judgment would be passed on it by Athanasius, Basil, Gregory, Hilary, and Ambrose? The more I considered the matter, the more I thought that these Fathers, if they examined the antagonist pleas, would give it against me. I expressed this feeling in my *Essay on the Development*”¹²¹. He is referring here to the famous passage where, in a poetic vision, he brings back to life the two saints, Athanasius and Ambrose, who without hesitation recognize in the Catholic Church their communion¹²². So it seems to us that the opinion that sees, and not without reason, the importance of the idea of apostolicity in the conversion of Newman¹²³, must be integrated with connecting catholicity with Catholic love, refractory to any form of separation whatsoever. The *Via Media* has been proposed as an apostolic Church, despite its separation from the entire Church. But precisely this conscious act of separation, of schism, which destroys it, would certainly be condemned by the Fathers, who would never have justified “the opposition between the whole and the part, between the living body in unity and the members retreating into death”¹²⁴.

To summarize, Newman’s idea of the Church is nourished by his mystical experience of the God-Revealer. This experience drives him in search of a Church where the presence of God is unequivocally manifest in the holiness of its members. In other words, he seeks the replication of the Church of the Fathers, a church of holiness where devotion and sacrifice, the substances of the Gospel, are in full force. He leaves his Church when he no longer finds in it the fulfillment of this ideal. In Newman’s writings one also finds profound passages on the identity of the Christian with the whole Church, in which he speaks of the “ecclesial” effects of grace and shows how authentic grace drives the individual toward the community, because the division of Churches, deep down, is the corruption of morals¹²⁵. Moreover, a quick glance at the collection of Newman’s ecclesiological texts presented by O.

¹²¹Essays critical and historical. Vol. II, p. 74.

¹²²*Ibid.*, p. 138.

¹²³Cf. CH. JOURNET: L’Église du Verbe Incarné. Paris 1941, pp. 682-688. Eng. tr., pp. 554-559 — Excursus XII “Apostolicity the Ground of Newman’s Conversion to Catholicism”.

¹²⁴L. Bouyer, *op. cit.*, p. 254.

¹²⁵Sermons on Subjects of the Day, Sermon X, pp. 130-134.

Karrer will suffice to convince us that all the modern themes of ecclesiology can be found in the most illustrious son of Oxford: striking passages on the role of the laity, on the relationship between natural religions and the Church, on the involvement of a holy Church in the secular domain, on the dogmatic significance of the history of the Church, on Catholic piety, and on the eschatological aspect of the Church.

The way Newman expresses his thought is more Platonic than Aristotelian: he prefers psychology to systematic presentation, lived experience to abstraction. His English character predisposed him to it¹²⁶. Although the voluntary, emotional, aesthetic factors occupy an important place in Newman's position, it would be unjustifiable to see him as a latent modernist, especially since the Oxford movement was launched under the banner of fighting against the subjectivism of religious liberalism¹²⁷.

The greatness of Newman consists precisely in having shown the relation and correspondence between the voice of conscience and that of ecclesiastical authority. Brémond raises, from his side, the moral, individual aspect of his idea of the Church; Przywara rather emphasizes instead the importance of the magisterium in that idea¹²⁸. The two theses, in our opinion, are not opposed, but complement each other. In Newman's eyes the search for holiness without an infallible magisterium does not attain its goal, while the infallible magisterium is at the service of holiness.

We need to say also a few words about Newman's influence on recent ecclesiology. It can be seen that his influence was influential more in an apologetic rather than in a dogmatic sense. In any case, in many authors one can easily notice a direct dependence on Newman. Especially in German theological circles we can see a Newmanian renaissance¹²⁹. Moreover, Newman's influence on recent ecclesiology is different from Möhler's influence. The works of Newman, the *Grammar* and *Development* excepted, were not developed in a systematic way. So the influence of Möhler's *Unity* is more recognizable than that of Newman's thought, because in the former we have a well-structured work, whereas in the latter thoughts are scattered every-

¹²⁶Cf. O. Karrer, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 18-19.

¹²⁷Cf. E. PRZYWARA: Einführung in Newmans Wesen und Werk. Freiburg (Br) 1922, pp. 82-83.

¹²⁸Cf. E. PRZYWARA: Einführung in Newmans Wesen und Werk. Freiburg (Br) 1922, p. 35.

¹²⁹See "Newman Studien" cited above, edited by a group of German theologians, the Newman-Kuratorium. For almost thirty years M. Laros saw the importance of Newman's idea of the Church without further elaborating on the matter. (Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche, "Newman". Vol. 7. col. 533).

where in his writings¹³⁰. To be more specific about Newman's importance in ecclesiology, one should not forget the stages of his life and the influence that the example of a life so focused on the mystery of the Church could exert. A life doubly grandiose: by his search for the true Church and for the truly Catholic perspective of his work. "He has, certainly not in a perfect but in an exceptional way, succeeded to realize the synthesis, for which our age strives, between these entirely holy and necessary values: faith and reason, spiritual life and intellectualism, history and thought, psychology and dogma, prophecy and life in the Church, subject and object, progress and tradition, reflection and poetry..."¹³¹.

1.3 F. Pilgram and his school

In the eyes of many, it is probably daring to juxtapose to Möhler and Newman a secular theologian of the 19th century, F. Pilgram. Underestimated in his time and little read today, Pilgram remains the source par excellence for a series of German ecclesiologists who, inspired by the ideals of Romanticism, approached the mystery of the Church in a philosophical and sociological rather than theological way. Prevented by his overly laborious developments from becoming a popular author, Pilgram has never been forgotten in certain theological circles, and the insertion of his masterpiece on the Church, *Physiologie der Kirche*¹³² in the series *German Classics of Theology*, sufficiently describes the vitality of his thought. Perhaps it would be an exaggeration to try to establish a direct connection between him and Max Scheler, who managed to popularize the same ideas fifty years later, but in fact both of them drew their inspiration from the same source: the philosophical current of Romanticism and the tendency, quite common in German Catholicism, to present the mystery of the Church as the synthesis of the personal and communal aspect of human existence. But even if one does not find in Scheler explicit references to Pilgram, his disciple, K. Neundörfer, often refers to him when he speaks of the need to consider the Church as the organic union between individuals¹³³. In the same way, Guardini begins his famous conferences on the Church with an idea dear

¹³⁰Cf. O. KARRER, *op. cit.*, I, p. 30.

¹³¹Y. CONGAR: Bulletin d'ecclésiologie, RSPT 31 (1947) p. 96.

¹³²Physiologie der Kirche. Mainz 1860. Re-edited by H. GETZENY in the series "Deutsche Klassiker der Katholischen Theologie ans neuerer Zeit". Mainz 1931.

¹³³"Die Kirche als gesellschaftliche Notwendigkeit" in Zwischen Kirche und Welt. Ausgewählte Aufsätze aus seinem Nachlass. Herausg. von K. Neundörfer und W. Dirks. Frankfurt 1926, p. 77.

to Pilgram: “It will be the mission of the coming age once more to envisage truly the relation between the Church and the individual. If this is to be achieved, our conceptions of society (*Gemeinschaft*) and individual personality must once more be adequate”¹³⁴.

To see in detail the romantic elements that determine the thought of Pilgram, we must first mention his theory of knowledge. Desiring to unite abstract thought and reality as best as possible, he presents certainty as the vital synthesis of a concrete and total knowledge. So knowledge necessarily surpasses the domain of abstract reason: it consists in grasping and recognizing reality through the concrete personality¹³⁵. In other words: the reality that cannot be demonstrated by abstract reason can be grasped by the concrete personality¹³⁶. In his correspondence with W. Zehender, Pilgram was quick to assert that Hegel was the first, in modern philosophy, to unite philosophical thought with reality¹³⁷.

Consisting of a rational element and of an irrational mystical, personal element, true knowledge can get into the mystical unity of the spiritual and the material, the mystical unity of things with things, in a word, the mystical unity that is the fundamental law of the whole universe. Without God, supreme reality, this mystical unity in the universe is simply inconceivable, reasons Pilgram, who sees the crowning of this unity in the Church. Therefore, the Church is incomparably more than a sum of abstract ideas. Also, the expression, *Church, instrument of salvation*, is very far from expressing her complete reality. The Church consists of the mystical unity of the whole universe destined for the supernatural life in the perfect union with God¹³⁸.

It is interesting to note that Pilgram traces his way of considering the Church primarily as a universal fact back to Möhler: “Möhler,” he writes, “discovered at the root of dogmatic realities a universal principle and elucidated their general properties in the total connection with reality”¹³⁹. A Romantic thinker, Pilgram seeks to penetrate the complete meaning of the

¹³⁴Vom Sinn der Kirche. Mainz 1922, pp. 22-23. Eng. tr., The Church and the Catholic and The Spirit of Liturgy. New York 1935, p. 45 — available online at <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/library/the-church-and-the-catholic-13707>.

¹³⁵“...Ergreifen und Anerkennen durch die wirklich reale Persönlichkeit”. From Pilgram’s correspondence with W. Zehender, published by the latter. “Nach Vierzig Jahren”. Leipzig 1895, p. 23.

¹³⁶Cf. D. A. ROSENTHAL: Konvertitenbilder aus dem 19. Jahrhundert. Schaffhausen 1866. I, p. 1069.

¹³⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹³⁸“Quasi-katholische Glaubens- und Lebensansichten protestantischer Persönlichkeiten”, in Hist. Polit. Blätter 34 (1853) pp. 354-55.

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 391.

following facts: revelation given to the whole man and not only to his reason; revelation directed not so much to one individual, but to the entire mankind; the revelation as the key to the relationship between the Spirit and nature, between the individual and the community¹⁴⁰.

Guided by these concerns, Pilgram discards a good number of definitions of the Church as inadequate. The definitions of the Church as an instrument of salvation or as the assembly of the faithful give, according to him, only a material description, and do not exclude the possibility of a plurality of churches. On the contrary, the true definition must immediately contain all its properties¹⁴¹. The idea of the Mystical Body, while being a perfect expression of the communion of men with God and with each other in Christ, does not, according to Pilgram, sufficiently emphasize the freedom of persons in this communion¹⁴². The perfect definition of the Church will therefore be based on the idea of the *Gemeinschaft*, which expresses in itself the balance between the personal and the community factors¹⁴³. This equilibrium is due to the organic bond through which the personality is connected to the universe without losing its freedom by which it spontaneously affirms its realization. The organic connection with the universe is therefore a natural but always free tendency of the person toward the universe, and this desire to find unity with the others is the fundamental law of human existence. Considered from this perspective, the Church has always existed as the human community having a relationship with God, a relationship which has been made more and more perfect through the successive phases of revelation, especially in the fact of the Incarnation, a supreme achievement of the communion between God and the human race¹⁴⁴.

Since the communication of life always contains the act of receiving such life, the natural and supernatural human communion is constituted hierarchically, i.e., the action of giving and receiving essentially establishes a subordination of those who receive to those who are the source of the communication. Without coming to justify the careful comparison between hierarchy and bureaucracy, even if taken in an ideal sense, the underlying idea of Pilgram nevertheless has its value. To think of the Church in terms of life, of organic communion, does not oppose whatsoever the idea of a hierarchy, but presupposes and justifies it¹⁴⁵. Consequently, the apostolic succession

¹⁴⁰Physiologie der Kirche, ed. by H. Getzeny, p. XLVIII.

¹⁴¹Physiologie der Kirche, ed. 1860, p. 9.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 10.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 15.

¹⁴⁴*Op. cit.*, ch. III. Vorgeschichte der Kirche, pp. 31-48.

¹⁴⁵*Op. cit.*, ch. IV. Die wirkliche Kirche in ihrem Bau und Verfassungsorganismus, pp.

goes far beyond just being a legal notion: it is above all a generator of life.

Influenced by the same philosophy which influenced Möhler, Pilgram refuses to talk about the two sides of the Church: interior and exterior. For him, the institutional aspect of the Church, the ecclesiastical kingdom [basileia], is only a necessary manifestation of its invisible essence¹⁴⁶. This necessity is based, according to Pilgram, on the general relation between essence and its form, and on the parallelism between the *Gemeinschaft* of the natural order and the Church. Since the *Gemeinschaft* is realized in the external form too, the Church must also be manifested visibly¹⁴⁷. In this connection a note by Getzeny rightly refers to several passages of Hegel, which show a very obvious affinity with the thought of Pilgram¹⁴⁸.

By placing holiness in the first place among the other marks of the Church, Pilgram proves to be an initiator of the current trends in ecclesiology. “The notion of the holiness of the Church,” he writes, “is identified with the notion of the Church herself, with its existence and its essence. In the measure in which the Church, communion between God and mankind, becomes a reality, it is holy, and humanity is holy in it because its holiness exists not only in its end but above all in its essence, in its communion”¹⁴⁹. From this communion the other marks of the Church originate: communion, one and unique in nature, necessarily tends to embrace the whole universe; as an uninterrupted flow, it presupposes an inexhaustible source from which apostolicity and apostolic succession come; as a total and complete flow, it requires infallibility¹⁵⁰.

However, Pilgram’s intuition leaves much to be desired when getting into the details. The too narrow identification of the essence of the Church with sanctifying grace makes Pilgram adopt the distinction between the soul of the Church, to which all justified non-Catholics would belong, and the body or the structure of the Church. Moreover, Pilgram leaves this principle in the same vagueness as it is found in the theologians of the 19th century, namely in Perrone, cited by Pilgram as his source¹⁵¹. But it should be noted that

48-70.

¹⁴⁶“Politeia, basileia zu sein ist also nicht bloß die allgemeine Seite der Kirche, es ist überhaupt keine Seite derselben, sondern es ist diese Bestimmung ihre Wesenheit selbst, und diese Bestimmung enthielt die Anstaltlichkeit nur als ein besonderes Moment und Seite ihrer selbst an sich”. *Op. cit.*, p. 114.

¹⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 186.

¹⁴⁸1931 ed., p. 451.

¹⁴⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 134.

¹⁵⁰*Passim*, but especially pp. 125-197. “Wesen und Eigenschaften der Kirche”.

¹⁵¹*Op. cit.*, p. 141. cf. G. Perrone: *Kompodium der Dogmatik*. Deutsche Ausgabe.

Pilgram carefully avoids separating the soul of the Church from the visible Church. Justified non-Catholics are but the invisible members of a reality of which the Roman Church is the unique external form. Moreover, he gives the first sketches of a theory recently revived by Fr. Rahner, according to which the Church cannot have absolutely invisible members. The communion with God of justified non-Catholics is ordained to the Church, and their “invisible” union with God and imperfect relationship to the Church are manifested at least in the practice of the natural virtues, raised to the supernatural order by the fact of the Incarnation¹⁵². Contemporary ecclesiology, which is so eagerly in search of the exact relation between the two communities, natural and supernatural, certainly cannot do without the rigorous study of Pilgram.

We have just seen the essence of the Church, as a communion of life, with its properties organically deduced from its essence. The third section of Pilgram’s book is devoted to the activity of the Church, which will also be explained in the light of the essence of the Church: holiness and organic communion¹⁵³. That is why the liturgical prayer of the Church as an act of the community receives primacy over individual prayer. Thus, Pilgram insists on the importance of personal holiness in teaching: since the Church is a supernatural fact, teaching receives its full effectiveness only in and by such persons who perfectly possess that life. Pilgram rightly recalls the fact that the Church has often invested the ardent laity with a teaching mission¹⁵⁴.

As far as asceticism is concerned, Pilgram is of the opinion that it must be made part of the idea of ecclesial communion, because the spiritual life is essentially a community life. Without wishing to dispute the right to an immediate relationship between God and the individual soul, Pilgram does not cease to insist on the primacy of the communal aspect in our relationship with God, and he certainly gives proof of a remarkable clairvoyance in writing these almost prophetic words: “...the upcoming ecclesiology will have the duty to explain in detail the mystical relationship that exists between the existence of the Church and the souls ordered directly toward God”¹⁵⁵. A few decades later, a good number of theologians will be engaged in this work. It is interesting to see how the idea of the Church as a communal organic life led Pilgram toward the liturgical aspect of the Church. In fact, the

Landshut 1852. I, p. 67.

¹⁵² *Op. cit.*, p. 192.

¹⁵³ *Op. cit.*, pp. 199-284.

¹⁵⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 231.

¹⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, pp. 388-389.

third part of the book which we have just analyzed is a treatise solely on the Church in her liturgical function. But what throws a particular light on the value of Pilgram's developments on this subject is the close connection of the liturgical aspect of the Church with the idea of the celestial Church¹⁵⁶. This heavenly Church, embracing not only the souls who have arrived at the vision of God but also the angels and the whole universe destined for the final glorification, is the center of the Kingdom of God and the accomplishment of the Church of this world.

While Pilgram's heavy style and cumbersome reasoning prevented the dissemination of his ideas, M. Scheler's writings were quite successful in spreading the same inspiration among German theologians to such an extent that Fr. Przywara¹⁵⁷ and R. Aubert¹⁵⁸ consider his influence in post-war ecclesiology as a fact of primary importance. Scheler's ecclesiological ideas are scattered almost everywhere in his works¹⁵⁹ which date back to a period when the question of conversion to Catholicism caught his attention. Although the value of his ideas from the ecclesiological viewpoint do not reach that of Möhler and Pilgram, still, his theories on knowledge, the idea of God, and the person exhibit the same characteristics we saw in his great predecessors. It must be noted, finally, that Scheler remained above all a philosopher¹⁶⁰, and that the theological and even ecclesiological questions enter into his philosophical works only secondarily.

The primacy of love over reason and the concrete knowledge of God in the supreme value of goodness imply, in Scheler's eyes, that any religion or knowledge of God is necessarily communal¹⁶¹. From this perspective, the idea of the Church as organic and communal knowledge of God is a postulate of a natural order. Moreover, the communal character of God's knowledge calls for the greater importance of fraternal love in this knowledge. God, supreme love and goodness, can be grasped by man only by virtue of love, which embraces God with all those whom God has communicated Himself in

¹⁵⁶Cf. Chap. XXI. Verhältnis der Kirche zum Reiche Gottes und der überirdischen Sphären desselben, pp. 285-315.

¹⁵⁷Cf. E. PRZYWARA: Corpus Christi Mysticum. Eine Bilanz. Z AM 15 (1940) pp. 197-215.

¹⁵⁸R. AUBERT: Les grandes tendances théologiques entre les deux guerres. Coll. Mechl. 16 (1946) p. 23.

¹⁵⁹The article: Die christliche Gemeinschaftsidee und die gegenwärtige Welt. (Hl. 14) 1916-7, I. (pp. 641-672) is inserted in his book: Vom Ewigen im Menschen. Leipzig 1921, pp. 124 ff. This work is the most important from the ecclesiological viewpoint.

¹⁶⁰See G. GURVITCH: Les tendances actuelles de la philosophie allemande. E. Husserl — M. Scheler — E. Lask — M. Heidegger. Paris 1949, pp. 67-152.

¹⁶¹Cf. Vom Ewigen im Menschen, p. 460.

any capacity. So it would be wrong to try to understand God apart from the path of solidary love; instead of finding the true religion, one would expose oneself to heresy¹⁶².

In Scheler's eyes, the basis of heresy lies not so much in an intellectual attitude as in a lack of love: heresy is above all a misunderstanding of God as Love¹⁶³. It would be easy to recognize the perfect coincidence between Möhler's and Scheler's views on the definition of heresy: both see it as a religious attitude deprived of its organic and vital element.

The notion of "person", so important in Scheler's thought, also bears much resemblance to Pilgram's notion. According to Scheler, the person tends with all his force toward contact with the concrete, infinite Person, to participate in his perfections—in particular, his holiness—the supreme modality in the scale of values. But taking possession of values requires on the part of the person a universal intent to become connatural with the unlimited character of values. Therefore, individual salvation must be in solidarity with the salvation of everybody. In this way the individual and the community are rooted in the same principle: a historical or biological given¹⁶⁴ does not make the person a member of the community, but his eternal idea, his destination toward the values. Communal aspirations then have their source in personality itself, and consequently the person essentially requires being part of a community. But the communities of the world, limited to finite values, are not capable of completely satisfying the individual; moreover, they serve their purpose only by leaving open the way to the source of all values, to the infinite Person¹⁶⁵. The idea of the Church, a perfect community with God, reveals the true meaning of the communities of inferior rank. In fact, all Catholic dogma professes that individual salvation cannot ignore solidary responsibility. It suffices to evoke dogmas such as those of the catholicity of the Church, of original sin, the resurrection on the last day, the Mystical Body of Christ, the communion of the saints,

¹⁶² *Op. cit.*, p. 461.

¹⁶³ "Der Häretiker irrt nicht zuerst darum, weil er materiell Falsches über Gott behauptet; er musz vielmehr religiös Falsches wesensnotwendig behaupten, weil er seine formate Grundeinstellung auf Gott dem Wesen des Göttlichen und darum erst auch seiner möglichen Erkenntnis überhaupt widerstreitet." *Op. cit.*, p. 693.

¹⁶⁴ "In der Idee einer Liebes- und Geistesgemeinschaft mit einer unendlichen Person, die zugleich der Ursprung, der Stifter und der Oberherr aller möglichen geistigen Gemeinschaften, auch aller irdischen und faktischen ist." *Art. cit.*, p. 646.

¹⁶⁵ "Des Menschen Geistes- und Personsgemeinschaft ist vielmehr eigenen und höheren Rechts und eigenen und zwar höheren Ursprungs, als diese Lebensgemeinschaft. Sie ist göttlich geistigen Ursprungs, wie göttlich sanktionellen Rechtes." *Art. cit.*, p. 645.

etc.¹⁶⁶.

In Scheler's eyes, all human societies are but a more or less imperfect reflection of the Mystical Body and as such they cannot, in many cases, succeed in achieving the perfect balance between the individual and the community, which is the divine mark of the church. The communitarian aspirations of our time, Scheler continues, are about to fail both on political and economic grounds because of the disorder between the individual and the society, between the person directly ordered to God and the organic link of persons between themselves¹⁶⁷. According to Scheler, mankind, disregarding the supernatural order, can be called in a certain way "Church", that is, the community of persons participating in the Supreme Goodness. Since the divine goodness is always, everywhere, and infallibly communicated, this community becomes in a certain sense unflinching and universal. All the more so is it with the community of the supernatural order. We see then that Scheler intends to reconcile as best as possible the natural and supernatural orders and the two communities based on them. Therefore, for Scheler, the necessity, the indefectibility, infallibility, and marks of the Church are rooted in the "properties" of mankind. From this viewpoint, the historical foundation of the Church and its Christological character only add a positive signification to it.

It is easy to understand that such a synthesis is exposed to a number of philosophical and theological difficulties. As for the knowledge of God, abstract reasoning is pushed too far into the background; as for the distinction between the natural and supernatural orders, Scheler gives no clear solution. Although Przywara is of opinion¹⁶⁸ that Scheler, despite the hesitation of his expressions, does not suppress the distinction between the two orders, it remains no less true that for Scheler the natural experience of the individual in his deep commitment to the collective constitutes the basis of the idea of the Church. The community in God, in Christ, is then an ethical community life, a shared mutual responsibility, an exchange of ideas, but above all a union of love in values. Salvation, and the religious acts of man, are also conditioned by their relationship to the community. Scheler also thinks that

¹⁶⁶Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 648.

¹⁶⁷"...eine Nachbildung der starken und doch so fruchtbaren Spannung... die zwischen der gottgeschaffenen und zu Gott hinbestimmten, selbständigen, freien Individual- und Personalseele und der ursprünglichen organischen Verbundenheit aller diesen Personen in einer sie umfassenden Korporation immer und notwendig bestehen musz." *Art. cit.*, p. 653.

¹⁶⁸Cf. E. PRZYWARA: *Religionsbegründung*, Max Scheler J.H. Newman. Freiburg (Br) 1923, p. 183.

only primitive Christianity has succeeded in perfectly realizing this ideal of community life; for today's generation this constitutes an arduous duty¹⁶⁹.

The accomplishment of this arduous duty is claimed in a very demanding way by the spirit of our time, as Guardini has shown in a series of lectures that have produced a profound impression on German Catholicism¹⁷⁰. According to him, the present ecclesiological problem is essentially conditioned by the spiritual movements of our days: on the one hand, the rationalism of the 19th century is overtaken by an intuitive metaphysics, and on the other hand, individualism has been replaced by a community instinct. It is obvious that such an orientation of mind turns eagerly toward religion and the Church as the most noble forms of intuition and community life, respectively. We must search here for the true meaning of these words that have become classic: "A Religious process of incalculable importance has begun—the Church is coming to life in the souls of men."¹⁷¹

The time has thus arrived to which Pilgram assigned the duty of showing and realizing the objective relation of the person to the community; and Guardini, in turn, does not want to reach in his lectures any goal other than to sketch the path to follow. The foundation of this relationship between person and community is the connatural attraction by which the person tends toward the organic community and wants to actualize it. To appreciate how much the fact of the Church is the accomplishment of the requirements of the person, a kind of intuition is necessary on the part of the theologian, says Guardini. "We must realize that, as Christians, our personality is achieved in proportion as we are more closely incorporated into the Church, and as the Church lives in us. When we address her, we say with deep understanding not 'thou' but 'I.'"¹⁷². The man of our time refuses to love the Church with superficial enthusiasm or vague feelings, and the mere fact that he is born within the Church is not enough for him to abandon himself totally to the Church¹⁷³. Guardini is of the opinion that perhaps the spirit of each era has never been so apt as ours to attract men to the mystery of the Church. However, he does not fail to realize the danger of viewing

¹⁶⁹Cf. M. SCHELER.: *Soziologische Neuorientierung und die Aufgaben der Katholiken nach dem Krieg*. Hl. 13 (1915-16 I.), pp. 385-406, 682-700; 13 (1915-16 ii.) pp. 188-204, 257-294.

¹⁷⁰R. GUARDINI: *Vom Sinn der Kirche*. Mainz 1922. Eng. tr., *The Church and the Catholic and The Spirit of Liturgy*. New York 1935.

¹⁷¹*Op. cit.*, p. 1. Eng. tr., p. 11.

¹⁷²*Op. cit.*, p. 33. Eng. tr., p. 47.

¹⁷³*Ibid.*

the Church as the product of this attraction. It is interesting to see that he expressly defends Pilgram, whose thought has been interpreted by many as the implicit negation of the supernatural order¹⁷⁴.

The mystery of the Church will save the person from the threats of our time such as collectivism, the tyranny of the state, and the manifestations of relativism: relativism in philosophy, in the sciences, and in the arts. Also, the metaphysical despair of the modern soul, caused by the loss of the Absolute, can be cured only by the Church which possesses the absolute truth in its dogmas, the supreme law in its ethics, and eternal life in its liturgy. Without being inserted in the Church, the person becomes a prisoner of the unilateralism of the times: he will be conditioned and absolutely dominated by the milieu, by the currents in vogue, and as such he will not be able to find the true freedom which is life lived in total dependence on God. So the idea of "*sentire cum Ecclesia*" is the way from unilateralism to fullness, the way from individualism to personality. Man is Catholic only as far as he does not live in the narrow sphere of his private life but in the fullness and totality of the Church. He is a Catholic only insofar as he has become the Church itself¹⁷⁵. To become the Church and to participate in this equilibrium which is the Church goes far beyond the forces of reason because the Church is above all a fact, a life, built by the sacraments, according to the laws of the Mystical Body.

The image of the Church delineated by Guardini is without a doubt one of the most accomplished in modern ecclesiology. A profound connoisseur of the spirit of our times, he is no less a great theologian who, while using the advantages of a modern approach to the Church, never yields to unilateralism. Similarly, the data of psychology and modern sociology do not make him lose sight of the supernatural mystery, and thus his lectures will have a permanent value and an always inspirational aura. All will gladly subscribe to his words: "That we can love the Church is at once the supreme grace which may be ours today, and the grace which we need most"¹⁷⁶.

In addition to the intellectual movements that we have just seen, contemporary sociology has also forced Catholic theologians to present the idea of the Church as the organic place of the person in society. The fundamental thesis at stake was formulated by Tönnies, for whom the individual exists only as a function of the whole¹⁷⁷. To refute the obvious errors of such a position, and to avoid at the same time the temptation to go to the

¹⁷⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 23. Eng. tr., p. 35.

¹⁷⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 73. Eng. tr., p. 44.

¹⁷⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 33. Eng. tr., p. 46.

¹⁷⁷ Cf. his work "Geist der Neuzeit". Leipzig 1935.

other extreme, the organic idea of the Church seemed particularly suited as a moderate position. That is why the ideas of Pilgram and Scheler were taken up by several German ecclesialogists who, without adding essentially new developments, proposed them from a directly sociological angle.

It is through the dialectic between the interior and the exterior that Rademacher shows how much the mystery of the Church is capable of harmonizing such conflicting values: the individual and collective, love and law. Conflicts that betray the two aspects of social existence: organic communion (*Gemeinschaft*) and social organization (*Gesellschaft*)¹⁷⁸. This does not mean that the Church would be reduced to the level of sociological phenomena, because, as Rademacher points out¹⁷⁹, this would mean adopting Kant's position on the Church. According to the latter, the Church is only a religious organization deprived of any supernatural element, but is it possible to explain the unparalleled sociological function of the Church, if one abstracts from its divine foundation?

The application of sociological principles to ecclesiological matters has been thoroughly pushed by one of Rademacher's disciples, N. Monzel. According to him sociology must appear in theology as *Strukturwissenschaft*, that is, to provide the principles for a systematization of sociological formations and relationships within the Church. This is important especially in methodology, because Christian doctrine is none other than the consciousness that the Church takes of its sociological structure¹⁸⁰. Moreover, Monzel assigns a decisive role to sociology in explaining the development of dogmas, because it is up to sociology to demonstrate the connection between doctrine and its bearer, the community¹⁸¹. Finally, the very nature of the Church cannot be understood without sociology if we admit with Monzel that it is the comprehension of the structure, rather than the penetration of its goal, which really makes us know a society¹⁸². To defend his position, Monzel refers¹⁸³ to K. Eschweiler, who deemed very important a work of this kind, especially having in mind Protestant ecclesiology, which rejects the visible side of the Church¹⁸⁴. But does this apologetic task require developments

¹⁷⁸A. RADEMACHER: *Die Kirche als Gemeinschaft und Gesellschaft*. Augsburg 1931.

¹⁷⁹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 143.

¹⁸⁰N. MONZEL: *Struktursoziologie und Kirchenbegriff*. Bonn 1931. "Die Glaubenslehre nicht anderes als das Bewusstsein der Sozialverbindung der Kirche von sich selbst...", p. 245.

¹⁸¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 264.

¹⁸²An idea no doubt exaggerated and somewhat questionable.

¹⁸³Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 242.

¹⁸⁴K. ESCHWEILER: *Die zwei Wege der neueren Theologie*. 1926.

so complicated and sometimes so obscure as those of Monzel?¹⁸⁵.

In conclusion, we may say that all those writers who have followed Pilgram in one way or another bear witness to the fact that the new tendencies of ecclesiology are inseparable from the experience that the Catholic wants in our times to encounter the total reality of human life. It is true that the harmonisation of theology with present thought has disadvantages and advantages; we can also state that the particular results of these works are still waiting to be inserted into a higher synthesis; moreover, it is undeniable that sometimes they seem to be more sketches than completed developments, but all this does not deprive them of the merit of having contributed some precious elements to a more comprehensive presentation of the mystery of the Church¹⁸⁶.

1.4 Naturalism and the mystery of the Church

Next to Romanticism, the naturalism of the last century also prompted Catholic thinkers to a deeper awareness of the mystery of the Church. Romanticism was far from being able to stop the continual secularization of the world begun with the Renaissance. While the deism and doctrinal atheism of Illuminism could not penetrate the broad strata of humanity, since the beginning of the 19th century, “secular” thought presents itself as the general belief in progress and becomes—according to Dawson—“an ideal capable of stirring men’s emotions and arising a genuine religious enthusiasm”¹⁸⁷. It is therefore not surprising that, step by step, an atheistic universe was drawn up, the slogan of which La Mettrie wrote poignantly: “The universe will never be happy as long as it is not atheist”¹⁸⁸.

Considering the thought of those who have pushed this logic to its ultimate consequences, it is interesting to note that the mysteries of the Incarnation, Church, and Christian divinisation ultimately constitute the object of the attacks of modern atheism. In Feuerbach, the dogmatist of materialism, man is the only object of philosophy, and hence the criterion of morality

¹⁸⁵Monzel defended his position recently in an article: *Die Soziologie und die Theologen*. Hl. 41 (1949) pp. 259-272.

¹⁸⁶Here are some more works regarding sociological ecclesiology, but they add nothing special to the works analyzed above: H. KELLER: *Zur Soziologie der Kirche*, Sch. 8 (1933) pp. 243-250; J. TERNUS: *Vom Gemeinschaftsglauben der Kirche. Ein Beitrag zur Soziologie des gesamtkirchlichen Lebens*, Sch. 10 (1935) pp. 1-30. — G. NEYRON: *Individualisme et Catholicisme*, Rev. Ap. 65 (1937) pp. 385-397, pp. 528-545.

¹⁸⁷C. DAWSON: *Progress and Religion: An historical enquiry*. London 1929, p. 192.

¹⁸⁸LA METTRIE: *L’homme-machine*. 1748. Quoted in G. COMBÈS: *Le retour offensif du paganisme*. Paris 1938, p. 22.

can only be the precarious happiness of the individual. So religious ideas with their transcendence deprive man of his real bliss to such an extent that the notion of God must be regarded as the great alienator of the mankind. According to Feuerbach the enrichment of God is built on the spoiling of man, and religion is in truth the vampire of humanity. To eliminate this tragedy from the life of humanity, the greatness attributed to God must be referred to humanity, and that is how we will reach the turning point of history where “man feels nothing towards God which he does not also feel towards man. *Homo homini deus est*”¹⁸⁹. He denounces Christianity the most among the religions because in the idea of the Incarnation man “registers his highest feelings and thoughts”¹⁹⁰.

Marx, afterwards, goes further. He reproaches Feuerbach for not having surpassed abstract criticism. According to Marx we must look for the reasons that gave birth to religion not in subjective desires but in social conditions. More precisely, religion is an invention of the upper classes, with the aim to retain the majority of men in the state of servitude. There is only one class, that of the proletariat, which is capable of liberating humanity and returning it to itself. So “the religion of the workers has no God, because it seeks to restore the divinity of man”¹⁹¹. Marx’s thought leads to a social idolatry, where the atheistic state claims to itself a messianic love¹⁹². Marxism wants to answer all the questions of the human existence and tends with all its strength toward the future society that will in turn replace the Divinity. Marx does not fail to paint in broad strokes the picture of this new humanism in which is erased the difference “between man and nature... between existence and essence, between objectification and assertion of self, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species”¹⁹³. What Communist propaganda inspired by Marx wants to substitute for the Christian religion is not the rationalism of Western thinkers, but “the ancient hope of Judeo-Christian apocalypses, transposed into Marxist language, where the role of Providence is played by the immanent dialectic of events and that of the chosen people, by the suffering and

¹⁸⁹G. FEUERBACH: *Wesen der Religion*, 1843. Eng. tr., “The Essence of Christianity” London 1854, p. 275. Quoted by H. DE LUBAC: *The Drama of Atheist Humanism*. Cleveland 1963, p. 10.

¹⁹⁰Feuerbach, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹⁹¹Cf. his letter to Hartmann; in DE LUBAC, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁹²“One point which is worth emphasizing is that this political community is not atheist accidentally and transiently; it is atheist constitutively and fundamentally”. Cf. CH. JOURNET: *The Church and totalitarian communities*. NV 10 (1935) p. 438.

¹⁹³K. MARX: *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*. Moscow 1967, p. 95.

ultimately triumphant class of the proletariat”¹⁹⁴.

Nietzsche’s more individualist atheism coincides at the end with Feuerbach’s and Marx’s central idea. According to Nietzsche, religion deprives the individual of his greatness, to such an extent that Christianity, religion par excellence makes man a nothingness¹⁹⁵. To liberate man from this slavery, abstract proofs do not suffice: one must show, according to him, how the idea of God evolved. In possession of this historical argument, one will be able to proclaim “the death of God”. The death of God, the fruit of a “heroic” act of will, goes well beyond the horizon of a vulgar atheism; it demands the strength of the “Super-men”. Nietzsche’s voluntarist atheism attacks Christian morality first and foremost. “Dionysus versus the Crucified”¹⁹⁶ is his motto. In his view, the theoretical questions about the truth of Christianity are a very accessory problem, “so long as no inquiry is made into the value of Christian morality.”¹⁹⁷. The morality of the Super-man appeals to a creative, powerful, heroic life, to the harshness and nobility of the Greek heroes, to the orgiastic life of Dionysos¹⁹⁸. No doubt the neo-paganism, inspired by Nietzsche, is going to exert an ever greater influence, and no less than Marxism it marks the apostasy of the masses.

As powerful as they are in themselves, Marxism and neo-paganism are but one arm of the great positivist current that has swept over our time. To be sure, complete positivism, as we find it in the works of Comte¹⁹⁹, retains a certain esoteric character, but the positive spirit is so closely interfused with the general thought of the age, that it has become almost unnoticeable, like the air one breathes²⁰⁰. The law of the three stages, the leading idea of Comte, highlights the atheism of his system. According to him mankind is subject to evolution, which leads it from the theological stage through the metaphysical stage to that of the positive principle. Our time, according to Comte, can boast of seeing the final advent of the positive age. This is the historical dogma of positivism. The theoretical dogma of this system found a characteristic expression in one of Comte’s letters, in which

¹⁹⁴L. ROUGIER: *La mystique soviétique*. Brussels, 1935, p. 79.

¹⁹⁵Cf. *Volonté de puissance*. Translated by G. Bianquis. Paris 1947. I, p. 108. Eng. tr., *The Will to Power*, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol XIV. Edinburgh and London 1914, p. 116.

¹⁹⁶*Ecce homo*, p. 177. Eng. tr., *Ecce Homo*, in *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, vol XVII. New York 1911, p. 143.

¹⁹⁷*Volonté de puissance*, I, p. 140. Eng. tr., p. 207.

¹⁹⁸Cf. DE LUBAC, *op. cit.*, p. 119.

¹⁹⁹A presentation on the relationship between positivism and Christianity is given in DE LUBAC, *op. cit.*, pp. 131-267.

²⁰⁰Cf. DE LUBAC, *op. cit.*, pp. 135.

he states that “positivism alone can make us systematically free; that is to say, subordinated to immutable and known laws, that enfranchise us from every personal domination”²⁰¹. The emancipation from the transcendent order goes hand in hand for positivism, with complete subordination to the immense organism of the social machine. For the individual there is nothing left but to immerse oneself unreservedly in the universal relativism of society. An interesting but very characteristic fact is that Comte sought to find a provisional alliance with Catholicism to arrive in a relatively short time at this absolute “sociolatry”.

Comte, in turn, carefully distinguished between the message of Jesus and that of St. Paul to such an extent that the latter, according to him, completely reversed the religion of the Gospels by substituting a strictly priestly system for it. This is where, according to Comte, the historical merit of Catholicism lies: the submission of the masses to a strong social discipline. Henceforth, Catholicism must give way to positive catholicism, directed by the priesthood of scholars. Thus, the positivist Church, which Comte soon founded, transferred to humanity the prerogatives of God in opposition to Christianity. The cult of this new “church” is “social physics”, which helps to establish the “messianic” kingdom on earth. We think we are correct in indicating in this “ecclesiasticity” the synthetic aspect of modern atheism. It is understandable then that Catholics—hierarchy, theologians, and laymen—have been forced to rethink and relive the mystery of the Church better. In fact, from the beginning of the last century, informed ecclesiologists and papal documents, starting from the Vatican Council, very frequently emphasize that the real antidote against these deviations is the lived mystery of the Church.

Already Möhler’s *Unity* wanted to serve, among other things, this goal. He reveals to us in the preface to *Symbolism* that his first work was intended to bring out the mystical, supernatural aspect of the Church against the tendencies of naturalism²⁰². Newman’s thought also reveals the same concern. He, whose conversion is based on the impossibility of finding a *via media* between atheism and Catholicism²⁰³, notes in one of his letters that the waters of infidelity have risen like a deluge, and he adds: “I look for the time, after my life, when only the tops of the mountains will be seen like islands in the waste of waters”. This is the great catastrophe of Protestant liberalism that he wants to predict, by pointing out immediately that only at the cost

²⁰¹Letter to Henry Dix Hutton; in DE LUBAC, *op. cit.*, p. 173.

²⁰²Cf. *Symbolik*, p. XI. Passage absent from the Eng. tr.

²⁰³According to A. Cecil (Six Oxford Thinkers. London 1909, p. 62), the antinomy between atheism and Catholicism is what ultimately motivated the conversion of Newman.

of an immense effort, provided by Catholic leaders, will the Church be able to avoid this great calamity²⁰⁴.

The fathers of the Vatican Council constantly had in view the danger of naturalism, and the *Schema De Ecclesia* presented the mystery of the Church as a remedy for the ills of the time, especially since the sublime idea of the Church, according to the *Schema*, had faded among the faithful. It is no longer the Protestant denial of the visible aspect of the Church to be refuted, the *Schema* reminds us, but it is against the naturalism of society, that it is necessary to vindicate the supernatural society, organism of salvation²⁰⁵.

In the writings of Cardinal Pie, we find a vigorous echo of the ideas that animated the Council as regards the mystery of the Church versus naturalism. "These truths (naturalism)," he writes, "are so much ingrained in humanity, that all the impieties of the present time are hardly anything more than its travesty"²⁰⁶. The cardinal denounces, in turn, the principle of naturalism²⁰⁷, its fundamental opposition to Christianity²⁰⁸, its execrable blasphemy of pretending to be a universal system, its tendency to render illusory the deific extent of the Incarnation²⁰⁹. To fight contemporary naturalism in all its positions and in all the entrenchments it occupies, "it would be necessary," he writes, "to reemphasize the teaching of the Church... on the extension of this deific union throughout all mankind by the order of grace and divine adoption"²¹⁰. The more naturalism invades the various sectors of human life, the more completely the system of Christ²¹¹ is to be propagated; the more atheism wants to gain ground, the more we must insist on Christian "deification, which reflects on all angelic and terrestrial creation, of which man is the center and link; such an obligatory and com-

²⁰⁴Letter to Mrs. Maskell, Jan. 6th, 1877; in W. WARD: *The Life of J.H. Card. Newman*, 1913. II p. 416.

²⁰⁵"...notum est omnibus ipsam in primis esse mystici corporis speciem quæ nunc inter homines adeo carnales ac mundanos aut penitus ignoratur, aut, uti oportet non attenditur; quare illa videbatur ante omnia in animis fidelium excitanda". Mansi, Vol. 51, col. 554.

²⁰⁶Oeuvres de Monseigneur l'évêque de Poitiers. Poitiers, 1867 Vol. V, p. 168. (Troisième instruction synodale sur les principales erreurs du temps présent).

²⁰⁷"...it is clear (for naturalism) that we are divine by the very fact of our existence, that humanity is divine, that by his solidarity with the human race each individual is deified. And because the human race is linked to everything and sums it all up, it is the most perfect expression of divinity". *Op. cit.*, Vol. VII, p. 195. (Instr. syn. sur la première constitution du Concile du Vatican).

²⁰⁸*Op. cit.*, Vol. VII, pp. 193-194.

²⁰⁹Cf. *op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 169.

²¹⁰*Op. cit.*, Vol. V, pp. 53-54.

²¹¹*Op. cit.*, Vol. V, p. 135.

manded deification will be found too light, when placed in the celestial balance, if it will not bring this supernatural and divine addition”²¹².

The doctrine of the Mystical Body, opposed to the errors of the times and presented as a synthesis of Christian existence, is often found in the teaching of the Popes. The allocutions and encyclicals of Pius IX and Leo XIII allude repeatedly to the fact that modern atheism strives to destroy the Church and, on the contrary, advocates of religious education and the freedom of the Church rightly make possible the participation of humanity in the divine life. The encyclicals of Pius XI, especially, emphasize the actuality of the doctrine of the Mystical Body with the greatest force.

Since his first encyclical, *Ubi arcano*, he drew the attention of the world to the evils “which transcend the material or natural sphere and lie within the supernatural and religious order properly so-called; in other words, those evils which affect the spiritual life of souls.”²¹³. A deeper awareness of the royal priesthood, of atonement in the Mystical Body, is indicated in his Encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor* as an important factor in drawing the Church out of its difficult situation²¹⁴. Again, the doctrine of the Mystical Body presents itself as the purpose and fulfillment of Christian education in his encyclical *Divini illius magistri*²¹⁵. Similarly, at the root of the social problems, Christian deification is at stake, according to the great Pope²¹⁶, and the solution will be accomplished only “when the constituent parts of society deeply feel themselves members of one great family and children of the same Heavenly Father; nay, that they are one body in Christ, ‘but severally members one of another’ (Rom. 12:5), so that ‘if one member suffers anything, all the members suffer with it.’ (I Cor. 12:26)”²¹⁷. Against satanic propaganda and in persecution, it is necessary to remark, there remains nothing else but to live the Christian truths, among which the most important for the times is “the human fraternity divinized in Christ and in His Mystical Body, the Church [*l’umana fraternità divinizzata in Cristo e nel Suo Corpo mistico la Chiesa*]”²¹⁸. The Sovereign Pontiff often returns to the same ideas in the encyclicals *Divini Redemptoris*, *Mit brennender Sorge*,

²¹² *Ibid.*

²¹³ AAS 14 (1922) pp. 679-680.

²¹⁴ Cf. AAS 20 (1928) p. 176.

²¹⁵ Cf. AAS 22 (1930) p. 83.

²¹⁶ “Economic and social disorders only show the surface; at bottom lies the great question: humanity would like to live from now on with or without God; if the response of classes and nations will be that of living without God, disastrous times would follow...” (Encyclical *Quadragesimo Anno*, AAS 23 (1931) p. 223).

²¹⁷ *Ibid.*

²¹⁸ Allocutio ad Filios Hispaniae, AAS 28 (1936) p. 378.

and *Nos es muy conocida*, emphasizing the true meaning of these great deviations, which are so fundamentally opposed to the immutable destiny of man and to his dignity as an adopted son of God in the Mystical Body²¹⁹.

Among the themes of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis* also appear “the circumstances of the present time”²²⁰, the attacks launched against the Church by neopaganism²²¹. The Sovereign Pontiff also denounces rationalism and naturalism, which consider absurd all that surpasses the powers of the human mind and which see in the Church only purely social links²²². To excite many Christians, charmed by the seductions of the world and “in compliance with the wishes of many, We will set forth before the eyes of all and extol the beauty, the praises, and the glory of Mother Church...”²²³. Reading the last sentences of the encyclical, where it treats of the love of the Church, one cannot fail to feel the immense need of the Church that agitates contemporary humanity.

After having exposed the teaching of the popes on this point, we are enabled to evoke the thought of some recent authors regarding the great dilemma which arises from the antagonism between these two kinds of divinization. According to J. Maritain, at the origin of modern atheism there is a deep resentment against the Christian world, even against Christianity itself²²⁴. Mgr. de Solages notes in turn that the spectacle offered by the bad Christians disconcerts those who are in search of the true Church and makes them think that the evangelical ideal can then be found only outside the Catholic Church²²⁵. Moreover, Marxism was born at the time, as Fr. Lavaud correctly notes, when Christians served the most pagan economic system: capitalism. According to him “the non-Christian practice of the baptized eager to serve Mammon” pushed Marx to pretend that the Church is linked to capitalism and that she abandons the proletariat to its sad destiny²²⁶.

We can then agree with Berdyaev’s conclusion, according to which the position of the Christian world in front of communism is not only the position of the one who carries the eternal and absolute truth in himself: it is also

²¹⁹Cf. *Divini Redemptoris*, AAS 29 (1937) p. 78.

²²⁰*Ed. cit.*, p. 22.

²²¹*Ed. cit.*, pp. 23-24.

²²²*Ed. cit.*, p. 28.

²²³*Ed. cit.*, p. 24.

²²⁴Cf. *Humanisme intégral. Problèmes temporels et spirituels d’une nouvelle chrétienté*. Paris 1947. New ed., p. 49. Eng. tr., *True Humanism*. London 1938, p. 33 ff.

²²⁵Cf. *Pour rebâtir une chrétienté*. Paris 1938, p. 238.

²²⁶*Antireligion communiste et athéisme militant*, NV 8 (1933) p. 395.

the position of the culprit, who did not know how to realize this truth. “[Russians] had to make real either brotherhood in Christ, or comradeship in Antichrist. (...) The people of Russia have put this choice in front of the whole world with awe-inspiring force”²²⁷. Nothing is easier then to glimpse the two horns of this dilemma: the growth or the decline of the Church, to use the classic expression of Card. Suhard²²⁸, and at the same time to esteem the true value of the ecclesiological effort which aims precisely by the complete presentation of the mystery of the Church to repress modern unbelief and to revive this mystery in the souls of the faithful.

1.5 Spiritual renewal and the mystery of the Church

We have just seen how Romanticism and the struggle against naturalism led Catholic thought to an attitude nourished by the mystery of the Church. But the main factor that drove the faithful toward the mystical experience of the Church is the renewal of the interior life in the Church. Here too, it transpires once more that the mystery of the Church was already a mystery experienced by diverse layers of Christians, before the ecclesiological renewal reached its peak between the two wars. Among the practical factors that had a repercussion on deepening this experience of the Church we should mention the liturgical movement, the Christocentric spirituality, the restoration of the dignity of the laity, and the Christian social movement.

It is interesting to note that the origins of liturgical renewal date back to Romanticism. According to a remark by O. Casel²²⁹, the seeds of the German liturgical movement of our days are to be found in the Romantic period. Although Möhler did not deal directly with the practical questions of liturgical restoration²³⁰, however, his ecclesiology has become its great inspiration²³¹. Möhler made the sources of the liturgical spirit, the patristic thought, accessible by going beyond the artificial Jansenist-inspired reforms

²²⁷N. BERDYAEV: *Un Nouveau Moyen Age*. Paris 1927, p. 292. Eng. tr., *The End of Our Times*. London 1933, p. 206.

²²⁸Lenten Pastoral Letter, 1947. *Doc. Cath.* 29 (1947) p. 384.

²²⁹Cf. art. “Liturgische Bewegung” in *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart*. III, p. 1699.

²³⁰Except for the brief period from 1823 to 1826, when he favoured, in articles of the *Tübinger Quartalschrift*, the use of the chalice for the laity, the liturgy in the national language, and so on. Cf. O. ROUSSEAU: *Histoire du mouvement liturgique*. Paris 1945, p. 85.

²³¹Cf. A.L. MAYER: *Liturgie, Romantik und Restauration*. *JL* 10 (1930) p. 141.

of the Council of Pistoia. Above all, Möhler's ecclesiology has positively influenced the practical projects in the liturgical matter of Sailer and Hirscher. All this is all the more easy to understand if one remembers Möhler's main preoccupation, which seeks to demonstrate the organic continuity between the primitive Church and the present Church, which manifests itself most powerfully through Christian worship. Möhler called this Christian worship the expression of the "powerful generations, the manifestation par excellence of the living Christ in his Church"²³².

Newman, while still a Protestant, did not fail to insinuate the important role that the liturgy could play in the conversion of an Anglican to the Church of Rome, and he was often astonished by the shortsighted views of certain Catholic apologists who did not care to present the liturgy, so full of excellence and beauty, as the Roman devotion par excellence²³³. We know the role played by the liturgy in his personal conversion to such an extent that the liturgy has always remained a fundamental element of his idea of the Church: the divine service that manifests the Communion of Saints and makes spiritual life possible²³⁴. Pilgram, in turn, is no less energetic, as we have seen, on this point.

It must also be noted that the spirit of the 19th century has greatly impeded the development of liturgical renewal. The Church had been forced to focus on other issues, such as strengthening its organization and cultural activity. Thus, for a long time, the flowering of liturgical renewal was confined to monastic circles, and it is there that we find the first convergences between the liturgy and the idea of the Church²³⁵. The two main figures in this matter are undoubtedly Dom Guéranger and Dom Wolter, founders of the monastic congregations of Solesmes and Beuron. The great publications, *Institutions liturgiques* and *L'année liturgique*, reveal everywhere how much a new understanding of the Church is involved. Guéranger presents his *Institutions*, "where the mysterious beauties and celestial harmonies that the Holy Spirit has spread over the forms of divine worship are told"²³⁶. His *L'année liturgique*, whose projects are indicated, would be aimed precisely at the initiation of the faithful to Catholic piety, to *sentire cum Ecclesia*²³⁷. The preface of *L'année liturgique* emphasizes the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church: "He is the principle of her movements; he imposes on her his

²³²J.-É. VIERNEISEL: L'actualité religieuse de Möhler. EU, pp. 304-05.

²³³Cf. L. BEAUDUIN: La piété de l'Église. Principes et faits. Louvain 1914, p. 43.

²³⁴Cf. VAN DE POL: *Op. cit.*, p. 130.

²³⁵Cf. A.L. Mayer, *Art. cit.*, p. 142.

²³⁶*Institutions liturgiques*. Paris 1878. 2nd ed. I, p. LXVII.

²³⁷Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. LXXVIII-LXXIX.

requests, wishes, hymns of praise, enthusiasm, and sighs. Here is why, for eighteen centuries, she has not been silent neither day nor night; and her voice is always melodious; her word always goes to the heart of her Bridegroom”²³⁸. We can thus understand the words of Card. Pitra, according to which Guéranger was the theologian who most penetrated the mystery of the Church²³⁹.

Dom Wolter, in turn, develops the liturgical aspect of the Church at the monastic level. According to him the hieratic and liturgical life of an abbey represents the ideal realization of the Church. The divine office solemnly celebrated puts the communion of saints, the Mystical Body of Christ²⁴⁰, before us in all its splendor. To highlight the major importance of this monastic-liturgical convergence with the idea of the Church, it is necessary to quote Fr. Rousseau: “...it seems,” he writes, “that between the liturgical conception of Guérangerian and Beuronian monasticism and Orthodox ecclesiology, the best possible rapprochement between the two churches was effected opportunely and almost as by chance”²⁴¹.

We do not wish to deal at length with the practical development of the liturgical movement supported by the monastic renewal. That the latter has excited many Christians to a more supernatural love of the Church does not need further demonstration. Practical adaptations, efforts for a better religious education of the faithful, especially in Belgium before the First World War²⁴², do not add anything remarkable to our subject. This is also true of the *Semaines liturgiques* held in Belgium immediately after the First World War. The rich documentation we have of these is the *Cours et Conférences des Semaines liturgiques*²⁴³. In Germany, Pius Parsch contributed most visibly, among the faithful, to a better understanding of the Church through its liturgy, while in France the *Cahiers* of *La Maison-Dieu* are the most prominent documentations of this ecclesio-liturgical apostolate.

We must look especially to the collaborators of the *Ecclesia Orans* collection to find the systematic exhibitions on the ecclesiological aspect of the liturgy. Very significantly, the first volume of this collection was presented by Dom I. Herwegen, Abbot of Maria Laach, as an emphasis on and a return

²³⁸L'Année liturgique. Paris 1890 I, p. X ff. (translation from French. Eng. tr. of the whole series by L. Shepherd O.S.B., Loreto Publications, 2000).

²³⁹Cf. DON DELATTE: Dom Guéranger, Abbé de Solesmes. Paris 1909. II, p. 443.

²⁴⁰Praecipua Ordinis monastici Elementa. Bruges 1880. ch. II.

²⁴¹O. Rousseau, *op. cit.*, p. 196.

²⁴²Cf. O. ROUSSEAU, *op. cit.*, Chap. VII.: Les origines du mouvement liturgique en Belgique, pp. 131-150.

²⁴³Par les soins des moines de l'abbaye du Mont-César. Louvain 1922 ff.

to the experience of the Church in liturgical prayer²⁴⁴. From this viewpoint is it not an exaggeration to say with Guardini that the problem of the liturgy is the problem of the Church in its cultural aspect?²⁴⁵ The authors of *Ecclesia Orans* approach this fundamental problem from two angles: what is the subject of this experience and what are its main features?

The subject of this experience is the Church as an organic community in the mystery of worship. The Church, in this respect, is neither a religion, nor a confession, nor a system of truths and of moral precepts, but the “mystery” itself. “It is certainly not constituted,” writes J. Pinsk, “by dogma and by discipline, but by the *actio Christi in mysterio* as it is celebrated in the Mass and in the sacraments”²⁴⁶. The first to condense all Christianity into one word, *mysterium*, was St. Paul himself, Dom Casel warns us, and this *mysterium* is identical with *Christus*, designating both the person of the Savior and his Mystical Body which is the Church²⁴⁷. Christianity, seen from this angle, is the Revelation in facts and theandric gestures; it is the communication of grace and the access of humanity to the heavenly Father. The mystery of worship presents the Church in her continual birth, in her vital union with her Head through the sacraments. One is inclined to speak of a continual creation of the Church in its members. This creation takes place above all in the liturgical assembly whose action par excellence is the Mass. Mass is the classic form of the mysterious life of the Church and the realization of the Pauline idea of the “body of Christ”, according to Th. Michels²⁴⁸. An organic community is thus born which perfectly satisfies the aspirations of the time: “The liturgical community is an ideal, a luminous flame, which springs powerfully from our world. A mystical current toward the community runs through our time. One discovers again that the community offers us something incomparable, that it is a supreme, incomparable good”²⁴⁹.

An idea dear to many authors consists in portraying the Church in the image of the liturgical assembly. Among the authors of *Ecclesia Orans*, we

²⁴⁴R. GUARDINI: *Vom Geist der Liturgy*. Freiburg (Br) 1918. Introduction by Dom. I. Herwegen, pp. VII-XIII. Eng. tr., *The Spirit of Liturgy*. Chestnut Ridge, NY 1998. The English translation has a different Introduction.

²⁴⁵Cf. R. GUARDINI: *Das Objektive im Gebetsleben*. JL 1 (1921) pp. 117-125.

²⁴⁶Die Liturgie als Grundlage für die religiöse Wirklichkeit von Kirche, Diözese und Pfarrei, LZ 4 (1931) p. 427.

²⁴⁷Le mystère du culte dans le christianisme. Paris 1946, p. 22.

²⁴⁸Die Liturgie im Lichte der kirchlichen Gemeinschaftsidee. JL 1 (1921) pp. 109-116. Cf. especially pp. 109-110.

²⁴⁹Die Kirche als liturgische Gemeinschaft. Mainz 1924, p. 111.

find it in Panfoeder²⁵⁰, but his developments do not add much to those of A. Gréa²⁵¹. The latter takes up the thought of St. Ignatius of Antioch who draws the figure of the bishop as the center of the Church, the home and source of sanctification for his people gathered around him in sacrifice and in prayer. Thus, the idea of a diocese goes well beyond legal notions, as J. Pinski points out: The bishop is above all the liturgist in his diocese; his role par excellence is to communicate grace, the life of Christ²⁵². Consequently, facts like the erection of a new diocese or the function of the cathedral chapter contain a deep ecclesiological meaning. Wintersig applied the same ideas to parish life²⁵³. The parish is in fact the organ through which the Christian comes into contact with the Redemption; the relation between the bishop and his diocese is reproduced, proportionately speaking, in the one between the priest and his parish. The liturgical actions reserved for the pastor, the blessing of baptismal fonts, etc., aptly emphasize this parallelism. By virtue of their constant renewal in the liturgical mystery of the parish, the works of charity do not lose their supernatural character, and only an intense liturgical life of the parish will be able to repress the social tensions among the parishioners. So, to expect the solution of parochial problems from organizational methods would be wrong; liturgical renewal alone can provide a final answer.

The liturgical aspect of the Church in time is reflected in the liturgical year, that links the Church subjected to change and that of immutable eternity. The liturgical year expresses for the faithful, according to Casel, the relationship between the glorified Christ and his Mystical Body²⁵⁴. This connection with the heavenly Church through the liturgy ultimately explains why the liturgical mystery is always complete: Easter is found fully in each particular feast. “The Church whose head is in heaven, even if her feet, her unfinished limbs, still walk on earth, is not subject to the eternal change proper to the decrepit things of this world. In nature “everything flows”, everything changes and everything is transformed, everything is born, dis-

²⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, *passim*.

²⁵¹ *De l'Église et de sa divine constitution*. Paris 1907, 2nd ed. II, pp. 13-21. See also H. CLÉRISSAC: *Le mystère de l'Église*. Paris 1925, 3rd ed. (Eng. tr., *The Mystery of the Church*. Providence, RI 2016) ch. IV. “La vie hiératique de l'Église” (pp. 61-84) and ch. IX. “Les Fêtes du mystère de l'Église” (pp. 169-187). Eng. tr., ch. IV. “The Hieratic Life of the Church” (pp. 31-42) and ch. IX. “The Feasts of the Mystery of the Church” (pp. 85-97) .

²⁵² *Pfarrei und Mysterium*. JL 5 (1925) pp. 136-143.

²⁵³ *Die Liturgie als Grundlage für die religiöse Wirklichkeit von Kirche, Diözese und Pfarrei*. LZ 4 (1931) pp. 426-437.

²⁵⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 131.

appears constantly, everything comes to life and then dies. With Christ, the *Ecclesia sancta* is above these fluctuations; she is in the reign of the eternal Spirit”²⁵⁵.

The horizon of the Church thus widens in time and space. In time, she meets eternity in the liturgical year²⁵⁶; in space, by virtue of the sacraments and sacramentals, the world becomes the consecrated universe. Of this last idea, Pinski gives a magnificent synthesis²⁵⁷. Given the universal scope of the Incarnation, nothing remains outside the sanctifying power of the liturgy. This consecration of the universe is realized by the application of the sacred signs and actions. This is how the material world enters the sphere of the supernatural. The liturgy consecrates not only the material expressions of the activity of the mind, the language, and the writing, but also the most banal instruments of everyday life. By emphasizing that the consecration of the world always implies sacrifice, suffering, the liturgy does not forget that the material world remains all the same an analogical way toward God. The work of the liturgy therefore consists, from this viewpoint, in preparing and anticipating the completion of this consecration according to the hidden way of divine life in the Incarnate Word and in the extended Christ: the Church. The more we participate in the liturgy, the more will we have a profound experience of what the Church is and the more we will have the guarantee that the final completion of this cosmic consecration will not fail.²⁵⁸

It is obvious that the principal traits of this liturgical experience of the Church are well characterized. According to Hammenstede²⁵⁹ liturgical spirituality, based essentially on the mystery of the Church, differs from other spiritualities by its collectivism, historicism, and dogmatism²⁶⁰. Truly, Hammenstede thinks he has recovered the elements of a Christian humanism in this liturgical experience that the faithful make in the Church. Instead of a religious individualism, liturgical spirituality strives above all for the interests of the kingdom of God; it tends towards the communion of the saints and harmonizes the supernatural world and the culture of this world. The apologetic attitude gives way to the dogmatic orientation, and as the ancient spirituality it makes us return to the Church of the first centuries²⁶¹.

²⁵⁵O. CASEL: *Op. cit.*, p. 132.

²⁵⁶Cf. C. PANFOEDER: *Op. cit.*, p. 51: “Die Liturgie betrachtet diesen Zusammenschluss mit der himmlischen Kirche nicht als nebensächlich, sondern als höchst wesentlich”.

²⁵⁷J. PINSKI: *Die sakramentale Welt. Ecclesia Orans* 22. Freiburg (Br) 1938.

²⁵⁸*Op. cit.*, pp. 201-202.

²⁵⁹Die Liturgie als Erlebnis. *Ecclesia Orans* 3. Freiburg (Br) 1919.

²⁶⁰Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

²⁶¹See especially pp. 1-31. “Aus dem Subjektivem und Persönlichen will ich zum Ob-

Herwegen, in turn, sees in this liturgical experience of the Church the reconciliation between classical and modern attitudes²⁶². The ancient man, immersed in the harmony of a static environment, loved objectivity and classified beings according to their type. On the contrary, modern man instinctively attaches himself to the concrete, to the immediate experience. The same divergence can be seen, according to the author, in the fact that while Christian antiquity focused on the ontological sanctity of the whole Church, modern man seeks rather the moral sanctity of its members. Also, from the awakening of the concrete sense in the aftermath of the Low Middle Ages, continues Herwegen, there is a desire to see the constitutive principle of the Church in a subjective element: in the loyalty of the faithful to the Church. Without wishing to force this antagonism between the ancient and the modern, between “Romanism” and “Germanism”²⁶³, it must be recognized that these two attitudes are more complementary than contradictory, and it would be a form of crude unilateralism to sacrifice the one for the other. In fact, nothing remains as compelling as the need for a synthesis between becoming and being, activity and contemplation, objective and subjective. According to Herwegen, the Mystical Body of Christ achieves this higher synthesis through its vital centre, the mystery of worship. Herwegen strongly emphasizes the supernatural character of such a synthesis, because the dimension of the task transcends a purely human attitude, however universal it may be²⁶⁴.

D. von Hildebrand shows, with regard to the problem of the formation of the personality, how much the liturgical experience is capable of realizing the organic unity of subjective and objective values²⁶⁵. The liturgy, he writes, in its classical structure communicates to the participants the spirit of reverence, frankness, and discretion, and thus it renders an unparalleled service to the formation of a true personality. Following Scheler’s principles Hildebrand bases his developments on two ideas: on the one hand, every value requires an adequate response on the part of the person²⁶⁶, and on the other hand, the world of authentic values is the supreme unifying force²⁶⁷.

jektiven und Allgemeingültigen vordringen, die Form des eigenen Ich aufopfern und in die Seele der Kirche, in ihren Gottesdienst, in ihre Gemeinschaft, in den mystischen Leib, in Christus das Haupt hineinwachsen.” Panfoeder, *op. cit.*, p. 162.

²⁶²“Antike, Germanentum und Christentum”. Salzburg 1932.

²⁶³Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 36.

²⁶⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 73.

²⁶⁵Liturgy and Personality. New York 1943. We use the Eng. tr. of the German original.

²⁶⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 76. This principle, writes Hildebrand, is refractory to any direct demonstration; as an axiom it must be grasped in an immediate, intuitive way.

²⁶⁷Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 44.

By communicating the realities, the supreme values, the liturgy transforms the individual into a personality in which, thanks to the vital contact with the values, one will no longer find traces of egocentrism, superficiality, and indiscretion. The person thus formed becomes the type of the classical Christian attitude whose manifestation par excellence is a holy living in perfect union with God and with the universe by virtue of the mystery of the Body of Christ²⁶⁸.

Nothing better shows how much the salient features of the liturgical experience are eagerly sought by the generation of our times than the studies of W. Becker²⁶⁹ and Th. Kampmann²⁷⁰. Becker notes above all the presence of a new Romanticism in modern aspirations regarding the Church²⁷¹. This new Romanticism goes hand in hand with the appetite for reality and the desire to take possession of all values by and in the Church. Kampmann, in turn, emphasizes that the motto “to relive reality” does not mean a vague sentimentality, but the taking of possession of reality in itself: the sacramental reality. This reality, a personality-forming force, is grounded more deeply than the social structure of the Church and the intellectual formation of its dogmas; it is the ecclesial reality embodied in the liturgy²⁷². To try to assimilate the values offered in the liturgical experience in a way that is consistent with modern mentality is perfectly legitimate²⁷³, provided that one does not expose himself to dangerous deviations, such as the separation of the two aspects of the Church or even a modernist immanentism²⁷⁴. It can therefore be stated without exaggeration that the liturgical movement led to a new understanding of the Church. It discovers to us the Church for which we live and [helps us to] become its living members. “Here,” to borrow the striking words of Fr. Jungmann, “the *Corpus Christi Mysticum* has become the favorite doctrine of a whole generation”²⁷⁵.

After the liturgical movement, it is worth mentioning the influence of the Christocentric spirituality in favor of the deepening of a more lively knowledge of the Church in the diverse strata of the faithful. “The most decisive element... in current ecclesiological renewal has been,” Fr. Congar

²⁶⁸Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 217.

²⁶⁹“Zum Kirchenbild einer jungen deutschen Generation”, in “Christliche Verwirklichung”. Romano Guardini zum fünfzigsten Geburtstag dargebracht. Würzburg 1935, pp. 84-101.

²⁷⁰“Liturgie und die Jugend der Gegenwart”. Hl. 33 (1936) II, pp. 481-496.

²⁷¹Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 84.

²⁷²TH. KAMPMANN: *Art. cit.*, p. 482.

²⁷³*Ibid.*

²⁷⁴TH. KAMPMANN: *Art. cit.*, p. 495.

²⁷⁵J.A. JUNGSMANN: *L'Église dans la vie religieuse d'aujourd'hui*. EU, p. 340.

writes, “a deepening of the interior life, especially where it looks at the person of Jesus Christ and where it feeds on the sacraments, principally through the Eucharistic communion. We are convinced that the attention paid with greater fervor to Christ himself has made his Mystical Body better understood”²⁷⁶.

Unlike the “Life of Jesus” published in the last century, the recently published works of this kind leave aside the already obsolete discussions of rationalist criticism and present the Divine Master above all in his relationship with those whom he came to redeem. The meditative developments of the Savior’s life are most characteristic of this viewpoint. Take for example one of the masterpieces of modern spiritual literature, *Our Way and Our Life: Christ in His Mysteries* by Dom Marmion²⁷⁷, whose fundamental theme is the participation of the members in the mysteries of their divine Head. The more the earthly life of this Divine Head progresses, the more the idea of the Mystical Body comes in the foreground. This is especially true considering the culminating points of the work of redemption: the members who suffer, die, return to life, and ascend to heaven with their Head, this is the leading idea of these classic spiritual conferences. This union of the limbs and the Head in a mystical person constitutes the central point of a well-received article at the time of its publication by Fr. Chardon²⁷⁸. On this plane the mystery of the Church has become not only one of the main points of meditation²⁷⁹, but simply the foundation of the ascetic and mystical theology²⁸⁰. The doctrine of the Mystical Body was far from being just a cherished idea of limited circles. It penetrated the realm of catechisms that have been composed, even today, according to the post-Tridentine apologetic mentality. In this sense Archbishop Williams²⁸¹ wanted to review the current catechisms, and the implementation of such a request, if well grounded, could not be delayed for long, as even recent publications containing illustrations leading to an easier understanding of this mystery show²⁸².

²⁷⁶Y. CONGAR: Autour du renouveau de l’ecclésiologie. VInt II. t. LXI. (10 Jan. 1939) pp. 10-11.

²⁷⁷Published in 1917. Eng. tr., by a Nun of Tyburn, reprinted by Angelico Press, 2013.

²⁷⁸L. CHARDON: Que par la subsistance mystique les âmes saintes font une seule personne mystique avec Jésus. Vie Spir. 30 (1932) pp. 298-307.

²⁷⁹J. LECLERCQ: Méditations sur l’Église. Liège 1926. — Let us mention also: MGR. GUERRY: Dans le Christ total. Elévations sur le mystère de l’Église. Paris 1952.

²⁸⁰Cf. A. TANQUEREY: Les dogmes générateurs de la piété chrétienne. Paris 1926.

²⁸¹A plea for the revision of the Catechism. Clergy Review 1 (1931) pp. 453-462.

²⁸²See for example: E. REICHGAUER: Einigung mit Gott: Schematisch-konstruktive Darstellung des Corpus Christi Mysticum. I. Band Grundlegender Teil mit 16 farbigen Volltafeln und 5 Einschaltbildern. Freiburg (Br) s. d. [1934].

It is very easy to see that such a renewal of spirituality could not be without effect on men still outside the Church and on Catholics troubled in their faith by various kinds of difficulties. A long series of great converts and Catholic thinkers found in the idea of the Mystical Body the irresistible pole of attraction, according to the words of Mauriac²⁸³:

Like many troubled Catholics in those days, difficulties of an historical order inclined me to seek elsewhere than in history the foundations of a belief to which I still adhered. Christ, living in the Church, living in the saints, and in each one of us, made real to me the Christ of history... It was a knowledge of the river which relieved me from all anxiety concerning its source; it was the great spreading tree, its branches filled with many birds, which made me accept without question the grain of mustard seed.

Of course, all of this testifies that Christ can be found only within his Church and that the search for Christ isolated from his Church does not attain its goal. So, according to Ceriani, theology, by synthesizing the revealed data regarding the Mystical Body, only reflects a fundamental aspiration of our time²⁸⁴.

Nothing better characterizes how the mystery of the Church has become the common good of the larger circles of Christendom than the restoration of the honour of the laity in the Church. To get an idea of the measure of change regarding the active attachment of simple faithful to the Church, allow us to report two statements, a little hyperbolic, but very striking. Let us quote first a letter from Talbot, written from Rome in 1867, to his archbishop, Manning, about an article by Newman, where the future cardinal may have defended too forcefully the role of the faithful people in the formulation of the matters of faith. "What is the province of the laity? To hunt, to shoot, to entertain. These matters they understand, but to meddle with ecclesiastical matters they have no right at all"²⁸⁵.

A passage from a speech of Card. Verdier, pronounced on February 20, 1931, in front of a great number of priests and working men, is also strong, but in the wrong way: "Gentlemen, if the mission that the Pope gave me and through me to all Catholic France, to organize this general action of

²⁸³F. MAURIAC: *Vie de Jésus*. Paris 1936. Preface of the new edition, pp. IX-X. Eng. tr., *Life of Jesus*. London 1937, pp. 277-278.

²⁸⁴G. CERIANI: *Orientamenti teologici nel Novecento*. Milano 1938, p. 89.

²⁸⁵Cited in W. WARD: *The Life of J.H. Card. Newman* London 1912. Vol. II pp. 146-147.

Catholics, will become a reality, you will have a somewhat new ministry... Until now you remained undisputed masters, almost kings of divine right. If tomorrow the laity will be placed next to the hierarchy to lead Catholic Action outside, you will now become like constitutional kings...”²⁸⁶.

It is paradoxical at first glance, but it highlights the grandeur of the hierarchy of the Church, the fact that the Roman Pontiffs once again are the tireless apostles of this restoration of the dignity of the laity. Since Pius IX, the Popes did not cease to inculcate the importance of the laity in the life of the Church. The movement of the Christian workers, inaugurated by Leo XIII, the organization of the laity in the professional order, extended by Pius X to all categories of society, are a prelude to the work of Pius XI, who may be called, rightly, the Pope of the Catholic Action²⁸⁷. He strongly emphasized the basis of the lay movement in the Church: the royal priesthood. This was all the more important because the lack of awareness of the participation in the Mystical Body was the reason why a large section of the laity lost vital contact with the Church²⁸⁸. Catholic Action does not designate in the first place the activity of the laity in the service of the Church, because such an activity already presupposes that the word “laity” is filled again with its supernatural content, after having been for a long time just a purely sociological term. Once this ecclesial awareness is acquired again, the laity will be brought back by Catholic Action “from the distant frontiers of ecclesiastical life into the sacramental movement of the Mystical Body of Christ”²⁸⁹. The happy expression proposed by Count Della Torre regarding this restoration of the dignity of the laity deserves to be quoted: Catholic Action is not only a social achievement, but a *sensus Christi* or, if we want, the Third Order of the Church Herself²⁹⁰.

Certainly there were exaggerations in this matter, so much so that G.S. Huber hailed the restoration to honor of the royal priesthood as the advent of the third kingdom of the Spirit, characterized by the abolition of ecclesiastical authority²⁹¹. With a view to similar cases, although not so serious, Fr. Bouyer was rightly able to denounce the appearance of the idea of a “lay holiness” which would substitute a “hierarchy of individual holi-

²⁸⁶Doc. Cath. 25 (1931). I, col. 588.

²⁸⁷On the role of the Popes with regard to the Catholic Action, see: P. DABIN: *L'action catholique. Essai de synthèse*. Paris 1932, pp. 28 ff.

²⁸⁸Cf. P. DABIN: *Op. cit.*, p. 242.

²⁸⁹O. BAUHOFFER: *Die Heimholung der Welt*. Freiburg (Br) 1936, p. 223.

²⁹⁰Cf. *Osservatore Romano*, May 10, 1930.

²⁹¹G.S. HUBER: *Vom Christentum zum Reich Gottes*. Regensburg 1934 (placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*).

ness” for the ecclesiastical hierarchy²⁹². The encyclical *Mediator Dei* did not hesitate to reject these captious errors, “already condemned and recently renewed”, while simultaneously encouraging the just aspirations, conforming to tradition²⁹³.

It would be useless to dwell at length on the several achievements of these just aspirations, recommended by the Sovereign Pontiff. However, let us note a few: above all, a deeper participation in worship, especially Eucharistic worship. It is easy to perceive how this awakens the parochial, ecclesial sense of the faithful. Similarly, family life will be influenced so much that the family becomes a cell of the Mystical Body under the sign of the “priesthood” of the Christian couple²⁹⁴. Let us mention again the participation in the work of teaching and of social assistance, the activity in parish circles, as a few of the concrete possibilities of the blossoming of the ecclesial conscience of the laity.

Alongside the liturgical movement, the Christocentric spirituality, and the restoration of the honor of the royal priesthood, we must not forget the Christian social movement, a sector of major importance for the lay apostolate. The rooting of this movement in the idea of the Mystical Body is perhaps the most striking illustration of the ecclesiological renewal meeting with the needs of the concrete life of Christians. The works of Canon Cardijn²⁹⁵, founder of the *Jeunesse Ouvrière Chrétienne*, never cease to refer to the dogma of the Mystical Body. To build the apostolate of young workers on a solid foundation, Canon Glorieux²⁹⁶ also proposes this doctrine to them. According to him the necessity of preaching the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ in working circles is based on the fact that it is impossible to fulfill a vocation of apostolate in difficult conditions without having a high enough idea of the central mystery of Christian life. This is the doctrine that would best enlighten them on their royal priesthood and help them powerfully in their dechristianized environment. “These workers, today young workers, tomorrow betrothed and married, fathers and mothers of new members of the Mystical Body of Christ, are all called to a mission and have a personal apostolate to fulfill, an irreplaceable apostolate necessary for the accomplishment of the redemptive work of Christ”²⁹⁷.

²⁹²Cf. L. BOUYER: Où en est la théologie du Corps mystique. RevSR 22 (1948) p. 321.

²⁹³Doc. Cath. 45 (1948) col. 219.

²⁹⁴Cf. M. SCHLÜTER-HERMKES: Die Familie als Kirche im Kleinen, StZ 133 (1938) pp. 286 ff.

²⁹⁵See for example: “La JOC et la paroisse”, 1925; “Le laïc ouvrier”, 1936.

²⁹⁶P. GLORIEUX: Corps mystique et apostolat. Paris 1935.

²⁹⁷R. KOTHEN: La pensée et l’action sociale des catholiques. Louvain 1945, p. 361.

1.6 Deviations and adjustments

This experience of the Church, whose sources and the principal features we have just seen, has affected theological thought in general. Not only ecclesiologists, whose work we analyzed in detail, have been influenced by them, but all this has been clearly felt in theological thought in general. The new systematizations of the different domains of Catholic theology obviously bears traces of it, as was shown by Fr. Przywara²⁹⁸, who mentions, regarding this, the moralist F. Tillmann, the dogmatists M. Schmaus and A. Stolz, and kerygmatic theology. Similarly, P. Weigl attributes²⁹⁹ the rediscovery of Scheeben's theology to the need to find a dogmatic foundation for this experience of the Church. If this was the case in strictly non-ecclesiological domains, it should come as no surprise that the experience of the Church seemed to have gained such prominence in recent ecclesiology that one began to speak of the crisis of ecclesiology³⁰⁰. But it must be emphasized that the "great ecclesiology", if we can distinguish it from popularizing works, always kept a fair balance. Suspect exaggerations and inaccuracies do not come from a strictly theological domain; they have their origin rather in the popularization works which have turned unreservedly towards the contemporary current of biologism. So, it would obviously be wrong to attribute these deviations to a closer contact with the concrete way of considering the Bible and the Fathers.

Let us first deal with the errors concerning dogma. The source of the possible deviations was, undoubtedly, the exaggerated emphasis on the ontological quality of the divine life participated by the faithful as a result of the action of the risen, pneumatic Christ. The word "pneumatic" interpreted in a too "physical" way irresistibly evoked for a number of theologians the somatic omnipresence of the glorified Christ, in which they thought to find the foundation of the Mystical Body. Thus, F. Kastner says in several places that the somatic presence of Christ does not cease in the members of the Mystical Body with the dissolution of the Eucharistic species³⁰¹. While D. Haug is not so categorical in this matter³⁰², J. Wittig's³⁰³ developments

²⁹⁸Corpus Christi Mysticum. Eine Bilanz. ZAM 15 (1940) pp. 197-215.

²⁹⁹"Scheebens Mysterien des Christentums und die liturgische Theologie", in Liturgisches Leben, 5 (1938) pp. 273-288.

³⁰⁰N. OEHMEN: L'ecclésiologie dans la crise. Questions sur l'Église et son Unité. Gembloux 1943, pp. 1-11.

³⁰¹Marianische Christusgestaltung der Welt. Paderborn 1936. 2nd ed., pp. 8, 46, 215.

³⁰²Wir sind dein Leib. München 1937.

³⁰³Leben Jesu in Palästina, Schlesien und anderswo. München 1925. I-II.

are very close to those of K. Pelz, whose work³⁰⁴ represents the extreme case concerning the recent theoretical errors regarding the Mystical Body. According to the latter, the pneumatic Christ, by virtue of his glorified body, is in us and we in him corporally³⁰⁵, and this bodily unity does not differ from the Eucharistic presence in the faithful at the moment of communion³⁰⁶. At first sight he seems to support his erroneous views on the soteriology of St. Cyril of Alexandria. But, on closer examination, it will be seen that he came in contact with the thought of St. Cyril only through the tendentious studies of E. Weigl³⁰⁷ and C. von Schüzler³⁰⁸. He also invokes the authority of Wikenhauser³⁰⁹, but it has been discovered³¹⁰ early on that his citations of Wikenhauser are taken from the modernist work of A. Schweitzer³¹¹, Pelz's true source. It was under the influence of Schweitzer that Pelz introduced a pantheist interpretation of Pauline mysticism into ecclesiology.

However, the immediate placement of this work on the *Index* left open the question of whether the very doctrine of the somatic presence or only its pantheistic exaggerations had been condemned. Deciding on this question was all the more important because some so-called theologians such as M. Schmaus, for example, spoke in favor of the doctrine of the somatic presence³¹². The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* repudiated, in turn, a "false mysticism creeping in, which, in its attempt to eliminate the immovable frontier that separates creatures from their Creator, falsifies the Sacred Scriptures"³¹³, but the somatic presence has not been directly affected. However, the more informed commentators of the encyclical have rightly observed that the somatic presence is not in conformity with the idea of the Mystical Body³¹⁴. This interpretation was soon confirmed by the explicit words of

³⁰⁴Der Christ als Christus. Berlin 1939, *pro manuscripto*. (Placed on the *Index*, Decr. S. Off. 30 oct. 1940).

³⁰⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 79.

³⁰⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 83.

³⁰⁷Die Heilslehre des hl. Cyrill. Mainz 1905.

³⁰⁸Die Lehre von die Wirksamkeit der Sakramente *ex opere operato*. München 1860.

³⁰⁹Die Kirche als der mystische Leib Christi nach dem Apostel Paulus. Münster (W.) 1937.

³¹⁰O. HOLZER: Christus in uns. Ein kritisches Wort zur neueren Corpus Christi mysticum Literatur. WW 8 (1941) pp. 24-35, pp. 64-70, pp. 93-105, pp. 130-136.

³¹¹Die Mystik des Apostels Paulus. Tübingen 1930. See especially pp. 123 ff.

³¹²Katholische Dogmatik III. 1, pp. 61, 191.

³¹³*Ed. cit.*, p. 28.

³¹⁴Cf. C. FECKES: Der Ertrag der Enzyklika *Mystici Corporis* für eine Theologie der Kirche. Theologie und Seelsorge 14 (1944) p. 8. H. SCHÄUFELE: Unsere Kirche. Rundschreiben *Mystici Corporis*. 1946, p. 114.

the encyclical *Mediator Dei*³¹⁵.

In addition to the properly dogmatic errors produced by an attitude for which the idea of the Mystical Body was only an occasion to reduce all the Revelation to a kind of natural mysticism, one finds in recent ecclesiology the infiltration of an extreme collectivism, too, which would like to justify itself through the idea of the Mystical Body. This tendency deluded itself by seeing in the Mystical Body the realization of a homogeneous society, in which personal interests are absolutely subordinated to those of the community. The erasure of individual differences has been presented as the advent of a higher order, as the authentic participation in “supernatural” life, as if the realization of a perfect community life could lead by itself to a more sublime life³¹⁶.

Interestingly, the other extreme, immanentist personalism, just as energetically claimed that the idea of the Mystical Body was its ultimate foundation. For example, J. Wittig is not afraid to depict the Church as the product of the Christian soul, conforming to a thesis according to which the soul creates the community for itself. The reason is that the essential function of the soul is to absorb the world, to assimilate the outside world to itself, before all other people. As Feckes points out³¹⁷, Wittig relies on a kind of biologism, ignoring the fact of the Incarnation while he deals with the reality of the Mystical Body, which he bases on a modernist concept of life. J. Thomé³¹⁸, by maintaining that the kingdom of God consists in the flourishing of a personalist humanism, is in truth only a distant echo of Wittig. In any case this personalism, even if it wishes to remain sincerely Christian, cannot be reconciled with the visible structure of the Church, as we see in F. Ebner, who tried to realize from a Catholic viewpoint what is the essential point in Kierkegaard: overcoming idealism by a Christian existentialism where everything is reduced to the exclusively personal encounter of *I* with God³¹⁹. But this *I and thou* philosophy, as F. Ebner’s thought summarizes, is refractory not only to any objective proof of the existence of God³²⁰, but also excludes all the elements that constitute the structure of the Church³²¹.

³¹⁵See S. SCHMITT: Päpstliche Entscheidung einer theologischen Streitfrage: Keine Dauergegenwart der Menschheit Christi in den Christen. BM 24 (1948) pp. 190 ff.

³¹⁶See the critique of this trend in L. DEIMEL: Leib Christi. Freiburg (Br) 1940, pp. 47 ff.

³¹⁷Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche. Paderborn 1934, pp. 132-138.

³¹⁸Meine Freunde! Erbauet das Reich Gottes in Euch! Krailing 1939.

³¹⁹Das Wort und die geistigen Realitäten. Innsbruck 1921, p. 21.

³²⁰“Die Wirklichkeit Christi”, in Brenner 10 (1926) pp. 18 ff.

³²¹*Ibid.*, p. 28. Cf. A. DELP: Ferdinand Ebner ein Denker des christlichen Lebens? StZ

We therefore feel that the devaluation of the Church's structure in certain trends of recent ecclesiology should be reduced to the influence of the unilateral aspirations we have just seen. They manifest themselves in different ways, for example in the form of a contraposition between the "free" community of the Church and its "juridical" conception. Tyciak³²² speaks only of the mystical, pneumatic aspect of the Church, in dealing with the relation of the Church to Christ, and he does so in vague, poetic terms which lend themselves easily to ambiguity³²³. One gets the impression, in the words of Fr. Bouyer, that the treatment of the hierarchy derives less from a theological conviction than from a human wisdom that wants to avoid censorship³²⁴. Similarly, many authors often use the term "Mystical Body" to refer to "what the concept of the Church turns out to be incapable of including. We do not separate the Mystical Body from the Church, but we want to ensure to it the greatest possible measure of autonomy"³²⁵.

Deviations in the existential experience of the Church must necessarily have their repercussions in spirituality, too. M. Kassiepe, while exaggerating the defects of the liturgical movement, characterizes them remarkably in a study which provoked animosity in Germany. According to him liturgical piety, by highlighting the supernatural ontological element in the spiritual life, has diverted attention from the importance of original sin. The ideal of liturgical piety, he continues, easily neglects the inner struggles inseparable from life, and therefore Christian asceticism loses its importance³²⁶. This criticism of the liturgical spirituality, even if it cannot be entirely acceptable, is not without any basis. Be it in the form of asceticism or of a kind of infatuation with other forms of Christian spirituality, sometimes the Church is portrayed in a way in which human conditions and the necessity of personal effort seem to lose their meaning. Not only has an overly sharp division between "liturgical-ecclesial" and "individualistic-subjective" spirituality been introduced into Christian spirituality, but even the former, presented in its ideal form, is shown as being opposed to the latter, which would only have deviations³²⁷.

132 (1937) pp. 205-220.

³²²J. TYCIAK: *Christus und die Kirche*. Regensburg 1936.

³²³He gives, for example, the following definition of the Mystical Body: "Er ist ein musikalischer Begriff, eine Melodie, die eine Wahrheit singt, deren Reichtum unaussprechlich, deren Harmonien unfaszbar sind".

³²⁴L. BOUYER: *Où en est la théologie du Corps mystique?* *RvSR* 22 (1948) p. 321.

³²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 323.

³²⁶*Irrwege und Umwege im Frömmigkeitsleben der Gegenwart*. 1940. 2nd ed., pp. 106-107.

³²⁷For example in A. HAMMENSTEDT: *Die Liturgie als Erlebnis*. Freiburg (Br) 1919, pp.

To this separation between the two forms of Christian piety, one can add a certain disesteem of individual prayer, which would even be found in a study as meritorious as that of M. Festugière on the liturgy³²⁸. Obviously, the same mistake is made when one sees a “tremendous” change in Christian piety, beginning from the Middle Ages³²⁹. Those who will not accept Kassiepe’s criticism will not refuse to admit that some renowned theologians, who cannot be suspected of a lack of understanding of the liturgical movement, were quick to disavow these exaggerations. Dom Winzen is of the opinion, for example, that the liturgy for a good number of poorly balanced minds is only the *titulus coloratus* under which they intended to legalize some unilateral or simply false ideas³³⁰.

The underestimation of Christian asceticism, or the tendency towards a sort of quietism, had been denounced already by F. Jürgensmeier, for whom the idea of Mystical Body, far from favoring quietism, requires an energetic activity in view of its concrete and salutary actualization³³¹. J. Anger also pointed out that a superficial knowledge of the Mystical Body could only lead to mistrusting a solid and serious asceticism³³². Dom Winzen³³³ and F. Jürgensmeier³³⁴ are unanimous in rejecting such an opposition or separation between the two forms of spirituality. Herwegen’s views about the “tremendous” change in Christian spirituality received a critique from the pen of the illustrious Tübingen professor, K. Adam³³⁵. As for the problem of prayer, a champion of the liturgical movement, R. Guardini, severely criticized the position of Festugière by warning us against simplistic solutions: “The liturgical problem,” he writes, “is all but simple. It is extremely complex. It is the problem of the object in its relation to the subject, of a community constituted in front of the person, seen on the particular ground of the life of prayer”³³⁶. R. Aubert was also right to note an excessive optimism and familiarity with God, a diminished responsibility, and a more

1-31.

³²⁸Essai de synthèse. La liturgie catholique. Maredsous 1913.

³²⁹I. HERWEGEN: Kirche und Seele, die Seelenhaltung des Mysterienkults und ihr Wandel im Mittelalter. Aschendorffs zeitgemäße Schriften K. 9. 1920, p. 31.

³³⁰D. Winzen in *Der Geistliche Führer* 4 (1933) p. 59.

³³¹Der mystische Leib Christi als Grundprinzip der Aszetik. Paderborn 1933, pp. 156-163.

³³²J. ANGER: La doctrine du Corps mystique de Jésus-Christ d’après les principes de la théologie de St. Thomas. Paris 1929, pp. 408-411.

³³³*Loc. cit.*

³³⁴*Op. cit.*, pp. 135-148.

³³⁵K. ADAM: Kirche und Seele. TQ 106 (1926) pp. 231-239.

³³⁶R. GUARDINI: Das Objektive im Gebetsleben. JL 1 (1921) pp. 117-125.

or less complete ignorance of the consequences of original sin. According to him modern man refuses, in his Pelagianism, the valley of tears and passes over in silence that suffering and moral evil are non-negligible facts³³⁷.

The views of such a critic were first confirmed by the circular letter of the Archbishop of Freiburg, Mgr. Gröber, addressed to the German hierarchy: “Thinking of my pastoral office, I feel anxious to ask to what extent the faithful people are served by presenting to them superabundantly the mysticism of the Body of Christ... As the Bishops of Great Germany that we are, can we remain silent? Will Rome be able to keep silent, too?”³³⁸ And Rome was quick to correct these captious deviations. The initial sentences of the dogmatic part of the encyclical are, from this viewpoint, very significant, especially in their insistence on the fact that the Mystical Body is born from redemption. The human family, “excluded from adoption as children of God” through “the sin of the first man”, cannot receive the power to become a child of God, except by the Man-God suspended on the Cross, of which the Church is the intermediary “in dispensing the graces of Redemption”³³⁹. Moreover, the encyclical explicitly mentions only the deviation of “those who endeavor to deduce from the mysterious union of us all with Christ a certain unhealthy quietism”³⁴⁰. The encyclical *Mediator Dei*, in turn, made the doctrine of *Mystici Corporis* more explicit by clearly affirming that the liturgy cannot be opposed to other forms of Catholic piety also inspired by the Holy Spirit³⁴¹.

This non-unilateral influence of the Holy Spirit, to which the encyclical refers, is in fact only another aspect of the Catholic wholeness. In the final analysis, the lack of a sense of the Catholic wholeness may lead one to forget that the double law, of which St. Paul spoke, remains true even for Christians who pride themselves on living from the liturgy “alone”, and that the “organic” growth in ecclesial experience cannot do without rules, even if they are “negative”. Thus, one did not realise that the rigorous distinction between “objective” and “subjective”, “personal” and “collective”, makes the standard of Catholic wholeness disappear in many cases. This is especially true when it comes to trends silently passed over, the primordial role of the cross as irreplaceable source of Catholic reality, speaking only of a “joyful and optimistic” church experience.

³³⁷R. AUBERT: Les grandes tendances théologiques entre les deux guerres. Coll. Mechl. 16 (1946) pp. 31 ff.

³³⁸Jan. 18, 1943.

³³⁹*Ed. cit.*, pp. 31-32.

³⁴⁰*Ed. cit.*, p. 98.

³⁴¹Doc. Cath. 45 (1948) col. 242-243.

We have just examined the testimony of modern ecclesiology regarding one of its major problems. The ecclesiological renewal, which is above all an effort of integration, has to face the most agitated question of current theology, namely the possibility and concrete methods of integrating vital values into the theological system.

It seems to us that, within the present ecclesiology, these requirements are too serious to be avoided. One can blame, with M. D. Koster³⁴², all the deviations we have just reviewed in recent ecclesiology. Moreover, we would gladly subscribe to his severe criticism, if he had in mind all the works analysed on the preceding pages. But by ignoring and rejecting this experience taken from the Church, under the pretext of peripheral deviations, he risks excluding precious and traditional elements from the ecclesiological synthesis. To reduce all the revealed data on the Church to this experience would be tantamount to a sort of modernism, but to ignore this ecclesial experience would lead one to become bogged down in abstraction. We are convinced that the principle of Catholicism is capable of accommodating all the nuances of the revealed datum without losing itself in a kind of relativism. The attempts we have just made to integrate this experience into ecclesiology certainly cannot boast of having solved this delicate problem perfectly. None of these authors wrote a systematic treatise on the Church in which the notional and vital aspects of the doctrine are really balanced. The very description of this experience leaves much to be desired, but, in any case, their contribution to ecclesiology seems to us definitive and permanent.

³⁴²M. D. KOSTER: *Ekklesiologie im Werden*. Paderborn 1940, *passim*.

Chapter 2

Non-Catholic ecclesiologies

The reference we have just made to the importance of the integration of the ecclesial experience into ecclesiology will appear even better founded if we remember that the ecclesiological renewal of our separated brethren is emerging under the banner of a clearly vitalist orientation. Of course, such a tendency requires not only criticism from our ecclesiologists, but also their effort towards an increasingly broad and concrete understanding of the mystery of the Church. Such a renewed ecclesiology will no doubt make a reconciliation between Catholic and non-Catholic systems easier. This is an all the more urgent duty for Catholic ecclesiology, since the ecumenical movement is becoming more and more one of the predominant characteristics of our time. Post-Tridentine ecclesiology as it evolved in the midst of controversy must be completed to become more fit for a dialog with the separated Christianities. This remark does not intend to imply any prejudice against a rather apologetic ecclesiology; but it must also be recognized that the ecclesiological problem in recent decades has changed in many ways. It is no longer historical or critical questions that are at stake; another duty became urgent: to show that the specific values of the separated Christianities, however partial they may be, belong by right and in fact to the Catholic fullness.

The subject of this chapter is precisely the attempt of Catholic ecclesiology to integrate, if possible, the new aspects and values of non-Catholic ecclesiologies. Moreover, it will not be pointless to find out that their new tendencies reflect in great part the same preoccupations that we have already noticed or will find again concerning our ecclesiology. It is understood that all this requires at least a brief summary of the ideas of the principal non-Catholic authors, but it will be done only secondarily.

2.1 Recent Protestant ecclesiology

1

All who have studied the new ways of Protestant ecclesiology have noted the influence there of an existentialist experience. This experience dates back to the failure of liberal Protestantism, which was to witness the defeat of its humanist optimism after the first World War. It turned out in a vital and concrete way that the questions posed by a historical catastrophe could not be solved using a theology which considered “the faith in its rational and psychological resonances, the Bible reduced to a testimony of religious experience, the dogma to a description of lived faith, and the sacraments to symbols of communion with Christ and the community life of Christians”¹. In such a theology, the notion of the Church was to be eclipsed and to become a generator of progress and well-being, almost completely devoid of any supernatural element. Harnack’s famous synthesis on Christianity² disavows this idea of the Church, which is also ignored in the answers given from the Catholic side³. At that time the works of many others⁴ who follow the path pioneered by Möhler’s *Symbolic*, no longer arouse much interest, because the question of superiority between Protestantism and Catholicism is discussed above all in terms of cultural and economic returns⁵. It would be useless to try to decide whether the theologians of the “Consensus of 1880”, Harnack and his school, still deserve the name of Christians; in any case, today their “basic deviation” is no longer contested even by Protestants.

The reaction of Protestant theology after the war had therefore to be necessary and very important. H. Stephan⁶ attributes the reasons for this

¹M. THURIAN: Les grandes orientations actuelles de la spiritualité protestante. Ir. 22 (1949) pp. 369-370.

²A. HARNACK: Das Wesen des Christentums. Leipzig 1900.

³F. HETTINGER: Die Krisis des Christentums. Protestantismus und die katholische Kirche. Freiburg (Br) 1886.

⁴Cf. B. FECHTRUP: Symbolik. Herder’s Kirchenlexikon. Freiburg (Br) 1899. Vol. 11, col. 1046-1050.

⁵The masterpiece of this tendency on the Catholic side is that of J. L. BALMES: El protestantismo comparado con el catolicismo en sus relaciones con la civilización europea, 1844.

⁶Cf. H. STEPHAN: Die Geschichte der evangelischen Theologie seit dem deutschen Idealismus. Leipzig 1938. Regarding the orientations of Protestant theology after the First World War, one can have a good picture in the following works: W. BROCK: An Introduction to Contemporary German Philosophy. Cambridge 1935. W. M. HORTON: Contemporary Continental Theology. London 1938. H. R. MACKINTOSH: Types of Modern Theology. London 1937. E. E. AUBREY: Present Theological Tendencies. New York 1936. It must be noted, however, that these works do not say much about the recent

to a series of mystical and existentialist currents, fruit of the ideological, cultural, and economic crisis. Many Protestant theologians then turned to the mystical values of Christianity, preserved most obviously by Catholicism. Their effort was aimed at creating a synthesis between the Lutheran and Catholic positions. The “High Church” movement alone is enough by itself to demonstrate the appreciation that Catholicism has begun to enjoy among Protestants⁷. On the theological plane, the works of F. Heiler remain the testimony par excellence of the intellectual effort aimed to elaborate a non-Roman Catholicism⁸. But in circles outside the German High Church, too, there are a number of symptoms which, although not tending toward Rome, should be counted as signs of a return to the positions of an orthodox Lutheranism. The principle of inspiration, rejected by rationalist criticism, has been restored in honor; the liturgical service takes new forms, more concrete and more adapted to the needs of the time⁹. Therefore, sacramental life also received more explicit attention in Protestant churches¹⁰. All this inevitably entailed the shift of the center of ecclesial life toward parochial communities¹¹. Fortified by a new awareness of the mystery of the Church, they began courageously to live without the protection of the State¹² and later, under the name of *Bekennende Kirche*, they successfully resisted the pressure of a regime expressly hostile to all things Christian. It is interesting to note that the changes that have taken place in parallel to the plan of Protestant ecclesiology, betray a considerable affinity with the Romanticism whose values and deviations they inherited¹³. But in any case, it cannot be denied that theological rationalism has been definitively overtaken, and that the problem of the Church stands in the foreground in both the confessional and the ecumenical sense¹⁴.

tendencies of Protestant ecclesiology.

⁷P. CHARLES: *La robe sans couture. Un essai de Luthéranisme catholique. La Haute Église allemande. 1918-1923.* Bruges 1923. See also W. Stählin's most recent work: *Katholisierende Neigungen in der evangelischen Kirche.* Stuttgart 1947.

⁸F. HEILER: *Der Katholizismus. Seine Idee und seine Erscheinung.* München 1923. *Urkirche und Ostkirche.* München 1941.

⁹R. WILL: *Le mouvement de réforme culturelle dans le protestantisme.* RHPR 6 (1926) pp. 558-580.

¹⁰W. STÄHLIN: *Vom Göttlichen Geheimnis.* Kassel 1936.

¹¹F. BINDE: *Die Gemeinde: die Vollendung des Leibes Christi.* Konstanz 1910.

¹²Cf. O. DIBELIUS: *Das Jahrhundert der Kirche.* Berlin 1926.

¹³Cf. E. WOLF: *Communio Sanctorum. Ergänzungen zur Romantisierung des Kirchenbegriffs.* TB 52 (1942) pp. 12-25.

¹⁴Cf. H. STEPHAN. *Op. cit.*, pp. 290-291. — This fact has also been remarked on the Catholic side by J. HAMER: *Les grands thèmes doctrinaux du protestantisme contemporain.* VSpir. Suppl. 1951, pp. 56-84. Cf. also Pastor M. Thurian's article: *Les*

On the Catholic side, all these changes have been greeted with profound attention, especially with regard to the ecclesiological ideas elaborated by dialectical theology and the *Neue Consensus* group. Dialectical ecclesiology intended to respond to the existential needs of modern man, while the concern of the *Neue Consensus* aimed to satisfy the requirements of the community of the time in terms of Protestant ecclesiology.

2

At the origin of dialectical ecclesiology there is a personal experience, that can be seen as a kind of conversion, that of K. Barth. Initially an enthusiastic disciple of Harnack and collaborator of the *Christliche Welt*, the official organ of liberalism, he professed a sort of religiously colored socialism in which religion was completely subordinated to the progress of culture. But on the one hand the events showed him the true face of this naturalist and pragmatist Protestantism, “who had to offer during the bloody catastrophe of the First World War only his derisory optimism, his discolored Christianity”¹⁵, while at the same time he was engaged with a series of mystical and existentialist currents in a philosophical atmosphere where religious problems were preferably treated. It was the time of the rediscovery of Kierkegaard and of the vogue of philosophies such as those of Heidegger and Jaspers¹⁶. On the other hand, as a pastor, he found himself faced with the great problems of human existence: “I sought,” he writes, “to find my way between the problem of the human life on the one end and the content of the Bible on the other. As a minister, I wanted to speak to the *people* in the infinite contradictions of their life but to speak the no less infinite message of the *Bible*, which was as much of a riddle as life.”¹⁷. Theology then cannot be anything else, he continues, but “a cry for rescue arising from great need and great hope”¹⁸. This experience led him to take on the role of a reformer, a role in which he arrived at the height of Luther and Calvin. A magnificent writer, endowed with an uncommon eloquence, he recalls the impetus and resistance of these two reformers, without their deficiencies of character¹⁹.

Barth felt he found the justification for his new orientation in

grandes orientations actuelles de la spiritualité protestante. Ir 22 (1949) pp. 368-394.

¹⁵CH. JOURNET: L'ecclésiologie de K. Barth. NV 24 (1949) p. 186.

¹⁶Cf. H. STEPHAN, *op. cit.*, pp. 280 ff.

¹⁷K. BARTH: *The Word of God and the Word of Man*. New York 1957, p. 103.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 104.

¹⁹Cf. Ch. JOURNET, *Art. cit.*, p. 185.

Kierkegaard. The preface to the second edition of his *Römerbrief* leaves no doubt on this point. Beside Dostoevskij, it is Kierkegaard, who, by his own admission, exercised the decisive influence on his philosophical thought²⁰. “If I have a system, it is limited to a recognition of what Kierkegaard called ‘the infinite qualitative distinction’ between time and eternity...”²¹.

What is he borrowing from Kierkegaard? Kierkegaard, against the idealistic tendencies of theological liberalism, wanted to restore the honor of the personal, religious existence and its correlative: the absolute transcendence of God and the equally absolute character of the Christian message. According to Kierkegaard, idealism makes one forget existence itself. “The misfortune of our time,” he writes, “is that he has had too much to know and has forgotten what it is to exist...”²². To correct this deviation, Kierkegaard focuses not on the doctrinal content, but on the personal assimilation of religious truth. According to him, “subjectivity is truth”²³ and abstract knowledge is only secondary because between the knowing self and the absolute, objective, infinite truth, which is God, the distance is infinite and refractory to any permanent contact. So the existence of God cannot be proved by abstract thought, but only by adoration. Although the person of Christ unites the two extremes, faith in Christ remains, however, a hopeless leap into emptiness, because of sin. The Bible does not reproduce either this mysterious, we would say theandric, union of the divine and the human, and hence it is no longer the synthesis of the two extremes, but only an instrument for the dialog between the soul and God. Kierkegaard then opposes an absolute dualism to Hegel’s pantheism, but thanks to his personal mysticism, he finds an underlying solution of this dualistic paradox in the love of God. One can see that there is no place for an ecclesiology properly so-called in Kierkegaard’s thought. His individualism absolutely excludes it.

The fundamental inspiration of the other major supporter of dialectical theology, E. Brunner, also boils down to an existentialist philosophy quite similar to that of Kierkegaard, the philosophy of *I and Thou*, professed by Buber²⁴ and F. Ebner²⁵. In their philosophy, which constitutes for E.

²⁰K. BARTH: *The Epistle to the Romans*. Oxford 1968, p. 4.

²¹*Ibid.*, p. 10.

²²S. KIERKEGAARD: *Concluding Unscientific Postscript to the Philosophical Crumbs*. Cambridge 2009, p. 217.

²³*Ibid.*, p. 288.

²⁴M. BUBER: *Ich und Du*. Leipzig 1923. Eng. tr., *I and Thou*, New York 1970.

²⁵See above, pp. 87-88.

Brunner the Copernican turning point in the history of human thought²⁶, the true reality is always of the existential order, or, more exactly, it is based on the meeting between two people. It is not the correspondence between the object and the subject that is the source of the truth, but the meeting of the I with the Thou.

K. Barth, arguing that the transcendence between God and man is dialectical, that is to say unbridgeable, must reject the idea of *analogia entis* which he considers elsewhere as an invention of the Antichrist²⁷. E. Brunner does not express himself with such vehemence and does not expressly reject the *analogia entis* but, attributing only an exclusively personal character to the revelation, he deprives it of all qualities of being an objective teaching²⁸. Such a dualism, common to Barth and Brunner, excludes, one might rightly say, any possibility of an ecclesiology based on the traditional notion of mediation. However, dialectical ecclesiology contains ecclesiological ideas which deserve to be looked at more closely.

The base of the dialectical ecclesiology, for Barth, is the Word of God. But this expression no longer means, for him, primarily the preaching of the Bible, as it was for the reformers; on the contrary, it is a spontaneous, discontinuous, and especially mysterious event. It is identified with the predestination and with the sovereign action of God that arouses faith in the predestinated. Given the absolute separation between God and man, the absolute sovereignty of God and the discontinuous nature of his actions, faith remains uniquely the work of God. This dualist position compels Barth to abandon certain Protestant themes, such as the inadmissibility of faith, because God's action is discontinuous. Nor does he admit the certainty of personal predestination, because one cannot experience faith, the transcendent action of God. For man there remains only the *fiducia*, based on the testimony of the Bible. But the authority of the Bible cannot claim the mark of the divine, because the distance is impassable. Brunner's position, also on this point, differs only in nuances from Barth's doctrine. The *imago Dei*, the redeemed man, is constituted by his personal response to God, but since there is only an indirect identity between the word of God and that of the Bible, the reality of the encounter between God and the soul is always subject to question²⁹.

Paradoxically, Barth and Brunner emphasize the importance of the visible Church and frequently refer to the principle: *extra ecclesiam nulla*

²⁶E. BRUNNER: Dogmatik. Die christliche Lehre von Gott. Zürich 1946. I, p. VII.

²⁷K. BARTH: Kirchliche Dogmatik. München 1932. I, 1, p. VII.

²⁸Cf. E. BRUNNER: Gott und Mensch. Zürich 1930, p. 20. Dogmatik I, p. 23.

²⁹E. BRUNNER: Dogmatik I, pp. 24-25.

*salus*³⁰. It is our common predestination in Christ that, according to Barth, makes this transition from an invisible and individual sphere to a visible and communal church. Predestination in Christ presupposes a community, a place “where we believe in Him, where through Him and in Him the testimony that God gives of himself, the announcement of His benevolent will and His saving work are welcomed and received into the faith”³¹. Brunner also rejects the idea of a strictly invisible Church by referring to his philosophical axiom, according to which the person cannot exist without a community³². But all this does not remove the fundamental ambiguity of the dialectical ecclesiology. The visible Church is based on human elements, Barth’s *fiducia* and Brunner’s involvement of the individual in the community, human elements having no contact with the divine sphere. Therefore, the relationship between the invisible church and the visible church is always dialectical, that is, lacking a real connection.

Because Barth is of the opinion that since the original sin created being is separated from God by an impassable abyss and that it is fundamentally opposed to the divine influence, the ecclesial structure must have only the minimum of visible human elements, to offer minimum resistance to divine action. The local congregational assembly, according to him, represents this ideal structure. Limited by a group of dwellings, the congregational church is constituted by those who participate in the same Sunday worship. Such a community knows no subordination, function, ministry, or hierarchy. It is perfect in itself as a local community that will never be subordinated to a higher authority, but will always retain its absolute independence³³. So the holy Church is a Church without place, without name, and without history which contains only the grace, vocation, and predestination of God³⁴. The action of God being discontinuous, the church was never founded by virtue of an institutional act. It is unceasingly founded and refounded. Devoid of any element of permanence, it exists without apostolic succession in the legal and sacramental sense. The Holy Spirit confers on the Church apostolicity by a continual updating of the apostolic message, so that, thanks to this

³⁰“Wir haben also die Kirche immer auf der Ebene der zeitlichen, sichtbaren, denk- und erfahrbaren Dinge zu suchen. Und das *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* besagt also immer auch: die subjektive Wirklichkeit der Offenbarung vollzieht sich für jeden jederzeit und überall auch in einer zeitlichen, denk- und erfahrbaren Begegnung und Entscheidung”. K. BARTH: *Kirchliche Dogmatik I*, 2, p. 240.

³¹*Ibid.*, p. 256.

³²E. BRUNNER: *Um die Erneuerung der Kirche*. Zürich 1934, pp. 12 ff.

³³“(Die Ortsgemeinden sind) jede für sich im Vollsinn des Begriffes der Kirche”. *Die Schrift und die Kirche*. Basel 1947, p. 39.

³⁴Cf. K. BARTH: *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 342.

transcendent actualization, the church of today exists without being bound to the church of yesterday. Considered on the side of its Lord, “the church-event” is always one, not subject to divisions. “If she thinks she can exist outside the event of the Holy Spirit, she has only the appearance of a church and her unity is necessarily destroyed”³⁵. So the visible church can only annihilate herself as much as possible in front of the transcendent sphere.

All this clearly determines Barth’s ecumenical thought. As we have just seen, Barth builds the church on *fiducia*, which in turn rests on the authority of the Bible. But this latter is a sort of *postulatum a priori* in Barth’s theology, and so the same is true for the criterion of the unity of the church; only those for whom the Scripture is the only rule belong to the church of Christ³⁶. This is why the union between the Lutherans and the Reformed is possible, but regarding Catholicism “our only attitude,” he writes, “is that of mission and evangelization, not union”³⁷.

Brunner, instead, does not get as far as the theologian of Basel, and tries to reconcile the logical consequences of dialectical principles with the main points of the Protestant Tradition. So, while reproaching the Reformers for not having applied their principles in all areas of ecclesiology³⁸, nevertheless he assigns, according to the Protestant Tradition, a major role to baptism regarding belonging to the Church³⁹. The same oscillation is manifested on all the points where Brunner takes up a Biblical theme, like that of the Mystical Body. He uses this idea extensively to show the communal character of the Church but, ultimately, it amounts in Brunner to an ethic of brotherly love. So it goes without saying that Brunner himself expresses his doubts about the ecumenical role of such an ecclesiological system. The transition from the *ecclesiola* to the universal Church turns out to be impossible according to his striking words: “We must recognize two or three churches as the true churches of Christ”⁴⁰. That confusion must be the result from such a situation, Brunner himself admits⁴¹. However, the responsibility for this is not due to the dialectical principles, he continues, but with the contradiction between the principles and the traditional data.

In Brunner one can find some very impressive developments about the

³⁵K. BARTH: The nature and form of the Church. Lausanne 1948, p. 76.

³⁶Cf. K. BARTH: Kirchliche Dogmatik. I, 1. ch. V.

³⁷K. BARTH: Désordre de l’homme et dessein de Dieu. Introduction aux travaux de l’assemblée d’Amsterdam. *Foi et Vie* 46 (1948) p. 495.

³⁸E. BRUNNER: Um die Erneuerung der Kirche. Zürich 1934, p. 6.

³⁹E. BRUNNER: Das Gebot und die Ordnungen. Zürich 1932, p. 516.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 514.

⁴¹E. BRUNNER: Um die Erneuerung der Kirche. Zürich 1934, p. 16.

communal involvement of individuals, about the enthusiastic atmosphere of the *ecclesiola*, but above all one finds in Barth the vital presentation of a powerful yet unilateral experience of the Church, which played a role of the highest order in the renewal of Protestant religious life⁴². The strong emphasis on the glory of God, on his incomprehensible transcendence, and the insistence on the absolute character of faith in the Lord in the eschatological kingdom are themes that accompany the constant reminder of the gravity of sin.

From this viewpoint, his pages, according to Mgr. Journet, are truly liberating⁴³; according to W. M. Horton, they are fascinating and can be accessed only with humility that is born out of suffering⁴⁴. A. Keller justly states that Barth's lively, energetic method aims to make it clear that God is not only an abstract object of thought; that man in front of God is not a spectator, a scholar, but above all the subject of a decisive encounter. Barth, he continues, wants to satisfy the religious needs of a certain type of man, the one drawn in the novels of Dostoevskij⁴⁵.

Barth's views, passionately discussed in Germany, failed to shake the theological dullness that characterized Norway and Denmark, but the new direction taken by the school of Lund [in Sweden], under the direction of G. Aulén, was carried out to some extent under his influence. In the Netherlands he also found famous disciples, such as Haitjema⁴⁶ and Visser't Hooft⁴⁷, not to mention the ecumenical movement whose Congress in Amsterdam in 1948 adopted many of his ideas.

The fact that Barth's theology has exerted considerable influence even beyond the borders of Protestantism must be explained by what constitutes the greatness of his work: the energetic affirmation of the unconditional respect due to the word of God. By this return to the vigorous thought of the Bible, Barth has contributed much to the ecumenical restoration, according

⁴²Cf. J.-L. LEUBA: Le problème de l'Église chez K. Barth. *Verbum Caro* 1 (1947) p. 16.

⁴³*Art. cit.*, p. 187.

⁴⁴"...full of terror as well as glory, demons as well as angels, and only to be known through suffering; yet so fascinating and compelling to those who have known it that they would never again be content in our plumber's paradise, nor exchange their apocalyptic torment for an eternity of our bourgeois bliss". W. M. Horton: *Contemporary continental theology*. London 1938, pp. XX-XXI.

⁴⁵A. KELLER: *Der Weg der dialektischen Theologie durch die kirchliche Welt*. München 1931, p. 36.

⁴⁶TH. L. HAITJEMA: *Karl Barths "kritische" Theologie*. 1926.

⁴⁷*Die Not der Kirche und die Oekumene*. Basel 1942. French tr.: *Misère et grandeur de l'Église* Geneva 1943.

to É. Gilson: “To restore theology to its place and essence is to work for all Christians...”⁴⁸. Certainly Barth’s Calvinism, in spite of his decidedly anti-Roman position, gives more chances to an interconfessional conversation than the diluted Calvinism of Kantianism. Moreover, a Catholic would better see through Barthian theology that “at least a part of the message of the Reformation, a part which is not the least precious, could have been delivered in this Church and understood by it”⁴⁹.

3

The other great current in Protestant ecclesiology, known as the *Neue Consensus*⁵⁰ do not have the same originality as dialectical ecclesiology; it does not have the same prophetic impetus either. Nevertheless, its guiding ideas can contribute to a better understanding of ecclesiological tendencies in general.

The interest accorded to the mystical aspect of the Church, according to M. Goguel⁵¹, is one of the marks of the new orientation. At the same time, the individualistic conception of the Church tended to fade away, to make room for a more collective conception of it, to an extent that sometimes seemed to give the impression of opposition. The *Neue Consensus* reproaches Protestant ecclesiology of the 19th century for introducing individualism, even spiritual atomism, into the notion of church and not preserving the identity with the Church of the first centuries⁵².

To redress this deviation, the idea of the people of God must be put back to the center of Christian life, as the true communal sense of Scripture must replace the exegesis of liberal theologians. The works of K. L. Schmidt⁵³ in particular, started soon to emphasize the temporal precedence of the universal Church with respect to the local churches; the two aspects of the Church, exterior and interior, have been recognized as *societas in cordibus*

⁴⁸*Hommage et reconnaissance*. Recueil de travaux publiés à l’occasion du soixantième anniversaire de K. Barth. Neuchâtel-Paris 1946. Letter from Étienne Gilson, Jan. 15 1946, addressed to the editor of the *Cahiers théologiques de l’Actualité protestante*, pp. 41-42.

⁴⁹*Ibid.*

⁵⁰The work of Fr. F. BRAUN: *Neues Licht auf die Kirche*. Einsiedeln-Köln 1946, presents a good depiction of it. The principal representatives of the *Neue Consensus*: Tr. Schmidt, A. Schlatter, M. Goguel, K. L. Schmidt, F. J. Leenhardt, O. Cullmann, G. Gloege.

⁵¹“Unité et diversité du christianisme primitif”. *RHPR* 19 (1939) p. 1.

⁵²Cf. W. A. VISSER’T HOOFT: *Misère et grandeur de l’Église*. Geneva 1943, p. 19.

⁵³“Die Kirche des Urchristentums”. Tübingen 1932. 2nd ed.; Art. *Basileia* ThWNT I, pp. 573-595; Art. *Ekklesia* ThWNT III, pp. 502-539.

and ritibus. The decisive role of the apostles is no longer disputed by this exegesis; it admits their intimate connection with Christ: moreover, the continuity between the two Testaments is admitted: according to Schmidt the Church represents the new Israel. It is no longer a question of the alleged opposition between the Pauline churches and the Judeo-Christian communities; no longer it is drawn any argument from the existence of the charisms to contest the authentic mission of the apostles.

The eschatological problem also received new clarifications. A middle position is taking form, which has repudiated not only the rationalist solutions of J. Weisz and A. Schweitzer but also those of dialectical ecclesiology, who, following Kierkegaard, proposed an “existentialist” solution, equivalent to a total reversal of the relationship between eternity and time⁵⁴.

For the rest, as far as the basic principles are concerned, the *Neue Consensus* hardly differs from the position of liberal Protestantism: indeed, for eternity to be present in time, in the person of the Messiah, His divinity is essential. But the theologians of the *Neue Consensus* rather prefer not to deal with this delicate problem: “Because it costs them much to confess unconditionally the divinity of Jesus in the sense of the Apostles’ Creed, they are therefore silent on why and how the link between the future and the present was formed in Jesus, the Messiah. After having advanced very audaciously on several points, it costs them a lot to provide the last explanation that we would be entitled to expect from them”⁵⁵.

The same Protestant apriorism prevails regarding the question of the primacy of Peter and of the apostolic succession, where, despite a scientific and objective investigation of the texts, they do not abandon their negative position.

2.2 The Catholic response: criticism and integration

1

Of these two recent currents of Protestant ecclesiology, dialectical theology, especially in its Barthian form, has made a detailed response from the Catholic side necessary. We have just seen that the efforts of Barth and Brunner to present the idea of the Church in its concrete and vital aspect

⁵⁴Cf. E. STANGE: *Die kommende Kirche*. Dresden 1925. O. CULLMANN: *Le retour du Christ. Espérance de l’Église selon le Nouveau Testament*. Neuchâtel 1943.

⁵⁵F. M. BRAUN: *Op. cit.*, p. 148.

agree in many respects with the tendencies of Catholic ecclesiology. But the absolute dualism of their system endangers, if it does not make it impossible, a truly Christian, biblical experience of the Church. A religious experience based on the dialectic of Barth and Brunner can have good effects only accidentally. Most often it leads to skepticism or to desperation. W. Stolz⁵⁶ frequently highlights the unbearable burden of a relativism that weighs on Brunner's profoundly Christian inspiration. As for Barth's ideas, G. Feuerer rightly thinks that this experience not only ignores the richness of revelation (in the first place, the love of God), but also destroys human personality⁵⁷. The Barthian dialectic, says Mgr. Journet, is that of death and "leads to a tragedy... It points from Mani to Pelagius, Luther, and Calvin, from Calvin to Rousseau and Schleiermacher, from Schleiermacher to Karl Barth"⁵⁸. J. Hamer also points out that such an experience can never take the love of God seriously⁵⁹.

But we must note at once that most of those who listen to and benefit from the Barthian message about the Church are far from deducing all the consequences of this dualistic experience. They retain only the strong emphasis on divine transcendence and renewed faith in the Bible.

Regarding the practical side of dialectical ecclesiology, it may be said that, in a certain sense, is less far from Catholicism than liberal Protestantism. But this is not so in its theoretical aspect. Catholic ecclesiologists' criticism leaves no doubt that between dialectical ecclesiology and Catholic one, dialog and reconciliation are impossible.

Mgr. Journet considers Barthian dualism an existentialist univocity which is not aware of the distinction between essence and existence, between nature and operation; such a univocity, followed rigorously, would

⁵⁶W. STOLZ: Der dialektisch-protestantische Kirchenbegriff. Kritische Studio zur Kirchenlehre Emil Brunners. DT 28 (1950) pp. 292-312; 361-394. Die Wesensfunktion der Kirche: Kritische Studio zu Emil Brunners Lehre von der Verkündigung des Wortes Gottes. DT 29 (1951) pp. 318-344; 457-481. Bekenntnis und Dogma. Darstellung und kritische Würdigung der Lehre Emil Brunners über Bildung und Geltungsanspruch von Bekenntnis und Dogma. DT 30 (1952) pp. 129-153.

⁵⁷Der Kirchenbegriff der dialektischen Theologie. Freiburg (Br) 1933, pp. 132-133. This work, after a general introduction to dialectical theology, is divided into two parts: the presentation and detailed refutation of Barthian ecclesiology. All his argumentation is fundamentally a continual resumption of the idea of the *analogia entis*.

⁵⁸*Art. cit.*, p. 189.

⁵⁹J. HAMER: *Karl Barth*. Paris 1949, p. 234. The principal merit of J. Hamer consists in having identified the sources of dialectical ecclesiology: the reformers, but especially Kierkegaard. Moreover, he devotes only the third part of his work to the ecclesiology of Barth. ("La prédication de l'Église: matière de la dogmatique", pp. 117-166).

lead either to atheism or acosmism⁶⁰. Once again it is the *analogia entis*, or more concretely, the theandric structure of the Church, to be at stake in the face of Barthism⁶¹.

Fr. Hamer, in turn, vindicates the notion of mediate revelation, the possibility for human reason to arrive at a certain knowledge of God and the harmony between faith and reason. Capital truths and certainties that are never clarified enough. But in our opinion, these philosophical arguments, from the practical viewpoint and especially in front of Barthian agnosticism, are not always the most effective in making the Catholic position prevail.

Against Barthism, and this is the weak point of the developments of the Catholic authors in question, it must be shown before everything else that its alleged biblicism is in truth a great abuse of the Biblical revelation. It is necessary to show at length that the Bible sees no opposition between divine and human causalities; that according to the Bible the authority of the apostles does not overshadow the sovereignty of God. In short, the central idea of Sacred Scriptures is the Incarnation, supreme seal of the harmony between the divine and human, natural and supernatural orders.

2

As already mentioned above, dialectical ecclesiology posed to Catholic theologians the problem of integration. G. Feuerer and E. Peterson undertook this work from different viewpoints.

When we speak of the integration of the themes of dialectical theology dealing with the book of G. Feuerer⁶², we do this, of course, in a rather broad sense. There is not any explicit quotation in which Feuerer mentions Barth's name, but the ideas in his introduction to the "Christian word" reflect quite well the concerns of Kierkegaard and Barth⁶³. According to Feuerer the

⁶⁰ *Art. cit.*, p. 189.

⁶¹ A fervent disciple of Barth, J.-L. Leuba confesses, on his part, that the Bible speaks not only of the vertical aspect of the revealed datum (the instantaneous, discontinuous action of God), but also of its horizontal aspect (human mediation in the Order of Salvation): However, this horizontal, institutional, sacramental aspect of the Church is only a play with words in Leuba: he understands it from the place where the divine event can occur. Cf. *art. cit.*, pp. 20-24. Another Protestant theologian, M. Fitzpatrick, also notes that the principles of the dialectical ecclesiology cannot account for St. Paul's idea regarding the Mystical Body. "Kierkegaard and the Church", in *The Journal of Religion* 27 (1947) pp. 259-260.

⁶² *Unsere Kirche im Kommen. Eine Begegnung von Jetztzeit und Endzeit.* Freiburg (Br) 1937.

⁶³ Cf. p. 6, where the author alleges the Dogmatics of Barth (p. 19) and says: "alles Sprechen des Christen ist im Grunde ein Sich-sprechen in seinem Insein in der Kirche...".

theologian's duty is twofold: his words and developments have to represent not only the Church in its objectivity, but also to express the resonance of such a doctrine in the soul, the aspirations of the era regarding the objective Church. The Christian word, the developments of the theologian, must be an effort to reflect not an abstract Church, but a Church living *hic et nunc* in the current phase of its life⁶⁴.

Such a union, the greatest possible, between the objective and the subjective, makes the author say that all Christian words, insofar as they are Christian, express and communicate a part of the life of the Church. Thus, the subjective word receives its objectivity by identifying itself, ultimately, with the life of the Church and constitutes the starting point of a new existential method for penetrating the mystery of the Church. In all its members, in all its manifestations, even in the partial ones, the whole Church, an indivisible unity, secretly operates. All is the Church in the Church⁶⁵. Therefore, the truth held by the Church, the author continues, is never an abstract formula, but identifies itself with the being of the Church, the way of existence of each singular truth. That is why the truth, in close union with the life of the Church, also has a dynamic aspect, something that is in the process of being constituted and of transforming those who listen to it.

Thus, the Christian religion never can be reduced to a system of dry concepts, but remains the powerful word of the living God.

After having analyzed this vital, ecclesial role of the word of God, Feuerer shows us how this union of the objective and the subjective takes place through history and in the human and ecclesial community. Feuerer always speaks from the viewpoint of the believing individual when addressing the themes of Church and history, Church and humanity, Church and culture, person and community, and community and Trinity. This is a personalist ecclesiology, one can say rightly, and add that, in the eyes of Feuerer, the Christian person must revive in himself the life of the Church, of the entire community. We have seen how dialectical ecclesiology is [instead] focused on the faith of the individual.

The third great theme of Feuerer, which best reflects his attempts at integration, is that of the tension of the Church in this world towards its eschatological fulfillment. The author views the eschatological problem as that of a continual approximation of the Church to its ideal and head, Christ. This growth of the Church towards its eschatological fullness presupposes, according to Feuerer, that Christ is more and more identified with his Church.

⁶⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 4.

⁶⁵Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 6.

Feuerer refuses to see in the continual enrichment of the Church just a growth of celestial gifts. Christ Himself becomes more and more rooted in the Church⁶⁶. To illustrate this tension, the continual becoming that takes place within the Church, it suffices to evoke some themes that the author develops in detail: the truth incarnated in the Church, the grace contained in the material elements of the sacraments, can only be understood gradually, and that is why the member of the Church must also relive more and more in his justification the great fact of divine mercy. The Church, engaged in history, can only transform human structures step by step; the sanctification of natural cultures always remains a new duty, because the mystery of iniquity never ceases to pose as its antagonist. The becoming, the evolution of the Church, is ultimately, in Feuerer's eyes, an effort to bring our subjective existence closer to the objective revealed reality.

The author's aim is to give a picture of the dynamic aspect of the Church, which explains why his developments do not deal with all its aspects. All the more reason this book is not a complete treatise on the Church. Its pathetic language is rather at the service of a vital suggestion, a prophetic teaching, which sometimes leaves much to be desired in its doctrinal precisions.

Another, very successful, attempt to present a dynamic vision about the Church as presented in the Epistle to the Romans, without the exaggerations of dialectical ecclesiology⁶⁷, is the study of E. Peterson: *Die Kirche aus Juden und Heiden*⁶⁸. In a captivating foreword, the author reveals to us by what perspective he wants to approach the mystery of the Church: he seeks to revive for our times the experience of St. Paul on the Church. Commenting on chapters 9-11 of the Epistle to the Romans, he raises the crucial question: how could the people whom God had elected no longer be the chosen people, and how did the Church take the promises of God for herself?

Blood descent, responds the author with St. Paul, unable to hold on to the promises of God, absolutely disappears before the mystery of divine election; the faith, a gift of God, makes one belong to the people of God⁶⁹. Unlike the Synagogue, the true people of God does not emerge from the

⁶⁶“Es geht also nicht um sachliche Beziehungen, um ein Anstellen von messianischen Gaben an die Kirche, es geht um eine neue Selbstsetzung Christi in seiner Kirche, um eine endgültige Verpflichtung Christi auf die Kirche hin und der Kirche auf Christus um einen Selbsteinsatz Christi in seiner Kirche”. *Op. cit.*, p. 54. It goes without saying that the author does not dispute the indissoluble union between Christ and his Church.

⁶⁷One should think mostly of *The Epistle to the Romans* by K. BARTH.

⁶⁸Salzburg 1933. French tr.: “Le mystère des juifs et des gentils dans l'Église. Suivi d'un essai sur l'Apocalypse”. Paris *s.d.* [1935] Collection *Courrier des Îles*. N. 6.

⁶⁹*Trad. cit.*, p. 16.

natural order; its name *ecclesia*, according to the Fathers, seems to indicate the divine call to leave the world and to abandon it, its natural structures, and its sociological creations⁷⁰. Therefore, what determines the Church always comes from the Spirit; God is absolutely free both in the election of his people and in the formation of his Church. “The Jews worried only about what is erected on the foundation: the Temple and the Law. And because of the Temple and of the Law, they have forgotten the foundation: Faith”⁷¹. Saint Paul never tires to show to the faithful Gentiles they are not by their own merit members of the Church; moreover, if they lose faith, they are absolutely nothing. The increasing intensity of St. Paul’s expressions aims to faithfully translate the mysterious action of God, which manifests itself “in the calling of Jews and Gentiles to be the people of God. Thus, the secret of the *Ecclesia ex Judaeis et Gentilibus* is none other than the Secret of Divine Mercy”⁷².

This style, which betrays a thinker tormented by the problems of Christian existentialism, catches again our attention in his essay on *L’esprit de l’Église apostolique d’après l’Apocalypse*⁷³. This study aims to sketch a theology of the Church in times of persecution, through which the Church must still manifest the Lord. Thus explained, the Apocalypse provides us with profound ideas about the existence of the Church, whose most important duty is to manifest, in the face of hostile powers, the glory of God. The destiny of created beings is that they must take a clear stand for or against God. According to this “iron law” of our supernatural destiny, a neutral position is no longer possible between Christ and Antichrist. A so-called impartiality must either become a Christian attitude or lead to an anti-Christian attitude.

What originates this fight to the death? The Incarnation reveals the Devil in the metaphysical order, the Antichrist in the political order, and the False Prophet in the intellectual order. Since all three are trying to maintain their tyrannical regime, Christians, following the example of Jesus, faithful witness through his passion, are bound to suffer his same fate for making the glory of God public.

The Church is essentially the Church of martyrs, in all its members.

⁷⁰*Ibid.*, p. 17.

⁷¹*Trad. cit.*, pp. 33-34. Two interesting insights of the author deserve to be reported: firstly, Jews cannot be destroyed by any hostile power, being reserved by God for the last days; secondly, the Jews cannot attain the degree of barbarism in which the Christian people are lowered when they fall back into paganism.

⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 66.

⁷³See *trad. cit.*, pp. 73-102.

We then understand the words of the author at the end of his study: “If something stands up against the spirit of a comfortable bourgeoisie, it is the primitive Christianity, as it is represented in the Apocalypse, burning us like a breath of fire”. By thus becoming aware of the true meaning of the advent of Jesus, of his manifestation, the words of St. John “come quickly Lord!” are no longer a desire for a too human beatitude, but the motto of the witnesses of Jesus. — Even such a short summary will help the reader, we hope, to feel the powerful inspiration of this book which has indicated the elements that must be integrated into our ecclesiology and whose principal source is the biblical revelation about the Church.

We have just reviewed the most important Catholic works, which represent the various attitudes that our ecclesiology must adopt with regard to dialectical ecclesiology, a phenomenon characteristic of recent Protestant orientations. Considered as a system, dialectical ecclesiology is completely false, and from this viewpoint the severe criticisms presented by G. Feuerer, Ch. Journet, J. Hamer, and W. Stolz do not seem at all exaggerated.

On the other hand, an effort of integration is necessary in two senses: firstly, to make full use of the Biblical teaching about the Church, especially regarding this vital aspect—one could define it existential; then to concretely consider the Church through the aspirations and experiences of the individual believer. Peterson’s study is excellent from this viewpoint, but Feuerer’s work does not lack valuable developments either.

To speak of a reconciliation between Protestant ecclesiology and the Catholic conception might be ambiguous. As a matter of fact, with regard to some secondary questions, Protestant scientific research leads to results concordant in many respects with Catholic theses, but the separation regarding questions of principle seems to remain unbridgeable. As long as they reject the sacramental structure of the Church, its visible mediation, it remains for us to show that the vital, communitarian, eschatological aspirations that animate Protestant ecclesiology find true satisfaction only in the Catholic idea of the Church.

2.3 Recent Orthodox Ecclesiology

1

One could say without fear of exaggeration that no theological treatise has undergone such radical changes among the Orthodoxes as ecclesiology. Unlike Protestantism, where the standards of theological teaching testify to a greater or lesser fluctuation, the traditional ecclesiology of Orthodoxy

did not cease to profess a doctrine whose theses hardly differed from those in our treatises on the Church. Studying this conservative ecclesiology—whose principal representatives are M. Bulgakov, Ph. Gumilevsky, and S. Malevansky—one would find a clear distinction between the earthly and heavenly Church, a balance between the visible and the invisible elements, the legal and the mystical aspect, and the distinction between the teaching and the taught Church, and so on. For example, the famous *Théologie dogmatique orthodoxe* of Bulgakov⁷⁴, a classic textbook for a long time in Orthodox seminaries, presents the doctrine on the Church exactly according to the divisions of our *De Ecclesia* treatises. The question about the institution of the Church is followed by a treatise on its organization, and, except for the idea of the papacy, one will encounter the usual arguments that can be found in Catholic textbooks. The whole presentation is crowned with the traditional marks of unity, holiness, catholicity, and apostolicity of the Church⁷⁵. “In short, in a constitutive schema of the Church thus characterized, it is impossible to discover the slightest trace of ecclesiological democratism”⁷⁶.

But precisely this work of Bulgakov, welcomed with unparalleled enthusiasm by the members of the Orthodox hierarchy, became the target of the protagonists of a new trend within Orthodoxy. Khomyakov rejected this work as *scholastica fetentem* because of the quotations borrowed from St. Augustine and of the Latin expressions used, and considered it the petrification of all living ideas⁷⁷. Later, G. Florovsky did not hesitate to express himself rather ironically on this work: “The dogmatics of Macarius has all the appearances of a theological book, but it is not a theology; it is only a book”⁷⁸.

But it should not be thought that only the neo-Slavophiles lay theologians revolted against this book, which represented the more traditional section of Orthodox theology. A no less important figure of the contemporary Orthodox hierarchy than Metropolitan Seraphim has endorsed this criticism by referring to similar remarks made in this regard by Patriarch Serge and Metropolitan Anthony (Khrapovitsky). According to him, the

⁷⁴Metropolitan bishop of Moscow, died in 1882. Cf. DTC Vol. IX, col. 1343-1344.

⁷⁵French tr.: Paris 1860. I-II. On the Church see Part III. Section II. Ch. I. “De Dieu comme sanctificateur”. Art. I. About the Holy Church as the instrument through which the Lord accomplishes our sanctification, see pp. 219-290.

⁷⁶A. PAWLOWSKI: *Idea Kosciola w. ujecim teologii i historiozofii rosyjskiej*. 1935 (pp. 245-262, French summary of the book) p. 248.

⁷⁷V. Z. ZAVITNEVICH: *A.S. Khomyakov I-II*. Kiev 1902. Vol. I, pp. 973-974. Cf. I. ZELENKA: *Doctrina de Ecclesia Macarii Bulgakov*. Rome 1941, p. 14.

⁷⁸In *Puti russkago logoslovija*, (*Les voies de la théologie russe*). Paris 1937, p. 222.

Théologie dogmatique of Macarius is the par excellence example of a rationalist theology. “Its method is analytical as much as rationalistic. Its exposition of dogma does not rest on ecclesiastical experience, nor does it elucidate the ethical content and meaning; everything is reduced to a series of deductions of syllogisms. So this theology can neither clear the way for the soul in search of God, nor quench its religious thirst”⁷⁹.

Anyway, if we flip through the Minutes of the First Congress of Orthodox Theology in Athens, it would be difficult not to notice that a great change has occurred in Orthodox ecclesiology. We will not deal for the moment with the question of whether the mentioned change should be considered progress or deviation. Certainly the official circles, the Holy Synod for example, have made efforts to prevent the development in new directions to the point that the work of E. Akvilonov⁸⁰, perhaps too bold a propagator of the idea of the Mystical Body, has been censored. But a few decades later the protest of the neo-Slavophiles ecclesiologists regarding the condemnation of S. Bulgakov by the Metropolitan Anthony⁸¹ has been very strong, and nowadays they present themselves as representatives of the current trends of Orthodoxy itself.

The Congress of Athens, having chosen as a subject of discussion the problem of the Church, has manifested the general conviction, which has been growing since Khomyakov, that “the divergence between the Eastern Church and all the Western confessions, both those of Rome and those which have left Rome and have taken the form of Protestantism, do not so much regard dogmatic points, or the symbol of faith, but something else which has not yet been clearly defined nor expressed. The entire difference consists in a markedly different way of understanding or defining the very essence of the Church”⁸². Copious other similar affirmations could be quoted. It suffices to refer to A. Palmieri, in whose eyes the root of the schism resides in the

⁷⁹METROPOLITAN SERAPHIM: *L'Église orthodoxe. Les dogmes, la liturgie, la vie spirituelle*. Paris 1952, p. 13.

⁸⁰E. AKVILONOV: *Cerkov: naučnija opredylenija Cerkvi i apostolskoje ueznenie o nei kak o tele krisztovom*. The Church: The scientific definitions of the Church and the apostolic doctrine on the Church as the Mystical Body of Christ.

⁸¹Cf. J. DANZAS: *Les réminiscences gnostiques dans la philosophie russe moderne*. RSPT 25. (1936) pp. 658-685. B. SCHULTZE: *Der gegenwärtige Streit um die Sophia, die göttliche Weisheit in der Orthodoxie*. StZ (1940) pp. 318-324. E. BEHR-SIEGEL: *La Sophologie du Père Bulgakov*. RHPR 19. (1939) pp. 130-158.

⁸²A.S. KHOMYAKOV: *Lettre à W. Palmer*; in *Oeuvres*, t. II, p. 362. quoted from P. BARON: *Un théologien laïc orthodoxe russe au XIXth siècle*. Alexis Stépanovitch Khomyakov. (1804-1860). Rome 1940, p. 82.

notion of Church⁸³, or to S. Bulgakov, who has indicated at the Congress of Athens the central position of the mystery of the Church for clarifying the principles of Orthodoxy⁸⁴.

Slavophile and neo-Slavophile ecclesiology, no doubt, is a bundle of very complex ideas. Not only its numerous proponents present it in very different ways, but the novelty of its principles is also the subject of heated discussion. It is then necessary to avoid simplistic solutions, which would like to settle the question enthusiastically or disavow it categorically. Our method in this matter will be the same we followed with regard to Protestant ecclesiology. After a sketch of the main features of Orthodox ecclesiology—Slavophile and neo-Slavophile ecclesiology, specifically—we will consider the various attitudes that our ecclesiologists have taken toward it and will conclude by offering some critical reflections.

2

Orthodox and Catholic ecclesiologists are in agreement in stressing the crucial influence of A.S. Khomyakov, who in many ways has determined the definitive aspect of this ecclesiology. Other Slavophile theologians owe him a great deal; Soloviev's two great philosophical treatises, *The Critique of Abstract Principles* and *The Philosophical Principles of Integral Knowledge*, draw on Khomyakov's theory of knowledge⁸⁵; Soloviev derived from him the idea of "Uni-totality"⁸⁶. Soloviev, in turn, inspired the theology in Dostoevskij's *The Brothers Karamazov*, whose chapter entitled *So Be It! So Be It!* reflects the ideas of Khomyakov on the Church⁸⁷.

Berdyaev devoted an entire work to the father of Slavophile ecclesiology, whom he praises for refusing to enclose the idea of Church within the limits of a concept, because it is a living organism, a unity of love that escapes any formal definition...⁸⁸. Moreover, Khomyakov is rightly proud of himself

⁸³Cf. "Theologia dogmatica orthodoxa". Florentiæ 1913. t. II, p. 160.

⁸⁴Cf. Pr. V., p. 127.

⁸⁵Cf. A. GRATIEUX: A.S. Khomyakov et le mouvement Slavophile. Paris 1939. Vol. II, p. 252.

⁸⁶"Die Kirche Khomiakovs ist für Soloviev die vollkommene Form der Vereinigung, in welcher alle Wesen nicht ihre Grenze, sondern ihre Fülle und den absoluten Sinn in der Einheit mit Allem (All-Einheit) erreichen". P. ROBIC: Solovievs Auffassung von den zentralen kirchlichen Autorität. Rome 1944, p. 18.

⁸⁷Cf. J. LUSKA: Adnotationes ad conceptum Ecclesiæ apud Th. M. Dostoevskij. Acta Acad. Velehr., 19 (1948) pp. 315-349.

⁸⁸N. BERDYAEV: A.S. Khomyakov. Moscow 1912 (in Russian). Cf. A. Gratieux *op. cit.*, I, p. 83.

since the letter written by the patriarchs and bishops of the East to Pius IX betrays the very idea of the Church which he had been developing for a long time⁸⁹. The Congress of Athens likewise was carried out in the same vein⁹⁰.

In the same way that at the beginning of dialectical ecclesiology we find Barth's personal experience, so Slavophile ecclesiology can be connected to the person of Khomyakov, to his intimate, living, experience of a free Church united by love. Full of overflowing optimism, Khomyakov personally offered the original and very rare phenomenon of the fullest freedom of religious consciousness. "Totally free, fully frank in his conviction, he also claimed for others the same freedom, the same right to be frank"⁹¹. He views this organic freedom as an absolute value, as a source of light and moral progress for the members of a society that lives in themselves by the unity of mutual love. Khomyakov thought to find the natural realization of this free organism in the community life of the Slavic peoples, to which Christianity would bring its full development and supernatural guarantee⁹².

On the basis of a mystical, optimistic experience, he establishes his philosophical and ecclesiological system. The primacy of love, of the mystical experience over intelligence, which we have had occasion to notice in Möhler and Scheler, is the very soul of Khomyakov's theology. Love is for him a mode of knowledge; communion in love alone gives the possibility of finding the truth. Khomyakov saw in this principle the characteristic feature of Orthodoxy that distinguishes it from Western religious rationalism, both in its Roman and Protestant forms. Both S. Bolshakoff⁹³ and N. Berdyaev⁹⁴ see his originality and importance. Without him, Berdyaev says, neo-Slavophile theology would have no solid foundation.

This fundamental intuition of Khomyakov not only derives from his own personality, but it also results from the influence of German idealism, which

⁸⁹Cf. *L'Église latine et le protestantisme au point de vue de l'Église d'Orient*. Lausanne and Vevey 1872, pp. 48-49.

⁹⁰Nothing shows this trend better than the predominant position of the secular congressmen who protested energetically against Archimandrite Scriban, who had contested their competence in theological matters: cf. Pr. V., p. 134.

⁹¹G. SAMARINE: *Préface aux œuvres théologiques de A.S. Khomiakov*. Paris 1939, p. 50.

⁹²*Ibid.*

⁹³"The Whole philosophy of Khomyakov is here summed up. His ecclesiology is built on the idea that the ultimate Reality is the Rational Will of which the human mind is a reflection. The truth cannot be understood by the logical reason alone but in agreement with the will expressed in love." *The Doctrine of the Unity of the Church in the Works of Khomyakov and Möhler*. London 1946, p. 56.

⁹⁴Cf. "L'idée religieuse russe" in *L'âme russe*. Paris 1927, pp. 16-17.

was the philosophy in vogue in his time in Russia, and more particularly the influence of J. A. Möhler. There is no doubt about Khomyakov's dependence on Möhler. Khomyakov expressly mentions Möhler⁹⁵ and his developments reveal many identicalities with those of the theologian of Tübingen. But according to L. Bouyer, the faults of the system of Möhler will be enlarged absolutely in Khomyakov⁹⁶.

After having seen the importance, the guiding idea, and the sources of Khomyakov's ecclesiology, let us take a quick look at his ecclesiological system⁹⁷.

His philosophical position, in which he claims an identity between reason and will, between the objective and the subjective, forces Khomyakov to present the revelation of the Incarnate Word as an essentially and exclusively moral fact. God revealed himself "as the only moral Being" in his Son⁹⁸. Here, Khomyakov makes the first mistake in his developments, identifying

⁹⁵Cf. "The Latin Church...", p. 69.

⁹⁶Cf. "Orthodoxy and Protestantism", Ir 15 (1938) p. 228.

⁹⁷KHOMYAKOV's studies on the Church written or translated into French are found in the volume: *L'Église latine et le protestantisme au point de vue de l'Église d'Orient*. Lausanne and Vevey 1872.

This volume contains the following opuscles:

1. Quelques mots par un chrétien orthodoxe sur les communions occidentales, à l'occasion d'un article de M. Laurentie, 1853 (pp. 3-88).
2. Quelques mots par un chrétien orthodoxe sur les communions occidentales à l'occasion d'un Mandement de Mgr. l'Archevêque de Paris, (pp. 89-187).
3. Encore quelques mots par un chrétien orthodoxe sur les confessions occidentales à l'occasion de plusieurs publications religieuses, latines et protestantes, (pp. 189-308).
4. Lettre à M. Bunsen, précédée d'une lettre au rédacteur du journal de l'Union Chrétienne, 1860 (pp. 309-367).
5. Lettre à Monseigneur Loos, évêque (janséniste) d'Utrecht, 1860. (pp. 369-387).
6. Lettre au rédacteur de l'Union Chrétienne, à l'occasion d'un discours du Père Gagarine, jésuite; 1860 (pp. 389-400).

We must also note his first theological work, "The Unity of the Church", written in Russian and translated into German: "Die Einheit der Kirche" in N. BUBNOV-H. EHRENBERG: *Östliches Christentum II*, pp. 1-27.

This work has been translated and published in the study of A. GRATIEUX: *Le mouvement Slavophile à la veille de la révolution: Dmitri A. Khomiakov*. Followed by the treatise of A.S. KHOMIAKOV, *The Church is One*. Paris 1953. (*Unam Sanctam* 25).

His English correspondence with W. PALMER is in W. J. BIRKBECK: *Russia and the English Church*. London 1917. 2nd ed., pp. 193-222.

⁹⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 259. Cf. also p. 126: "The divine word manifests itself as the moral being par excellence, as the unique moral being".

revelation with holiness, without specifying in detail the degrees and the various aspects of this identification. Whence comes that Khomyakov must seek a “holy” and irreproachable subject to safeguard the Revelation in time and space. In his eyes, individuals, always inclined to sin, do not correspond to such a requirement⁹⁹, because the Revelation regards above all the moral domain. Therefore, “Truth can only exist where there is unsullied holiness, that is, in the totality of the universal Church, which is the manifestation of the divine Spirit in humanity”¹⁰⁰.

The descent of the Spirit on the community of the apostles provides Khomyakov with the dogmatic proof of his identification of revelation with holiness. “The Spirit of God descended on the heads of the apostles united in the unanimity of the prayer and restored to them the presence of their Lord, no longer a presence seizable by the senses, but an invisible presence, no longer external, but interior... The Church possesses (Christ) and obtains him constantly through the interior action of love without needing an external phantom of Christ, as the Romans [Catholics] believe”¹⁰¹.

After positing the principles, Khomyakov logically deduces all the consequences; the entire Church takes the place of the hierarchy to decide in matters of faith, according to the law of the ancient Church, where “the entire Church accepted or rejected the decisions of these assemblies (councils) according to whether they found them to be in conformity or contrary to her faith and to her tradition, and called ecumenical those councils which she recognized as an expression of her intimate thought”¹⁰². The highly mystical attitude of Khomyakov has led him to another serious unilateralism, namely, to a notion of holiness and love that is no longer able to evaluate the external element in revelation and in the moral law. In his eyes, the external authority is a pure rationalism that makes men slaves¹⁰³. “Neither God, nor Christ, nor his Church,” he continues, “is the authority, which is an external thing. They are the truth, they are the life of the Christian, his interior life; they are more alive in him than the heart that beats in his breast and the blood that flows in his veins; but they are his life only as long as he himself lives by the universal life of love and unity, which is the ecclesiastical life”¹⁰⁴. According to Khomyakov, external authority separates

⁹⁹“...faith in the individual man, subject to sin, is eminently subjective and therefore involves a constant doubt: it feels in itself the possibility of error”. *Op. cit.*, p. 240.

¹⁰⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 52-53.

¹⁰¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 112, cf. also pp. 164-65.

¹⁰² *Op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁰³ *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁰⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

religious truth from the life of holiness¹⁰⁵.

The same unilateral mysticism makes Khomyakov affirm that in the place of the teaching authority, “God himself teaches us”¹⁰⁶, and he concludes: “there is no teaching Church in the true Church”¹⁰⁷. The teaching of the logical word is a rationalism, and to ward off this danger, one must resort to the teaching of the holy life where there is no distinction any more between a bishop and a lay person. “Every man... alternately gives and receives instruction; for God distributes the gifts of his wisdom to whom he pleases”¹⁰⁸.

Hence, the search for truth is the function of the life of holiness, because the divine truth “is not knowledge alone, but knowledge and life at the same time... It is not thought or felt, but thought and felt at the same time”¹⁰⁹. In matters of faith, we cannot admit the distinction between the magisterium and the faithful, because that would destroy “the free unity of the living faith which is the manifestation of the Spirit of God”¹¹⁰. In short, the harmony of individual thoughts, enlightened by the grace of God, constitutes the general thought of the Church”¹¹¹.

Since Khomyakov’s writings on the Church, without exception, serve as an apology for Orthodoxy against Western Christendoms, it will be very useful to summarize his views on the Catholic Church.

By introducing the *Filioque* into the Symbol, the Roman Church has committed a very serious sin against brotherly love. She declared by this fact that “the Eastern world was only a world of islands in faith and doctrine”¹¹². This act of Rome constitutes, in the eyes of Khomyakov, the first heresy against the universality of the Church, by removing its moral base, i.e., fraternal love¹¹³. Rome committed “moral fratricide”¹¹⁴. Rome, substituting pontifical infallibility for the infallibility of love, betrayed the unity of the Church based solely on the moral law¹¹⁵.

It is logical that Khomyakov does not admit the existence of the marks of the Church. To rely on the marks would be to abandon the supernatural

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 282.

¹⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁰⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

¹¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 62.

¹¹¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 283-4.

¹¹² *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

¹¹³ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹¹⁴ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 86.

¹¹⁵ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 107.

guarantee of the Church: faith and hope¹¹⁶.

In conclusion, it must be emphasized once again that Khomyakov's unilateralism and his often very serious errors stem from his aspiration to give a lively response to his Russian contemporaries troubled by rationalism. He seeks the remedy in an idea of the Church where everything is idealized, where man¹¹⁷

finds himself again, no longer in the weakness of his spiritual isolation, but in the strength of his spiritual and intimate union with his brothers and his Savior. He finds himself therein in his perfection, or rather he finds there what is perfect in him, the divine inspiration which gets constantly lost in the gross impurity of each individual existence. This purification is effected by the invincible power of the mutual love of Christians in Jesus Christ; for it is love, it is the spirit of God... the material particle, which has been thus assimilated to a living body, itself receives a new meaning and a new life from the organism of which it has become an integral part. Such is the man in the Church, which is the body of Christ, of which love is the organic principle.

The same anthropological concern is reflected in another long passage, in which he represents the Church as the reality resistant to all error and uncertainty, as the intimate union of the subjective and objective element, as the organic and living world, "of which the law is neither an abstraction nor a thing of human invention, but a divine reality, God himself in the revelation of mutual love. This is the Church"¹¹⁸.

3

In truth, neo-Slavophile ecclesiologists¹¹⁹ only propagate or expand the ideas of Khomyakov. The catchword of these ecclesiologists is the term *sobornost*, whose idea dominates the works of Khomyakov, but which he uses only once¹²⁰. Bulgakov sees in it the essence of the Orthodoxy that "opposes

¹¹⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹¹⁷*Op. cit.*, pp. 116-117.

¹¹⁸*Op. cit.*, pp. 240-421.

¹¹⁹We think especially of the members of the Russian Theological School in Paris, which has existed since the Russian Revolution.

¹²⁰In his letter about a speech by Fr. Gagarine, Khomyakov gives the reason why Orthodoxy preferred the word *sobornost* to the word *Catholic*. The motive was, according to Khomyakov, to emphasize that the catholicity of the Church is not an external thing, a geographical one, but an intimate value (cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 389 ff.); "The word they chose is

both authoritarianism and individualism; it is unanimity, a synthesis of the authority and of the freedom in the love that brings believers together. The word *sobornost* expresses all this”¹²¹.

The *sobornost*, life of the Church, continues Bulgakov, is indefinable rationally, “because it is only discovered beyond the limits of rational thought”¹²². The *sobornost*, life in the truth, is the source of the dogmatic knowledge of the Church, “but of a supra-rational, intuitive character, the source of ‘knowing by seeing’”. The *sobornost*, interior catholicity of the Church, is its supreme reality, the true Mystical Body, lived in the experience of the unity of many in one¹²³.

The other neo-Slavophile ecclesiologists profess the same doctrine almost verbatim and do not hide their mistrust of all what is notional regarding the Church. According to Florenskij the fact that the Church is indefinable is the best evidence in favor of her vitality. That is why a function able to define in itself all what the Church is does not exist. In the same way it would be impossible, he continues, to try to enclose the life of the Church in abstract formulas: “The idea of the Church does not exist, but the Church itself exists, and for every living member of the Church, the ecclesiastical life is the most definite and palpable thing of all that he knows”¹²⁴. Ecclesiastical life, he concludes, is not a matter of legal and archaeological concepts, but of biology and aesthetics. The thought of N. Arseniev¹²⁵ betrays the same mixture of just and profound intuitions with a simply tragic unilateralism. The idea of the unity of the Church, he says, admits of no juridical formula, just as it is refractory to every legal power. The Eastern Church knows no other head than Jesus Christ, head of the Mystical Body, and for it neither Jesus Christ nor the apostles nor the councils constitute a legal authority. “Let no one mention,” he writes, “the authority regarding the unity of the Church, because there is but one inexhaustible stream of the life of grace,

sobornost. *Sobor* implies the idea of the assembly not necessarily gathered in any physical place, but existing virtually without a formal meeting. It is unity in plurality... The Catholic Church, which is according to all, or according to the unity of all, the Church of free unanimity, perfect unanimity, the Church where there are no more nationalities”. (*Op. cit.*, p. 398).

¹²¹S. BULGAKOV: *L’Orthodoxie*. Paris 1932, p. 84.

¹²²*Op. cit.*, p. 88.

¹²³*Op. cit.*, p. 94.

¹²⁴P. FLORENSKIJ: *Der Pfeiler und die Grundfeste der Wahrheit*. In *Östliches Christentum*. Dokumente herausgegeben von N. Bubnov und H. Ehrenberg. Munich 1925. II, p. 30.

¹²⁵N. ARSENIIEV: *Die Kirche des Morgenlandes*. *Weltanschauung und Frömmigkeitsleben*. Berlin-Leipzig *s.d.* [1926]. Sammlung Göschen N. 918. See especially ch. VI: *Die grosse Gemeinschaft*. Eucharistie und Kirche, pp. 79-93.

having its source in Christ and in which each person, like a drop, like a wave, is dragged”¹²⁶.

G. V. Florovsky’s thought is even bolder: “What we propagate,” he writes, “is neither a subjective experience, nor a solitary mystical consciousness, nor the experience of the separated faithfuls, but the living experience of the Catholic Church, the Catholic experience and the ecclesial Life... This experience is exhausted neither in the Scriptures, nor in oral tradition, nor in definitions”¹²⁷. S. Zankov, in turn, does not show less enthusiasm on this subject¹²⁸. Again, the idea of *sobornost* alone would be able, according to A. Karpov, to solve a problem already discussed in depth by the Catholic ecclesiologists: that of the person¹²⁹. For G. P. Fedotov, the agreement with the soul of the *sobornost* constitutes the supreme criterion of the theological sciences¹³⁰ and N. M. Zernov sees in it the unique path to Christian union, which cannot be realized by the individualistic notions of Catholic and Protestant churches.¹³¹

In the same way in which the exaggerated mystical orientation in Khomyakov could not fail to bring about a kind of depreciation towards the hierarchy, so the Orthodox theologians just mentioned betray more or less overtly the same attitude regarding the doctrinal and authoritarian role of bishops. While Florenskij, Florovsky and Fedotov are content to propose ideas that are deliberately left vague, Zankov explicitly reduces their role to that of *pars in toto*¹³²; moreover Arseniev openly denies their infallibility in relying on the authority of Khomiakov¹³³. According to the example given by Khomyakov, these theologians replace the role of the hierarchy with the theological interpretation of the liturgy. Since Khomyakov has embraced the vision of the liturgy as a condition for genuine knowledge of the Church, Orthodox theologians are increasingly willing to embark on the path to aesthetics and liturgical vitalism. A Bulgakov finds it essential to

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

¹²⁷ G. V. FLOROVSKY: Sobornost. The catholicity of the Church. In *The Church of God. An Anglo-Russian symposium*. London 1934, edited by E. L. Mascall, p. 67.

¹²⁸ S. ZANKOV: Das orthodoxe Christentum des Ostens. Sein Wesen und seine gegenwärtige Gestalt. Berlin 1926 See especially pp. 87-91.

¹²⁹ A. KARPOV: Personality and the Church. The problem of personality in the light of Christian teaching. In *The Church of God*, pp. 135-154.

¹³⁰ G. P. FEDOTOV: Orthodoxy and historical criticism. In *The Church of God*, pp. 91-104.

¹³¹ N. M. ZERNOV: The Church and the Confessions. In *The Church of God*, pp. 211-227.

¹³² *Op. cit.*, p. 91.

¹³³ “Nun versteht die Kirche, der die Liturgie begreift”. Cited in *Östliches Christentum*, Vol. II, p. 25.

Orthodoxy¹³⁴.

Another basic idea of Khomyakov, that of the Church as the last and supreme reality and as love embracing all created beings, was equally well received among his followers. The unilateralism, with which Khomyakov insists on the notion of life and on the unity between knowledge and love, without caring about their distinction, becomes in Soloviev and the neo-Slavophiles a theory close to pantheism. In other words, it is through the idea of universal deification that they intend to represent the Church. Soloviev thinks that it is “the social incarnation of divinity in the universal Church”, i.e., the sophiology that the “new Russia” must propagate in the world¹³⁵. The divine *Sophia* “being the accomplished unity of everything in God, it also becomes the unity of God and of the extra-divine existence”¹³⁶.

In Fr. Florovsky the Divine Wisdom already includes the following acceptations: the Holy Trinity, the Logos, the Mother of God, the Virginity, the Church, the Entire Humanity, the Great Being of Auguste Comte. He thinks that these ideas complement each other¹³⁷. In N. Berdyaev there is also the idea of cosmic deification, a function of the Church¹³⁸. He defines the Church as the soul of the world, precisely because of its role in the sanctification of the cosmos¹³⁹. Fr. Bulgakov goes even further. He seems to admit under the idea of *Sophia* a certain being intermediate between the Divinity and the created world. “The *Sophia*,” he says, “in the Creator and in creation is the point that unites God and man”; in the two natures of Christ only one principle is reflected “in two images, that of divine plenitude and that of material becoming”¹⁴⁰.

Although the inspiration of the neo-Slavophiles is Christian on this point, it is no less true that their developments are mixed with non-Christian philosophical elements. Soloviev already speaks of a certain theogonic process re-

¹³⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 180-182.

¹³⁵La Russie et l'Église universelle. Paris 1922, 4th ed., p. 264.

¹³⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 241.

¹³⁷P. FLORENSKIJ: Der Pfeiler und die Grundfeste der Wahrheit; in Bubnov-Ehrenberg *op. cit.*, II, pp. 28-194, *passim*.

¹³⁸“Die Kirche ist der verchristlichte Kosmos” quoted from the Russian original in “Die Philosophie des freien Geistes” by B. SCHULTZE: Die Schau der Kirche bei N. Berdiajew. Roma 1938, p. 92.

¹³⁹Cf. in Schultze, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

¹⁴⁰See, in Danzas, *art. cit.*, p. 672; quoted from Bulgakov's self-review of his book “L'Agneau de Dieu” in Put' N. 41. (Nov.-Dec. 1933). See E. BEHR-SIEGEL: La Sophiologie du Père Boulgakov. RHPR 19 (1939) pp. 130-158. S. TYSZKIEWICZ: Die Lehre von der Kirche beim russischorthodoxen Theologen S. Bulgakov. ZKT 51 (1927) pp. 82 ff.

garding the Incarnation¹⁴¹, of Mary representing the “feminine principle”¹⁴²; moreover, he wants to deduce the idea of the Trinity from the notion of Being¹⁴³. The synthesis of Fr. Florenskij, which we have just seen, is already sufficiently eloquent in itself. Berdyaev is mainly inspired by German idealism. The condemnation of Bulgakov, quickly followed by his rehabilitation by various Orthodox authorities, and the fact that Bulgakov was admitted to the Congress of Athens and that he was able to spread an “ecclesial ontology”¹⁴⁴, clearly show how much these vague doctrines have already invaded neo-Slavophile ecclesiology.

For a long time the influence of Khomyakov has been exerted almost exclusively in the circles of Russian theologians. The careful research of F. Gavin¹⁴⁵ on the orientations of Greek theology between 1890 and 1920 does not mention the influence of the ecclesiology of Khomyakov, but much more that of Macarius Bulgakov¹⁴⁶. In fact, the most representative theologian of the new Greek theology, in the eyes of Gavin, Androutsos, closely follows the method of Macarius Bulgakov in his dogmatic synthesis: *Théologie dogmatique de l'Église orientale orthodoxe*¹⁴⁷. The severe criticism of the future participant to the Congress of Athens, D. Balanos¹⁴⁸, regarding this book is motivated more by the views of liberal Protestant theology than by those of the ecclesiology of Khomyakov, as A. Palmieri¹⁴⁹ and M. Jugie¹⁵⁰ showed no long after the discussion of Greek theologians among themselves. But the Congress of Athens unequivocally demonstrated the adoption of Khomyakov's ecclesiology not only by Russian theologians, but also by large groups of theologians from other autocephalous churches.

This does not mean, of course, that the traditional path of Orthodox theology has lost all its importance. Moreover, it has seemed to many observers of the recent orientations of Orthodox theology that the insistence on episcopal authority is affirmed¹⁵¹; it is possible to quote even some Or-

¹⁴¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 269.

¹⁴²Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 257.

¹⁴³Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 213.

¹⁴⁴“Thesen über die Kirche”, Pr. V., pp. 127-135.

¹⁴⁵F. GAVIN: *Some aspects of Contemporary Greek Orthodox Thought*. Milwaukee-London 1923.

¹⁴⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 235-267.

¹⁴⁷*Dogmatike tes orthodoxou anatolikes ekklesias*. Athens 1907.

¹⁴⁸Krisis tes Dogmatike tou K. Androutsos. *Nea Sion*, 5 (1907) pp. 669-705.

¹⁴⁹A. PALMIERI: *Theologia dogmatica orthodoxa*. Florentiae 1911. Vol. I, pp. 149-151.

¹⁵⁰M. JUGIE: *Une nouvelle dogmatique orthodoxe, trois théologiens grecs en présence*. EO 11 (1908) pp. 146-154, 257-264.

¹⁵¹G. DEJAFVE: *Sobornost ou Papauté*. I. La notion de l'Église dans l'orthodoxie con-

thodox theologians who strive to diminish the importance of Khomyakov and try to restore the honor of the traditional principles while avoiding the “contamination” of “scholastic rationalism”¹⁵². Nevertheless, the thought of Khomyakov is the decisive factor, today more than ever, in Orthodox theology, so much so that more and more members of the Orthodox hierarchy accept it. A recent book on the Orthodox Church, published under the direction of Metropolitan Seraphim, is a shining example¹⁵³. The most important part of this work dealing with Orthodox dogmatics was written by the spiritual leader of the vast Orthodox ecclesiastical province comprising all of Central Europe, Metropolitan Seraphim himself, in a completely neo-Slavophile spirit. The doctrine on the Church¹⁵⁴ which is given here is the faithful echo of the teaching of the neo-Slavophile authors we have just seen, while the two short pages devoted to the idea of hierarchy carefully avoid mentioning the question of the authority of the bishops¹⁵⁵. It seems to us, therefore, that there is no reason to believe that Orthodox theology will in the near future follow another path than that predicted by the Father of Slavophilism¹⁵⁶.

4

The Congress of Athens can be considered as Orthodox theology’s definitive recognition of the new tendencies that seek to flourish within its bosom. The reports and communications published in the *Procès Verbaux* testify to the ideas of the highly qualified Orthodox theologians who focused on the mystery of the Church. Many other theological problems that concern Or-

temporaine. NET 84 (1952) pp. 355-371. II. La notion catholique de la Papauté. NET 84 (1952) pp. 466-484. Cf. also: W. WINOGRADOW: Die russische orthodoxe theologische Wissenschaft als Vertreterin der authentischen Theologie der orthodoxen Kirche Ruzslands. MTZ 3 (1952) pp. 125-135

¹⁵²For example, the Archimandrite Cyprian Kern writes: “...while turning away from scholasticism, one should not seek in Khomyakov alone the weapons that preserve one from all the evils of rationalism, nor appeal to the legend of the great Inquisitor as a source of theological knowledge”. (Tserkovny Viestnik, 1950 n. 4., cited in *Russie et Chrétienté*, 1950, n. 1-2, p. 78).

¹⁵³METROPOLITAN SERAPHIM: L’Église orthodoxe. Les dogmes, la liturgie, la vie spirituelle. Paris 1952.

¹⁵⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 44-51.

¹⁵⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 54-56.

¹⁵⁶The influence of the ecclesiological ideas of Khomyakov is felt even in questions of ecclesiastical organization, as the reform of the legislation of the Russian Orthodox parishes shows quite clearly. Cf. P. METHODIUS PRICHODJKO: Die Pfarrei in der neueren Gesetzgebung der russischen Kirche. Brixen 1947.

thodox theologians today are related to this one.

Above all, the position and nature of theological science in the Orthodox Church captured the attention of the Congress. This question implies, as we know, the problem of the criterion of religious knowledge, and here ecclesiology enters essentially. The explanations given to this question are reduced to the idea of *sobornost*. Kartashov uses it to reconcile the freedom of scientific and theological research with ecclesiastical authority¹⁵⁷. Bulgakov also took the opportunity to broadly summarize his ideas, even if they were already known anyways. There is a definite tendency in D. Balanos¹⁵⁸ to reduce to a small number, the absolute standards which are imposed on theological work. The theologian, in his eyes, depends in his research only on “fundamental” truths that are manifested in the decisions of the ecumenical councils and in the unanimous doctrine of the Fathers¹⁵⁹. The same tendency can be found in E. Antoniadis, who admits only a relative and partial inspiration¹⁶⁰.

In addition, a strong orientation towards the patristic mentality is evident among the participants at the congress. According to Bratsiotis, the theandric principle is not primarily the central idea of Orthodoxy, but rather the spirituality of the old, undivided Catholic Church¹⁶¹. From this viewpoint Fr. Florovsky¹⁶² goes furthest. He recalls that the official theology of Orthodoxy has forgotten the mentality of the Fathers: the idea of deification, the universal character of the resurrection. Instead of using quotations, the spiritual milieu of the Fathers must be revitalized; here lies the true methodological value of the Fathers.

According to Fr. Florovsky, the Fathers created a new philosophy, different from that of Plato and Aristotle, which cannot be penetrated by Bergsonian philosophy or by any modern philosophy, but only by a deep understanding of Christianity. This understanding of Christianity, says Florovsky, is not a question of style, but of experience of the catholic fullness. This Christian experience is expressed above all in the Hellenistic

¹⁵⁷“Die Freiheit der theologisch-wissenschaftlichen Forschung und die kirchliche Autorität” Pr. V., pp. 175-185; in the same direction goes: B. VELLAS: “Bibelkritik und kirchliche Autorität”, Pr. V., pp. 135-143.

¹⁵⁸“Die neuere orthodoxe Theologie in ihren Verhältnis zur patristischen Theologie und zu den neueren theologischen Auffassungen und Methoden”. Pr. V., pp. 232-237.

¹⁵⁹Cf. p. 236.

¹⁶⁰“Die orthodoxen hermeneutischen Grundprinzipien und Methoden der Auslegung des Neuen Testaments und ihre theologische Voraussetzungen”. Pr. V., pp. 143-174.

¹⁶¹P. BRATSIOTIS: “Die Grundprinzipien und Hauptmerkmale der orthodoxen Kirche”. Pr. V., pp. 115-126.

¹⁶²“Patristics and Modern Theology”. Pr. V., pp. 238-242.

atmosphere. To provide a proof, he refers to the works of the Maria-Laach School, particularly those of Father Casel¹⁶³. The spirit of the Church, Florovsky concludes, has a Hellenistic structure so much so that Hellenism has proved to be an essential element of Christian existence. The task of our generation is then to embrace the spiritual treasures of the Hellenistic world, because as we become more Greek, we become more catholic and more orthodox¹⁶⁴.

The influences of other christianities on Orthodoxy could not be ignored at the Congress. Mgr. Chrysostomos, archbishop of Athens, tried to highlight the influences that reached Orthodoxy during the 17th and 18th centuries¹⁶⁵. The way in which he wishes to counter the objections raised on this subject seems to us a little unfounded: in his eyes, these influences on Orthodox theology would only have been “superficial”.

Fr. Florovsky’s communication¹⁶⁶ on the influences of modern philosophies is more indicative, about the position of Orthodoxy. Instead of repudiating the various currents of modern Western mentality, we must go beyond them, integrating them inside a “creative” return to the proper sources of Orthodoxy. This is the true antidote to the poison of Latinism and to Western tendencies in general. This desire to overcome Westernism is one of the main goals of the Slavophiles, starting with Khomyakov.

On the other hand, the Congress paid particular attention to the fact that the West shows an increasing understanding of Orthodoxy. According to Arseniev, the renewal of Western Christianity owes much to a closer contact with Orthodoxy in the past few decades¹⁶⁷. In particular, he mentions the dependence of Barthian theology on Dostoevskij’s ideas, in which sin plays a leading role. The importance given to the Incarnation by B. Brunner¹⁶⁸ would also find its source in a contact with Orthodoxy. The same is true of Aulén and Künneth, who put the idea of the Christian victory and of the resurrection in the foreground. Similarly, Anglican theology, where since the First World War the thoughts of Khomyakov found a more and more favorable reception, saw a revival based on the idea of the Incarnation¹⁶⁹.

¹⁶³Cf. p. 241.

¹⁶⁴“... let us be more Greek, to be truly catholic, to be truly orthodox!” p. 242.

¹⁶⁵“Die äusseren Einflüsse auf die orthodoxe Theologie in XVI. und XVII. Jahrhundert”. Pr. V., pp. 193-208.

¹⁶⁶“Westliche Einflüsse in der russischen Theologie”. Pr. V., pp. 223-231.

¹⁶⁷“Das christliche Abendland der Gegenwart und der Geist der orthodoxen Kirche”. Pr. V., pp. 342-347.

¹⁶⁸E. BRUNNER: *Der Mittler*. Tübingen 1937. 3rd ed.

¹⁶⁹Cf. F.C.N. HICKS: *The fullness of Sacrifice*. London 1930. Arseniev refers also to Thornton’s: *The Incarnate Lord*. London 1929.

Arseniev himself finds that the idea of the glorified Church can be the true theme for a reconciliation between the separate Churches¹⁷⁰. He notes with satisfaction that Protestantism shows an ever increasing sympathy regarding the organic idea of the Church, the plenitude of the risen Christ. The change in this matter took place, so to speak, instantaneously within Protestantism, especially if we take into account the fact that liberal Protestantism almost completely lost the sense of such a vision of the Church¹⁷¹. Among Catholic ecclesiologists, continues Arseniev, Möhler, Scheeben, and the School of Maria-Laach betray a closer kinship with Orthodox ecclesiology¹⁷².

Several participants at the Congress have become aware of the duties imposed on Orthodox theology to fulfill its mission: the clarification of ecclesiastical consciousness. S. Dimitrijevic¹⁷³ assigns to theology the duty of affirming the ecclesiastical sense of the faithful. His characteristic words deserve to be quoted: "Theological science must be the subject of the principal and most intimate collaboration of the clergy in their efforts to enlighten the confessional conscience and to strengthen the attachment of the faithful to their Church"¹⁷⁴.

Several of the theologians of the Congress addressed themes organized around the missionary problems of the Orthodox Church, admitting the great negligence of Orthodoxy in this matter and declaring themselves inclined to follow the example of the Churches that have always faithfully fulfilled this duty imposed by the Lord¹⁷⁵. D. Moraïtis¹⁷⁶ strongly advocates modern methods for religious education and psychology, in order to satisfy the just demands of modern man. His thinking is consistent with the striking formulation of B. Ispir: "Current problems are much less about apologetics and dogmatics than about integral culture and ethical sociology"¹⁷⁷.

The problem of the relationship between the culture and the Church

¹⁷⁰Cf. p. 344.

¹⁷¹Arseniev refers in this connection to the moving words of W. Monod, W. Zöllner, and W. Stählin on the Church.

¹⁷²Cf. p. 345.

¹⁷³"La mission de la science théologique pour l'éclaircissement de la conscience ecclésiastique". Pr. V., pp. 242-249.

¹⁷⁴p. 247.

¹⁷⁵Cf. H. ALIVISATOS: "Die Frage der äusseren und inneren Mission der orthodoxen Kirche". Pr. V., pp. 328-331.

¹⁷⁶"Aus der inneren Mission der orthodoxen Kirche Griechenlands. (Predigt und Katechese)". Pr. V., pp. 332-339.

¹⁷⁷"La mission dans l'Église orthodoxe". Pr. V., p. 341.

is the subject of the conferences of M. Popescu¹⁷⁸ and V. Zenkovski¹⁷⁹. Their position is to wish for the Church's commitment to social and cultural movements, as desirable for Orthodoxy; but on the other hand, they insist on a certain antinomy between the two orders and on the absolute primacy of the supernatural destiny. Moreover, P. Bratsiotis, on his part, refuses the grievances of Harnack and Steffes on the disinterestedness of Orthodoxy in social and cultural matters. In addition, a series of conferences aims to fill an indisputable lacuna in this respect. Church and State relations have been treated from the standpoint of Orthodoxy¹⁸⁰; the biblical and dogmatic principles that compel the Church to resume her social mission have been emphasized¹⁸¹; furthermore, the relationship between the Orthodox Church and international law was not exempt from the interest of the Congress¹⁸².

These works, in conclusion, bear witness to the tendencies within Orthodoxy to overcome a unilateralism too attached to the vision of a celestial Church.

But the Congress could not fail to reveal, despite its generous efforts towards ecclesiological renewal, the disconcerting aspect of its views on the Church. We have the conferences and communications relating to a possible ecumenical council in mind, from which is expected for humanity a rebirth in the life of the Church. The desirable solution of several practical problems would also be part of it, namely: the reform of the calendar, the codification of the canon law of the universal Church¹⁸³.

As for the theoretical questions concerning a possible Council, the communications of the congress participants lead to an absolute impasse. The Church's *sobornost* theory turns out once again to be unable to overcome the difficulties that arise. H. Alivisatos does not consider it even possible to convene an ecumenical council¹⁸⁴. His thesis follows logically from the idea of the *sobornost* which is refractory to any criterion of authority about

¹⁷⁸“L'Église et la culture”. Pr. V., pp. 347-360.

¹⁷⁹“L'Église et la culture”. Pr. V., pp. 361-370.

¹⁸⁰H. ALIVISATOS: “Kirche, Staat und Volk vom orthodoxen Standpunkt aus”. Pr. V., pp. 370-389.

¹⁸¹H. ALIVISATOS: “Die biblische und historisch-dogmatische Begründung der sozialistischen Aufgabe der Kirche vom orthodoxen Standpunkt”. Pr. V., pp. 427-435. Cf. in the same sense the papers of S. Jonescu and S. Pascheff on the social problem.

¹⁸²M. ZYZYKINE considers in this conference, in the first place, the social aspect of the dogma of the Trinity.

¹⁸³Cf. V. SESAN: “Die Einberufung einer ökumenischen Synode”. Pr. V., pp. 288-297.

¹⁸⁴“Ist die Einberufung einer ökumenischen Synode möglich?” Pr. V., pp. 256-264.

the revealed datum. The considerations of S. Zankov¹⁸⁵ on this point give the reader an even more painful impression and clearly show the theological confusion determined by the ecclesiological unilateralism of Khomyakov.

2.4 The Catholic response: criticism and integration

1

After having examined the tendencies of recent Orthodox ecclesiology, we still have to consider the attitude of Catholic ecclesiology on this subject. It goes without saying that the latter had a twofold work to accomplish. First, an objective criticism that has brought to light the sometimes serious deviations of the Orthodox system, then an understanding, an effort to integrate values, which perhaps are not yet sufficiently explicit in our treatises on the Church.

The criticism begins with Soloviev. But are we allowed to include this great Russian among Catholic theologians? Respected by the Orthodoxes, claimed by the anthroposophists¹⁸⁶, can he be called as d'Herbigny¹⁸⁷ does, the "Russian Newman" without risking of simplifying an extremely complicated problem? In any case we must admit that Soloviev was not a Roman Catholic in the common meaning of the word. It is established that he died reconciled with the Orthodox Church¹⁸⁸ in which he was born. But it is also undeniable that after his anti-Roman period (until 1881) and his belief in a universal church (1881-1883), he recognized, with an uncommon lucidity, the Roman primacy¹⁸⁹, which he never repudiated, even in the years between 1889 and his death. These years, besides being dominated by a highly sophiological preoccupation, induced Soloviev to renounce not to the Roman primacy but to the practical possibility of a union among the churches. His last work, *Les trois entretiens*, which appeared shortly

¹⁸⁵“Die prinzipiellen Schwierigkeiten der Abhaltung eines ökumenischen Konzils”, Pr. V., pp. 269-283.

¹⁸⁶Cf. L. WALTON: “Vladimir Solovyov”. DR 225 (1951) pp. 39-53.

¹⁸⁷M. D'HERBIGNY: *Un Newman Russe: Vladimir Soloviev. 1853-1900*. Paris 1925. See especially pp. 156-284 on Soloviev's theology.

¹⁸⁸Cf. D. STREMOOUKHOFF: *Vladimir Soloviev et son œuvre messianique*. Strasbourg 1936.

¹⁸⁹Cf. P. F. GÖSSMANN: *Der Kirchenbegriff bei Soloviev*. Würzburg 1934, and P. ROBIC: *Solovievs Auffassung von den zentralen kirchlichen Autorität*. Rome 1944.

before his death, aptly expresses the vision of a united Christianity under the direction of the Church of Rome at the end of time¹⁹⁰. Thus, Soloviev's ecclesiology, as found in *La Russie et l'Église universelle*, presents to us the essence of his ecclesiology. Although this book contains not only a criticism of Orthodoxy and an apology for Catholicism, but also a sophological theory of the universal Church, the clarity of its properly ecclesiological thought hardly suffers.

Khomyakov's merits in ecclesiological matters is spontaneously recognized by Soloviev: "About the general idea of the Church as a moral organism," he writes, "the doctrine of the Slavophiles is perfectly true, and they have the great merit to have insisted in principle on the essential and indivisible unity of this organism, so overlooked by our official theologians and by our dissenters"¹⁹¹. But neither does he stop insisting on their fundamental error that leads these "so-called Orthodox" to believe that "the real way to arrive at the port is to imagine that one is already there"¹⁹². According to Soloviev, the Slavophiles do not sufficiently distinguish the various spheres of the Church, and they confuse the modest perfection of means with the complete perfection of the celestial Church. According to him the origin of this error must be sought not only in the mystical aspiration of the Slavophiles, but also in their lack of a positive faith in the universal Church. This refusal of the Slavophiles to accept the idea of a universal Church, existing in a concrete and visible way, comes from the instinctive recognition of the fact that such a Church cannot exist without a supreme, living, and personal authority. That such authority must be personal is best shown by the authority of the first eight ecumenical councils, which has fallen prey to the capricious interpretation of individual theologians. The Slavophiles try to cover this weakness of their system, to use the words of Soloviev, with the "transparent veil of an idealistic theory of the Church in its free and living unity, based on divine grace and Christian charity"¹⁹³. But this position, Soloviev remarks, by minimizing the role of authority, cannot do justice to the visible aspect of the Church and runs the risk of forgetting the theandric structure of the order of salvation, based on the fact of the Incarnation. According to Soloviev, it is in consequence of the Incarnation that the Church has a perfect corporeal body, because "Jesus Christ wanted to unite with

¹⁹⁰Cf. H. DE VISSCHER: Vladimir Soloviev et l'Église universelle. NET 85 (1953) pp. 33-47.

¹⁹¹V. SOLOVIEV: *La Russie et l'Église universelle*. Paris 1922. 4th ed., p. 34.

¹⁹²*Op. cit.*, p. 36.

¹⁹³*Op. cit.*, p. 34.

humanity as a social and political being”¹⁹⁴. The reason is that the order of society cannot remain outside the effects of the Redemption¹⁹⁵. In addition, love, freedom, and unity, so as not to become “vague, purely subjective, and powerless feelings,” must be translated into a constant and determined action that gives the interior feeling an objective reality”¹⁹⁶. By abandoning true theandricism and the principle of instrumentality, the Orthodox Church is no longer able to fulfill its vocation: sanctification of the whole society.

Moreover, it must be noted that several ideas in this book by Soloviev hardly satisfy Catholic thought. For example, his developments on the Christian state in the service of the Church, the idea of the monarchy of St. Peter, the societal incarnation of Divine Wisdom, etc. Basically, he sometimes exaggerates the scope of the theandric principle and of the visible aspect of the Church to the point that in the final analysis he assigns two social bodies to the Church: the hierarchical structure, presided over by the pope, and the Christian state governed by an ideal prince, but almost absorbed by the Church. From this viewpoint “Soloviev does us great harm in the eyes of the Orthodoxes: his theocracy presents Catholicism in a light that makes it unacceptable for them”¹⁹⁷. Anyway, even if it is regrettable that Soloviev did not succeed in the positive aspect of his task of elaborating a complete and synthetic ecclesiology, it remains no less true that no one, before and after him, has emphasized with such depth the principle of christoconformity which must guide a unionist ecclesiology and which alone is capable of integrating and developing the just aspirations of Slavophile and neo-Slavophile thought in ecclesiological matters.

2

In the Latin Church, an attempt to reply to the ecclesiological ideas of Khomyakov and the neo-Slavophiles was not long in coming.

In the first place, let us speak of those who are characterized by an attitude of understanding regarding Slavophile and neo-Slavophile Orthodoxy.

¹⁹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 106.

¹⁹⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 115 and p. 129.

¹⁹⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 125.

¹⁹⁷ S. TYSZKIEWICZ: *La théologie moehlérienne de l'unité et les théologiens pravoslaves*. EU, p. 290.

We rank J. Urban¹⁹⁸, C. Bourgeois¹⁹⁹, K. Pflieger²⁰⁰, and Fr. Congar²⁰¹ as belonging to this group. Above all, they denounce the insufficient information of Catholic ecclesiologists about Orthodoxy. In addition to a better information, a great effort of adaptation on the part of our ecclesiologists seems desirable to them²⁰². They also agree that instead of the less fertile dogmatic controversies, it is necessary to analyze the anthropological foundation of the Orthodox system²⁰³. This necessarily leads to a sincere acknowledgment of the shortcomings of our ecclesiology²⁰⁴.

They emphasize that our juridical ideas are not adequate to adequately communicate the Catholic position. The reason for this is that the Orthodox soul, especially the Russian soul, has little interest in legal concepts²⁰⁵. Pflieger expresses the same idea by affirming that Orthodoxy can only be understood through mysticism²⁰⁶. The means for a better understanding of Orthodoxy would consist in a new emphasis on the idea of the Mystical Body, which has been dormant since the 16th century in Catholic ecclesiology²⁰⁷.

According to Bourgeois, this is the difference between the two ecclesiologies: among Catholics a few hundred pages on the external legal aspect of the Church and one page on the Mystical Body in a scholion; among the Orthodoxes it is the opposite²⁰⁸. Moreover, Fr. Mersch thinks that the notion of the Mystical Body is not yet characterized with proper Latin or juridical terms and that it has preserved “almost the same meaning for many of our separated brethren as for ourselves. By safeguarding its particular significance, we keep alive the possibility of conversations, of exchanges of views, and even, perhaps, of formulas of union. Providence cannot but have

¹⁹⁸“De iis, quæ theologi catholici præstare possint ac debeant erga ecclesiam russicam”. Acta I. Conventus Velehradensis. Præagæ Bohemorum 1908, pp. 13-35.

¹⁹⁹“Psychologica russionum ad occidentalem culturam relatio quomodo influat in eorum conceptum de Ecclesia”. Acta Conventus Pragensis. Olomucii 1930, pp. 173-185.

²⁰⁰“Sinn und Deutung des neuorthodoxen Denkens” in *Der Christliche Osten. Geist und Gestalt*. Regensburg 1939, published by J. Tyciak, G. Wunderle, and P. Werhun, pp. 259-274.

²⁰¹Chrétien désunis. Paris 1937, pp. 266 ff.; (Eng. tr., *Divided Christendom: a Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, pp. 198-220.).

²⁰²Cf. URBAN *art. cit.*, pp. 14-15.

²⁰³Cf. BOURGEOIS, *art. cit.*, p. 175.

²⁰⁴Cf. BOURGEOIS, *art. cit.*, p. 168.

²⁰⁵BOURGEOIS cites in this connection (p. 182) an anonymous Russian author who, in 1912, shows an almost complete lack of interest in the legal sciences.

²⁰⁶Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 260.

²⁰⁷Cf. URBAN, *art. cit.*, p. 20.

²⁰⁸Cf. *art. cit.*, pp. 179-180.

some reason for preserving it and for thrusting it into the foreground in our day”²⁰⁹.

Consequently, these authors prefer to speak rather of the incompleteness of Orthodox ecclesiology than of its errors. Urban wants to maintain a real, though incomplete, membership of the Orthodoxes in the Catholic Church²¹⁰. Pflieger contests, at all costs, the infiltration of modernism among neo-Slavophile ecclesiologists and defends the merits of a theology based on vital and mystical empiricism²¹¹. Fr. Congar, while admitting that Orthodox ecclesiology takes an insufficient account of the human mode of the ecclesiastical reality²¹², concludes that despite “its more or less radical ignorance of institutional and jurisdictional realities”, Orthodox ecclesiology “is not so much wrong as it is incomplete”²¹³.

This position—characterized by a benevolent understanding and a respect for concrete, vital, and psychological values—seems to us to go a little too far. It may give rise to a somewhat superficial attitude in doctrinal matters where the clear distinction between the true and the false is the only way to avoid confusing them. The careful reading of Khomyakov or the *Procès Verbaux* of the Congress of Athens leaves no doubt that, alongside respectable values, there are also very dangerous tendencies and completely erroneous notions.

This is why we think that the methodological position of these theologians will be happily complemented by that of A. Pawlowski²¹⁴, A. Schepetyckij²¹⁵, and their great precursor, A. Palmieri²¹⁶. Their main relevance is to highlight the doctrinal deviations among the Orthodoxes and their approaching closer and closer to Protestant and even modernist theses. These theologians fiercely defend the primacy of theoretical issues while maintaining a friendly atmosphere and respecting the importance of the psychological factors concerning the discussions themselves.

²⁰⁹La théologie du Corps mystique. Paris 1907, 2nd ed. II, p. 197. Eng. tr., p. 481. One can doubt, especially after the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*, about the identity of the meaning of the Mystical Body among us and among many Orthodox, especially the neo-Slavophiles.

²¹⁰Cf. *art. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

²¹¹Pflieger gives the following definition: “Sie ist ein mit rätselhafter Plötzlichkeit und Gewalt aus der russischen Spiritualität empordrängender spekulativer Ausbruch der uralten pneumatischen Sehnsucht”. *Art. cit.*, p. 266.

²¹²Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 268.

²¹³*Op. cit.*, p. 272.

²¹⁴*Op. cit.* above, p. 101.

²¹⁵*Introduction*, in *Der Christliche Osten*, pp. 11-16.

²¹⁶*Op. cit.* above, p. 114.

Palmieri denounces a sort of irenism that tries to dispense with polemics and disputes the validity of Calvet's opinion regarding the unionist work of Fr. G. Morel. According to Calvet, "the less polemical, the better. The courteous relations among Christians not only result in knowing each other better, but they have another result: that there is a reciprocal esteem and, in such a case, the desire of union grows, and one works with an entirely stronger ardor to realize it"²¹⁷. Palmieri is also in complete disagreement with several Catholic writers who refuse to admit a real opposition between the two Churches²¹⁸ and which go so far as to state that "there is in fact no divergence except for private feelings of certain authors who have interpreted according to their particular views such or such point of the dogma... and that there only remains an absolute identity in the beliefs of the two Churches"²¹⁹. According to Palmieri, the attitude of Catholic ecclesiology towards Orthodoxy is only indicated by the words of St. Paul: *Veritatem autem facientes in caritate...*

Among the dogmatic questions, the idea of the Church must require the utmost attention of the unionist theologian, Palmieri insists. Unfortunately, Catholic theology has too often employed its energy dealing with secondary problems, unable to decide the outcome of the struggle, while the central idea, the Church, has remained in oblivion²²⁰. The task at hand is so great that only a new theological age can solve it, he continues, and this new theological age must elaborate the notion of the Church in all its aspects: *In dogmate enim de Ecclesia enucleando semen illud zizaniae latet, quod in legendum excrevit dissidium*²²¹. However, the preeminent place of dogmatic questions on the Church does not make Palmieri forget the importance of psychological, historical, and cultural problems. It is a deplorable fact, he writes, that almost nothing has been written about the differences which characterize religious life in the East and in the West²²². In addition, a sincere respect for Orthodox customs and a friendly attitude in the discussions will powerfully help Catholic ecclesiology to become aware of the fact that Catholics and Orthodox are one on most issues, and the discussions will be carried out not by the desire to conquer at all costs, but by the love of the truth²²³. In describing the new trends of Orthodox ecclesiology, Palmieri in-

²¹⁷CALVET: Abbé Gustave Morel. Paris 1907, p. 297.

²¹⁸A. PALMIERI: *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 169-196.

²¹⁹P. MICHEL: *L'Orient et Rome: Étude sur l'union*. 1894, p. 262.

²²⁰Cf. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 160-161.

²²¹*Ibid.*, p. 166.

²²²*Ibid.*, p. 161.

²²³*Ibid.*, p. 690.

sists on the flourishing of the horizon of our ecclesiology and earnestly hopes for the arrival of resolute workers who will not waver under the criticism of backward minds. *O felix ætas, quæ hanc genuit sobolem Ecclesiæ*²²⁴.

The urgency of putting dogmatic questions in unionist matters first will be even more evident if we remember the testimony of Archbishop Schepetyckij regarding a so-called Oxford movement among the Orthodoxes. According to him, in the place of such a tendency, one encounters a strong attraction among Russian intellectuals in general and among youth in particular towards Protestantism. "This movement," he says, "will likely not attract many Russians to Anglicanism or authentic Protestantism. But it will surely help to penetrate the ideas, desires, and even dogmatics with Protestant or modernist concepts, which will powerfully distance Russian intellects from the Catholic Church"²²⁵.

If the lack of rigor in judging is sometimes forgivable, the uncritical enthusiasm of J. Tyciak²²⁶ remains dangerous. He denounces the rationalism of the West, unable to regain its balance without the help of the East, which even today feeds on the depths of the mystery of worship. According to him, scholasticism has lost since Saint Thomas the "pneumatic" meaning and the methodology of the Fathers. To return to our authentic sources, we must revive the Augustinian notions of the Mystical Body, views that alone express the spirit of the Church and that dispel the prejudices of the Orthodoxes. The latter, while repudiating a legal Church, welcome the ideas of a Bernard, of a Hildegard, of a Bonaventure, of a Nicolas of Cusa, of a Bérulle, etc. A characteristic enumeration about which much could be said...

The same inadmissible attitude is betrayed by the way in which J. Casper²²⁷ and J. Tyciak²²⁸ approach Orthodox ecclesiology in its liturgical aspect. Both of them, fond of the Johannine idea of the Orthodox Church, think that the Eastern liturgy is the best point to start for realizing a reconciliation between the two Churches²²⁹. These two books not only show an often uncritical enthusiasm vis-à-vis the "Johannine" Church, but also

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

²²⁶ "Die Theologie des Ostens und das Abendland" in *Der Christliche Osten* pp. 38-58. Tyciak's more recent work betrays the same orientation: "Wege östlicher Theologie". Bonn 1946.

²²⁷ *Weltverklärung im liturgischen Geiste der Ostkirche, Ecclesia Orans* 22. Freiburg (Br) 1939.

²²⁸ *Die Liturgie als Quelle östlicher Frömmigkeit*. Freiburg (Br) 1937.

²²⁹ "Wenn wir wissen wollen, was die Ostkirche ist, fragen wir ihre Liturgie. In allen ihren ergreifenden Symbolen und Bildern, Worten und Handlungen sieht die Ostkirche eine herrliche Theophanie: Gott erscheint dem Menschen". J. Casper, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

establish an arbitrary opposition between the Christian East and the legal West, between the deification of man in the Eastern Church and Western rationalism. One cannot escape the impression that the rationalist, legal West ultimately means the Catholic Church, otherwise the oppositions would lose their demonstrative force.

Tyciak, in turn, does not stop praising the religious philosophy of the Slavophiles, who would have been the first to grasp the life of the Church²³⁰. Moreover, he sees in the doctrine of *Sophia* a delightful hymn about the Church, the celestial aspect of it²³¹. In his eyes, sophiology is seen not to have any deviation; it is “above the peaks and abysses without losing equilibrium”²³². The Eastern Church preserves, Tyciak continues, the features of the ancient Church. Not only does the liturgy of the Orient reflect the patristic era, but the whole of its religious and philosophical thought is organized around the great mysteries of Christianity²³³.

It is understandable that such a unilateralism undermines heavily their explanations, and the harsh criticism of K. Adam seems fully justified with regard to Tyciak²³⁴. Moreover, their harsh position can easily compromise the services that putting the liturgy of the heavenly Church in the forefront must render in the unionist work. This is why we repeat the categorical words of Fr. Muckermann: “We cannot accept as valid for us the superficial enthusiasm for Eastern Christianity”²³⁵. The theological reason for this position is, as Fr. Lialine rightly points out, that liturgical vitalism, from the psychological viewpoint, must attract the attention of the Catholic workers of union; but, from the dogmatic viewpoint, it is “contrary to Catholic doctrine which cannot admit confusion between religious experience and the virtue of faith”²³⁶.

3

An optimistic current and a more critical current can be discerned among the works that deal with recent Orthodox ecclesiologists²³⁷.

²³⁰Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 115.

²³¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 122.

²³²*Op. cit.*, p. 110.

²³³“...alles religiöse Denken des Ostens steht im Bann des Mysteriums...” p. 109.

²³⁴Cf. TQ 120 (1939) pp. 140 ff.

²³⁵Theol. Revue. 1926, p. 201.

²³⁶“Rite, Spiritualité et Union” Ir 12 (1935) p. 162.

²³⁷The work of B. SCHULTZE: *Russische Denker*. Wien 1950, contains very enlightening information on the attitude of the leading figures of the Russian spirituality regarding Christ and the Church. But these developments aim to serve the cause of ideological

The *Unam Sanctam* collection, which stands out for its comprehensive and optimistic attitude regarding separated christianities, has published the work of A. Gratieux²³⁸, which, without being critical or polemical, paints a picture of the Slavophile movement and its repercussions on the ecclesiology of Khomyakov. By his irenic attitude, the author aims to serve the cause of union in the spirit of Khomyakov, which, according to him, “by studying, affirming, and glorifying the high ideal of the mystical Church, made a vital work of apologetics, of the type that is so necessary to confront modern incredulity and which is no less useful for the defense of the Catholic Church than for that of the Orthodox Church”²³⁹.

Gratieux defends the entirely Christian orientation of Khomyakov while admitting a nuance of Protestantism in some of his expressions. According to him, Khomyakov still remains on a solid ground regarding his theory of knowledge and his ecclesiology: the fanciful constructions of sophiology cannot be regarded as the legitimate continuation of Khomyakov’s thought²⁴⁰.

In our opinion, Gratieux does not always realize that it is extremely easy to pass from an understanding attitude to a false irenism, so dangerous to the cause of union. Some of his judgments are difficult to sustain, as, e.g., the following: “...it is in Khomyakov himself, in his life and in his whole thought; it is there, in his doctrine on the role of life manifested by the unity and freedom of love and realized in the Mystical Body of Christ... that we must look for a starting point for new reconciliations”²⁴¹. The work of Khomyakov, in our opinion, has distanced Orthodox ecclesiology from Catholic truth, despite certain values contained in his doctrine.

In the same collection, the translation of the *Préface aux œuvres théologiques* of A.S. Khomyakov, written by G. Samarine²⁴², was published; it praises the great Slavophile for having given to the idea of the Church a, so to speak, “standard” expression “to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be taken away”²⁴³. The translator, A. Gratieux, again points out the great merit of Khomyakov and Samarine “for having put total reason above reasoning and to have shown in synthesis, that is to say in life, the point of departure and the point of arrival of the analysis,”

information rather than that of ecclesiology itself.

²³⁸ A. GRATIEUX: A.S. Khomyakov et le mouvement slavophile, I. Les hommes, II. Les doctrines. Paris 1939.

²³⁹ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 103.

²⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 255.

²⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, II, p. 255.

²⁴² Paris 1939. (*Unam Sanctam* 7).

²⁴³ *Op. cit.*, p. 72.

even if they had not done full justice to the external Church²⁴⁴.

On the other hand, the theses of P. Baron²⁴⁵ and G. Pasa²⁴⁶ are generally more severe with respect to Khomyakov. Baron, while recognizing the positive values of his ecclesiology²⁴⁷, does not fail to draw attention to the “drama of logic”, which is detected there²⁴⁸. He also points out that the theological concerns of Slavophiles are often tainted by religious nationalism due to the lack of a differentiated theology and a Christian philosophy²⁴⁹. This would explain why these views of the visible Church have an analogy with Protestant doctrines²⁵⁰, and why religious dualism, the idea of an evil world embodied in the West, does not disappear from the Slavophile system²⁵¹.

Baron also settles in his own way the controversial problem of Hegel’s influence on Khomyakov. Without denying the influence of German idealism, he asserts that Khomyakov, while drawing inspiration from Hegel, took a course opposed to his principles²⁵². Baron does not conceal the fact that Khomyakov does not admit the proof of the Church by the signs, that he rejects any apologetics about it, and that he interprets the nature of the Church according to a system intended to justify an ideal Russian Christianity with respect to an imaginary Catholicism²⁵³.

Baron repeatedly points out the contradictions and ambiguities that result from Khomyakov’s developments: when Khomyakov does not want to appear Protestant and when he asserts the distinction between ministerial powers and personal sanctity of those who exercise them, he contradicts himself, Baron rightly concludes. “... There is nothing left of the argumentation that he constructs to condemn papal infallibility, since it was entirely based on the essential connection he established between faith and charity, between the holiness and the teaching of the infallible revealed doctrine”²⁵⁴.

The originality of Khomyakov, according to Baron, consists in his opposition to Catholicism, of which he had, by the way, an absolutely false

²⁴⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 78.

²⁴⁵Un théologien laïc orthodoxe russe au XIX^e siècle. Alexis Stépanovitch Khomiakov. (1804-1860). Rome 1940.

²⁴⁶Homjakovi doctrina de Ecclesia. Zagrebiae 1943.

²⁴⁷See especially pp. 62 ff.

²⁴⁸Cf. p. 15.

²⁴⁹Cf. p. 39 and p. 43.

²⁵⁰Cf. pp. 135-137.

²⁵¹Cf. p. 126.

²⁵²Cf. pp. 58-59.

²⁵³Cf. p. 128.

²⁵⁴Cf. p. 213.

conception. “This facilitates his defense and allows him to conceal, under the guise of a positive construction, an exclusivism incompatible with the reality of the Church, as Christ established it, as a reality that should present itself to the world to convert, sanctify, and save it”²⁵⁵. Pasa’s work is a mostly apologetic study and offers no new viewpoints.

Fr. Schultze devoted an in-depth study to the ecclesiological thought of N. Berdyaev²⁵⁶. It highlights in particular the tension that results from the opposition between loyal adherence to the Christian tradition and the daring philosophical developments that characterize Berdyaev’s works. Berdyaev proposes a philosophy of identity where the difference between the subject and the object must vanish in the intuition, whereas the data of the objective order (the right, the power, the law, the sciences, the culture) would find their completion in an intuitive and existential gaze, in the immediate possession of all reality²⁵⁷.

Pushing such principles to the extreme consequences, all external authority and obedience is suppressed. Revelation, a very spiritual thing, will be qualified as absolutely refractory to any materialization: “The interpretation of revelation, which sees an authority in it, is a form of materialism”²⁵⁸. By identifying the material with what is static and the spiritual with what is dynamic, Berdyaev erects a Church where everything is prophetic and unfinished until the end of time. Surely, it is partly true that “Christian truth is revealed in a dynamic and creative process and this process is still unfinished in the world, it cannot be fulfilled until the end of time. The revelation of Christian truth in humanity presupposes an eternal dynamic of the consciousness, an eternal creative tension of the Spirit”²⁵⁹. But this would also imply that the Church on the earth could take an absolutely internalized form of existence. Moreover, the fundamental notions of Berdyaev’s ecclesiology, as Ch. Journet remarked²⁶⁰, lack an indispensable precision: the notion of prophetic revelation must mean both the conceptual revelation and the deep, mystical experience of the Christian life. But for Berdyaev living faith always accompanies prophetism and the magisterium accompanies

²⁵⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 129.

²⁵⁶ B. SCHULTZE: *Die Schau der Kirche bei N. Berdjajew*. Roma 1936.

²⁵⁷ “Berdjajeffs Auffassung von der äusseren, sichtbaren Kirche nimmt teil an der ganzen Fragwürdigkeit, Problematik seiner Schau der Außenwelt, die als Objektivieren aus der Existenz hinausfällt, aber als Identität *Kosmos und Geist* innerhalb des Lebensstroms der Wirklichkeit bleibt”. *Op. cit.*, p. 97.

²⁵⁸ N. BERDYAEV: *Esprit et liberté*. Paris 1933, p. 113.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

²⁶⁰ CH. JOURNET: *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*. I. Paris 1941, p. 153 ; (Eng. tr., pp. 139-142.)

mediocrity, and consequently he must divide Christianity into two parts: one conservative and the other creative.

To philosophically justify such a division, or rather opposition, Berdyaev is forced to substitute the tension between necessity and freedom to the principle of *actus* and *potentia*. His philosophy and ecclesiology are characterized by dynamism, by a continual movement between monism and dualism; kataphatic and apophatic theology, the small Logos and the great Logos, and the historical Christ and the eternal Word are some oppositions that govern his thought. In conclusion, Fr. Schultze says that Berdyaev's effort to support the pillars of his theology without the help of the idea of *analogia entis* is enormous. Nevertheless, it seems that, despite its modernist appearance, he aims to seriously maintain the two aspects of the Church, the conservative-sacramental and the creative-prophetic aspects.

Regarding the Congress of Athens, the study of Fr. Schultze deserves attention²⁶¹. Above all, he denounces the anti-Catholic trend of the Congress. The Congress, according to him, shows a spirit of distrust towards the Catholic Church—a spirit that manifests itself especially in the adoption of theses such as the subjective conception of a universal consensus, taken for the criterion of truth. The theologians of the Congress do not seem to be really aware of the essential points of the Catholic ecclesiological system—a phenomenon hardly beneficial, since in their eyes Latinism is equivalent to a set of deviations. Scholastic theology in particular became the object of severe criticism by Bulgakov and Arseniev. From the dogmatic viewpoint, Fr. Schultze continues, the hierarchy is no longer considered by any of the participants as the source of the truth; rather, they try to demonstrate that Orthodoxy has remained unchanged despite the “failure” of the Eastern hierarchy at the Council of Florence. The Congress is based essentially on the ideology of Khomyakov, spiritual heir to Syropoulos²⁶² whose leading idea from this viewpoint is basically Protestant²⁶³.

²⁶¹B. SCHULTZE: Problemi di teologia presso gli ortodossi. OCP 7 (1941) pp. 149-205.

²⁶²Greek author of 16th century, who, with the help of a distorted presentation of the aforementioned Council, was the first to contrast the failure of the Eastern hierarchy to the orthodoxy of the people: “Vera historia unionis non veræ inter Græcos et Latinos, sive Concilii Florentini exactissima narratio”. Græce scripta per Sylvestrum Sguropulum... transtulit in sermonem latinum Robertus Creyghton. Hagæ – Comitis. 1660.

²⁶³“L'ideologia di Syropulos, degli autori dell'enciclica, di Khomyakov, è in fondo protestante”. *art. cit.*, p. 187.

In reviewing recent Orthodox ecclesiology and the answers given by Catholics, it is not difficult to see how criticism is a delicate problem, and even more a work of integration.

Thus, the work of Fr. Tyszkiewicz²⁶⁴, which seeks to do justice to certain elements of the Orthodox notion of the holiness of the Church, despite his sincere efforts toward integration, has rather the character of a criticism. The author shows how wrong are the grievances of the Orthodoxes against the Catholic Church, whose legalism and authoritarian structure would render the flourishing of holiness impossible. On the other hand, the author's principal thesis wants to inculcate that the Church's holiness can only be christoconform, and thus it must correspond to the theandric, theandric structure of the Church²⁶⁵.

A skilled expert of his adversaries, he tackles his theme from many angles: he demands, in the name of holiness, that the Church be a perfect human society and fulfill its mission with all the fullness of its collective being²⁶⁶. The Church, the *pleroma* of Christ, must manifest its theandric being in its societal form; the means of the Church must, according to this principle, be both spiritual and material; the Church must sacrifice herself, as Jesus Christ does, in its visible nature, especially since "spiritual churches" are never persecuted.

Since it would be too long to repeat the arguments of the author, we will only point out the richness of his viewpoints. The theandric principle implies the submission of the will to an external authority; therefore, the idea of a freedom without obedience, conceived in the manner of the Orthodoxes, is essentially opposed to holiness. If holiness is a life par excellence, Tyszkiewicz continues, it must be protected by a network of laws that make a homogeneous evolution possible for such life. The sacraments and the prayer do not communicate grace unless the will manifests an unconditional submission to the commandments of God.

The universal principle of instrumental causality pleads for the necessity of a supreme instrument in the life of the Church in order to maintain its unity. The principle of the uni-diversity presupposes, in the diversity of beings, a common destiny towards a common end: hence the multiple nuances

²⁶⁴"La sainteté de l'Église christoconforme". Rome 1945.

²⁶⁵In the first part of his work, the author enumerates the Catholic ecclesologists who see in theandricism the *Leitmotif* of ecclesiology, but without going into details (see pp. 53-55).

²⁶⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 111.

in the external, human aspect of the Church would lose their *raison d'être* if they were not coordinated by a superior principle of unity. The vocation of the Church is to realize the unity of redeemed individuals; but grace here, as everywhere, assumes a natural starting point to attain a supernatural elevation. Thus, supernatural unity demands the juridical aspect of the Church.

A profound analysis of Christology and ecclesiology shows that theandricism loses its value if the hierarchy gives way to a vague concept of freedom; similarly, the true notion of sacrifice requires obedience in its perfectly human form. The Christian moral order must embrace no less effectively all the manifestations of human life; the three theological virtues can only exist and develop in their theandric form, i.e., have as their object the divine reality in human, sometimes repulsive, forms.

The Church, the theophany of divine love, can only manifest the glory of God under the veil of human weakness, following the example of Jesus Christ, its Divine Head. The Catholic Church has recognized the full meaning of the Incarnation by valuing the role of Mary in the Church the most. Natural law and Christian humanism found both in the Church their right esteem. The development of dogma proves impossible in the *sobornost*, in the opinion of even a Rozanov and a Tolstoy, who have recognized that dogmatic Christianity and the papacy are inseparable. The lesson of oriental hagiography is opposed to the ideas of the Slavophiles who disregard the value of obedience²⁶⁷.

These are some essential ideas in Fr. Tyszkiewicz's book, a convincing demonstration that outside the Catholic Church, Christ-conforming sanctity cannot reach its full meaning and that the noblest aspirations of Orthodoxy will find their authentic achievement only within the Catholic Church²⁶⁸. However, it would have been better for the author to more precisely mark the elements of the Orthodox idea about the holiness of the Church, which are not sufficiently developed or are simply lacking in our treatises on the Church.

These, then, are the salient features of the new Orthodox ecclesiology which have recently elicited some notable reactions among Catholic ecclesiologists.

As we have seen, Slavophile and neo-Slavophile ecclesiology betrays a strong mystical tendency, and the philosophical basis it uses to try to ex-

²⁶⁷Cf. S. TYSZKIEWICZ: *Spiritualité et sainteté russe pravoslave*. Gr 15 (1034) pp. 351-376.

²⁶⁸Cf. S. TYSZKIEWICZ: *L'attitude des saints russes à l'égard du Catholicisme*. Gr 23 (1952) pp. 292-298.

plain and justify itself is under the sign of romantic idealism and its heir, philosophical existentialism, both taking on, by the way, very personal hues while passing through the mind of Khomyakov or his new disciples.

This is why the complexity of Orthodox ecclesiology does not allow any simplistic stand, either enthusiastic or severe. It is not, strictly speaking, Protestantism, nor the preserved mind of the early Church, but an erratic auriferous block, to use the words of Pius XI, seeking, even unconsciously, the Catholic fullness. It is not enough to judge such an ecclesiology according to the categories of our apologetic *De Ecclesia* treatises, which are limited, for the most part, to the terrestrial, militant, aspect of the Church, whereas Slavophile ecclesiology defines the Church only by the elements of its eternal substance.

Catholic ecclesiology, no doubt, has an important mission toward the Eastern Churches; it must give them the doctrinal elements which will complete what their present ecclesiology may have that is false, unilateral, and incomplete; but it can fulfill this mission only by abandoning the apologetic unilateralism of many of the *De Ecclesia* treaties still in vogue and presenting the revealed doctrine on the Church in a more dogmatic and irenic way, by simultaneously integrating the vital aspect of the idea of the Church²⁶⁹.

Among our ecclesiologists, at least among the most balanced of them, we notice a concern for objective criticism against everything that, in the new Orthodox ecclesiology, tends to subvert the visible and hierarchical aspect of the Church. On this point, the attitude of Catholic ecclesiologists is all the more understandable because the distant Protestant filiation of this aspect of the Slavophile mentality is not disputable. On the other hand, there is no shortage of Catholic theologians sincerely wanting to render justice to many aspects of Slavophile ecclesiology. But it must be admitted that so far we have only the well-posed general principles of an integration yet to be realized.

2.5 The ecclesiology of the ecumenical movement

1

Among the major external factors that have had a profound influence on the direction of recent Catholic ecclesiology, a very important place must

²⁶⁹It is in this sense, above all, that studies on Eastern Christianity will have a very advantageous influence on the enrichment of Catholic theology. Cf. G. WUNDERLE: *Die religiöse Bedeutung der ostkirchlichen Studien*. Würzburg 1950. 3th ed.

be reserved for the ecumenical movement. This movement, which today appears as a characteristic par excellence of contemporary Christianity,²⁷⁰ may be traced back to the vital needs that emerged in the past century inside Protestantism, exhausted by the ever increasing number of its divisions. It was the mentality of acting without delay that characterizes the American Protestantism that first discovered that Protestant missions were doomed to failure without an effective cooperation in the mission countries. This willingness to cooperate was strongly stimulated by the formation of the Evangelical Alliance (London, 1846), an organization based on the acceptance of a few fundamental dogmas. It is in the spirit of making missionary action more effective that the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, held in Chicago in 1886, proposed a plan that, after several modifications, is now known to us under the name of Lambeth Quadrilateral. The youth movements (YMCA, 1878; YWCA, 1894) and Protestant student movements (SCM, 1895) have also contributed much to a unified action of the Protestant front aiming to make Christian principles prevail in modern life.

Thus, the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America was formed in 1908 in Philadelphia with a social action program. These three factors of the Protestant ecumenical spirit—missionary, theological, and social—spontaneously led to the formation of a global higher organization: The World Missionary Conference (Edinburgh, 1910). In terms of missionary cooperation, the major stages of the Conference's activity are the imposing meetings of Jerusalem (1928) and Madras (1938). As for social, cultural, and charitable cooperation, known as the Life and Work branch, the Conference succeeded in preparing and convening, with the help of other entities, the Stockholm Ecumenical Congress (1925). The groups eager mainly for doctrinal unity, the Faith and Order branch, met for the first time in Lausanne in 1927. The second meeting of these two branches took place in 1937 in Oxford for Life and Work and in Edinburgh for Faith and Order. But in the course of the discussions it became more and more evident that the practical and theoretical issues of the meeting were closely related and therefore it was found desirable to unify the Faith and Order and Life and Work movements under a common leadership called the Council of Churches. This Council, without having an authoritative role over the churches, is nonetheless responsible for preparing and running the ecumenical Congresses, the first of which was held in Amsterdam in 1948. But it should be noted that

²⁷⁰Cf. A. RADEMACHER: *Der religiöse Sinn unserer Zeit und der ökumenisch Gedanke*. Bonn, 1939.

the Faith and Order movement has retained some autonomy and continues to hold its meetings under the auspices of the Council of Churches (Lund, 1952). It is characteristic of the energetic activity of the Council that already in 1954, in Evanston, the Second Ecumenical Congress was held²⁷¹.

After the Stockholm Conference, the Protestant ecumenical movement made its influence felt strongly in Catholic ecclesiology, although the situation of the Protestant churches in the United States and also in Europe is not such that one could expect a dogmatic orientation from the Stockholm Conference²⁷². In Europe, the Lutheran theses defeated by the liberal current lost their value in the eyes of the Protestant people, and this in turn led to a great depopulation of these churches. This a-dogmatism could no longer fill the gap that existed between modern life and Christian morality, to such an extent that the Protestant churches have largely ceased to have an influence on the morality of the people. The predominant representation of the American churches at the conference further increased the pragmatist hue of the conference to such an extent that, leaving aside some declarations of religious character, the conference dealt almost exclusively with the social and international problems of the Christian world.

However, the Stockholm Conference is not without merit; it bore a certain testimony of Christianity before a practically unbelieving civilization; it humbly acknowledged the fragmentation of Christianity and had the courage to admit the responsibility of Christians. But, in spite of everything, it did not leave the frames of the Protestant mentality whose roots are betrayed by various indications²⁷³. In the first place, nominalism, which separates the reality from abstract knowledge, and thus religion from its doctrinal status and the "spiritual" religion from its dogmatic and cultural forms. Most of the participants in the Conference were drawn from the followers of Schleiermacher and Ritschl, with Söderblom in the lead, as the key player at the Conference. They maintained their philosophical rationalism, according to which the Symbols remain the ever reformable expressions of the sponta-

²⁷¹Regarding the history of the Protestant ecumenical movement, one can profitably consult the work of the Protestant theologian W. A. BROWN: *Toward a United Church*. New York 1946. Cf. also M. PRIBILLA: *Um kirchliche Einheit*, Stockholm, Lausanne, Rome, Freiburg (Br) 1929, and Y. CONGAR: *Chrétiens désunis*, Paris 1937; (Eng. tr., *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*). Finally, let us mention the work edited recently by R. ROUSE and S. C. NEILL: *History of the Ecumenical Movement 1517-1948*. London 1954.

²⁷²On the themes of the conference, cf. Pribilla *op. cit.*, p. 25 ff. Cf. also CH. JOURNET: *L'union des Églises et le christianisme pratique*. Paris 1927.

²⁷³Cf. Congar *op. cit.*, pp. 156 ff.; (Eng. tr., pp. 116-144).

neous experience of the religious soul. Pragmatism, in turn, only reinforced this tendency by subordinating Christianity to a humanitarian social politics and by substituting a religious philosophy for supernatural faith. The Lausanne Conference (1927), which aimed to be more dogmatic, rested on the theory of “branches”, on the distinction between essential and ancillary dogmas, a position which implies the Protestant thesis of free inquiry.

2

This pragmatic character, based on religious experience, dominated the ecumenical movement from the conference of Stockholm to the one of Evanston. One began to look at the different Christian Churches as irreducible experiences of Christianity, so rich in its various aspects.

A good part of the Orthodox ecclesialogists declared themselves, as it still true today, in favor of this tendency. An interesting documentation on this subject can be found in the collection of studies: *La réunion chrétienne. Le problème œcuménique dans la conscience orthodoxe*²⁷⁴. They are side by side with the communications that reflect the theses of traditional Orthodox ecclesiology²⁷⁵; other communications, like the ones of Bulgakov, Berdyaev, Zenkovski, and Kartashov, treat the ecumenical problem in the manner of a *Weltanschauung*.

Fr. Bulgakov²⁷⁶ considers the question of union within the framework of the “evangelical” antinomy of institutionalism and freedom, two possibilities for living today the authentic, underlying, indivisible Christianity that persists in his unity, notwithstanding denominational divisions. On purpose, he does not distinguish objective and subjective ecclesiastical factors, means and effects of grace, and dogmatic and psychological viewpoints because, in his opinion, these distinctions are only various but legitimate manifestations of one reality: the ecclesiastical experience.

V. Zenkovski²⁷⁷ proposes a theory about what is absolute and what is relative in the Church; the absolute factor is the experience of sacramental life, which reveals the absolute value of the Church for salvation, but which

²⁷⁴Paris 1933.

²⁷⁵Mgr. GENNADIOS: Les problèmes dogmatiques principaux dans la réunion des Églises, pp. 39-52. S. ZANKOV: L'unité ecclésiastique dans le monde contemporain, pp. 121-130. H. ALIVISATOS: Comment réaliser effectivement l'union des Églises, pp. 131-140. Cf. also the article of Fr. LIALINE: “Orthodoxie à propos d'Œcuménisme” *Ir* 10 (1933) pp. 304-334.

²⁷⁶“Puits de Jacob”, *op. cit.*, pp. 9-32.

²⁷⁷“Le mouvement œcuménique et le travail religieux avec la jeunesse”; *op. cit.*, pp. 142-166.

does not prevent a legitimate relativism. N. Berdyaev, in turn, shows the way toward super-confessionalism, viz., toward a spiritual experience, the only area suitable for union. His leading ideas, the primacy of mysticism and the measure of human freedom, only allow for a union in the subjective.

A. Kartashov is of the opinion that every formal union implies, essentially, an erroneous ecclesiology, infected with Latin legalism; on the contrary, the ecumenical movement can only aim for a union between equals, in which the churches would keep their interior mystical dignity²⁷⁸.

Even if rather different with the often much more reserved attitude of the Orthodox hierarchy regarding the ecumenical movement, this very conciliatory and almost relativist position has remained common among Orthodox theologians in ecumenical matters²⁷⁹.

The theoreticians of the ecumenical movement did not fail to properly distribute the theological roles to be played in the movement by the various denominations, with a view to achieving non-Roman Catholicism, a major factor in contemporary religious history according to Visser't Hooft.

The mission of Orthodoxy, according to him, is to bear witness to the "spiritual primacy of the visible Church"²⁸⁰, to preserve the heritage of primitive Catholicism about the realism of the visible Church. In the ecumenical movement, which is a tension towards mutual enrichment, Orthodoxy would represent the traditional Church, based on the sacraments, in the manner of a divino-human society, while avoiding the sacerdotalistic exaggerations of Roman Catholicism. Orthodoxy would affirm in the ecumenical movement the principle: *in Ecclesia salus*, without adding to it *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Visser't Hooft has also clearly seen that the conservative part of the Orthodox, especially the hierarchy, would not follow this path, which is why he has in mind only the followers of Khomyakov, who would represent the characteristic ecclesiology of Orthodoxy²⁸¹.

The Protestant message would counter the tendency to make the means of salvation absolute, by professing the sovereign freedom of the Word of God. "To take for granted that God acts and necessarily acts in a certain way and at a certain time, puts us in the very dangerous risk of not listening

²⁷⁸"L'union des Églises à la lumière de l'histoire", pp. 82-120.

²⁷⁹We cite as an example: N. ARSENEV: Die Ostkirche und die ökumenische Bewegung. IKZ 20 (1930) pp. 176-180. S. ZANKOV: Die orthodoxe Kirche des Ostens in ökumenischer Sicht. *Kirchliche Zeitfragen*. 17. Zürich 1946.

²⁸⁰Le Catholicisme non-romain. Paris 1933. Cf. also the account of this work by Fr. LIALINE: Ir 11 (1934) pp. 35-50.

²⁸¹Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 71-72.

to him when he is speaking and of deluding ourselves into believing we have heard when he does not speak”²⁸². While leaving the visible Church to be the bearer of grace, truth would be relegated exclusively to the mystical domain.

Although neo-Slavophile ecclesiologists want to maintain, even at the price of contradictions, the absolute value of their visible Church, an intuitive attitude brings them closer to the position of Visser’t Hooft, so much so that “in both cases we are in the presence of a religious philosophy rather than of a theology”²⁸³.

The discussions on the sacraments and grace at the Edinburgh Conference (1937) are proof that the Orthodoxes have adopted, to a certain extent, the role assigned to them by non-Roman Catholicism²⁸⁴. In sacramental matters, the Orthodox side could not but recognize the Protestant misunderstanding²⁸⁵: The priesthood once again proved to be the line of demarcation between the two denominations. Thus, the Orthodoxes assigned themselves the task of opening the eyes of the Protestants on the sacramental reality.

But for the discussion regarding grace they already seem to agree in sharing the theological roles, leaving to Protestantism the task of bearing witness to the absolute gratuity of grace and reserving to themselves the right to underline the reality of Christian divinization and the effectiveness of grace. According to Arseniev, Lutherans have been able to realize that spiritual combat does not diminish grace, that the real sanctification of man does not remove the gratuitousness of God’s gifts. The exchanges of views between Lutherans and Orthodox, according to the same author, were moving, instructive, and gave the impression of a great and real reciprocal rapprochement²⁸⁶.

²⁸²*Op. cit.*, p. 122.

²⁸³C. LIALINE: *art. cit.*, p. 48.

²⁸⁴Cf. L. HODGSON: *The Second World Conference on Faith and Order*, held at Edinburgh. August 3-18, 1937. New York 1938; see especially pp. 220-278.

²⁸⁵Cf. N. ARSENIÉV: *The Doctrine of the Sacraments and Grace at the Edinburgh Conference*, Ir 15 (1938) pp. 29-43.

²⁸⁶It should be noted, in truth, that the Orthodox delegates refused to subscribe to the wording of the doctrine of the Conference, which they found Protestant in spirit, but, in spite of this, the presence of the Orthodoxes implied a firm and irenic proclamation of a number Catholic truths before a Protestant assembly. On the role of Orthodoxy in the ecumenical movement, cf. L. BOUYER: *Catholicisme et œcuménisme*, VInt 13 (1945) pp. 6-30.

3

The Amsterdam Congress, while renouncing the doctrinal compromises²⁸⁷, retained the orientation of the Stockholm Conference, which the Protestant pastor J. Jézéquel rashly expressed: “At Stockholm, no Church has come to say: I have all the truth and I have the perfect organization; union can only occur in my womb”²⁸⁸.

The official Congressional report²⁸⁹ notes that the disagreement within Christianity can be reduced to the opposition between two general concepts: “Catholicism” and “Protestantism”, that is to say, two antithetical ways of conceiving Christianity. “Catholicism” insists on the sacramental mediation of the visible Church (horizontal aspect of the Church), while “Protestantism” emphasizes immediate contact with the Word of God (vertical aspect of the Church). The report concludes by noting that “even as dialog takes place between people who trust and understand each other, there is an irreducible core of divergences between two totally different ways of grasping the nature of the Church of Christ”²⁹⁰. This observation is followed by an admission of the impossibility of solving this antinomy.

The position of the Congress remains a clear expression of non-Roman Catholicism, especially since it presupposes that various groups inside Christendom share the unique and indivisible truth about the Church. There is no shortage of Catholic ecclesialogists who are inclined to see an enormous progress compared to previous Conferences²⁹¹. But we must not forget that besides Fr. Florovsky, K. Barth also played a very important role there.

A disciple of the latter, R. Paquier, interprets the doctrinal results of the Congress of Amsterdam in an article whose title tells it all: *Des théologies confessionnelles à une théologie œcuménique*²⁹². There the author calls upon the contribution of confessions to build the universal theological house, having in mind a generous detachment from the narrow position imposed on Christian groups by historical events.

This generous detachment implies not only a return to Christian sources, but also a spirit of renunciation which would consent to see in dogmatic def-

²⁸⁷The three ecumenical methods employed so far are: that of fundamental points, that of doctrinal compromises, and that of pragmatic unity, fruit of agnosticism, but precious as propaedeutic.

²⁸⁸Christianisme social. Paris. (1925), p. 979.

²⁸⁹“L’Église universelle dans le dessein de Dieu”. Neuchâtel-Paris 1949, pp. 303-312.

²⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 305.

²⁹¹As for example, R. ROUQUETTE: La première assemblée du Conseil œcuménique. Amsterdam, 1948. Et. 82 (261) (April 1949) pp. 3-29.

²⁹²See in *Verbum Caro* 2 (1948) pp. 3-14.

initions no more than verbal formulas. Among these definitions the author lists as examples: the condemnation of monophysitism, the doctrine of transubstantiation, the definitions of the Council of Trent, as well as the *sola fides* of Luther. In this perspective, according to the author, the Anglican theme of the Incarnation, the Barthian doctrine of the Word of God, and the values restored by the Catholic liturgical movement tend towards the same perfection, towards the fullness of Christ.

The latest evolution of the ecumenical movement clearly shows us what can and should be expected on the doctrinal plane from this so-called interdenominational *pleroma*. In fact, the Conference of Lund in 1952 strongly suggested that union is possible only for those who are willing to reduce important doctrinal points to some general affirmations. This is why the Conference of Lund proved utterly ineffectual on questions concerning the grace, the priesthood, and the sacraments. It is therefore not surprising that the Ecumenical Congress in Evanston has concluded that it is quite vain, in the present situation of the Protestant churches, to deal directly with the problem of union. Instead of this problem, an eschatological theme has been chosen, the return of Christ at the end of time, as the object of the discussions. Basically, the Evanston Congress marks the ever growing importance of American Protestantism, an active body, full of missionary spirit, but little concerned with dogmatic questions.

It is not for us to judge the ecumenical movement of our Protestant brothers. Despite several disconcerting factors from the Catholic viewpoint, the Catholic Church, which has never participated in these discussions for reasons that are too well known, is pleased to see the ongoing purification of the ecumenical movement. The way from Stockholm to Evanston remains testimony to the fact that Protestantism wants to sincerely get past the position of liberalism according to which the divinity of Christ no longer existed and wants to interpret the whole story according to a strictly supernatural event: the return of the Christ, Lord of the ages. But even from the strictly theological viewpoint, the ecumenical movement is not without effect on Catholic ecclesiology. It made her more sensitive to questions concerning the rooting of dogma in the souls of the faithful.

4

After what we have just said, it will be easy to understand why the ecumenical conferences were not followed by dogmatic debates on the Catholic side, but rather by a clear awareness of the importance of anthropological, cultural, and psychological factors underlying the separation of the Christian

churches. Among our theologians who were dealing with this subject, it is necessary to mention, first of all, Fr. Congar, who remarkably analyzes what the divisions of Christianity represent²⁹³. According to him, Anglicanism has become more and more closely tied to the national temperament, while the Slavophiles tend to substitute for the political and dogmatic motives of schism “a cultural separation, which would make out the Christianity of the Orient to be true Christianity just because it is oriental” generating “a radical and inexpugnable opposition between two ways of thinking about Christianity as such and the Church as a whole”²⁹⁴.

This fact would explain why the Orthodoxes, in good number, feel closer to Protestantism than to the Catholic Church, despite the almost complete dogmatic identity that exists between them and us. Protestantism represents in their eyes the perfect form of the position of Christianity according to one type of mentality, a position towards which Slavophile ecclesiology tends with all its force. What divides us then is not the solution of the problems, but their position, “not so much the articles of faith as the actual concept of the act of faith... not so much as regards the solution of problems, as the actual way of approaching them”²⁹⁵. This leads to a problem of anthropology because separated Christians have become different men. Sociological schisms, the refusal to submit to one or another doctrinal point in the magisterium, have become schisms of mentality²⁹⁶.

Besides, the attempt to reduce the opposition between Catholics and Protestants to a philosophical or anthropological principle is not recent²⁹⁷. Chemnitz saw, for his part, the deep root of the differences in the fierce will of Catholics to express the doctrine of justification in philosophical terms. On the other hand, Bellarmine saw a latent Nestorianism in Luther’s christology and his thesis on the *companatio*. According to him, Calvin was Arian in his doctrine of the Trinity; in short, the Protestants, in Bellarmine’s opinion,

²⁹³Y. CONGAR: *Chrétiens désunis*. Paris 1937, See especially pp. 1-57 ; (Eng. tr., *Divided Christendom: A Catholic Study of the Problem of Reunion*, pp. 1-47).

²⁹⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 46 ; (Eng. tr., p. 38.)

²⁹⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 47 ; (Eng. tr., p. 39.)

²⁹⁶“At the origin of great secessions there was as a rule a genuine spiritual impetus which, in so far as it was positive and disinterested, was truly Catholic,” Fr. Congar says (*op. cit.*, p. 49 ; (Eng. tr., p. 41.)). This psychological (or maybe anthropological) explanation of heresy appears to Ch. Journet (*L’Église du Verbe Incarné*. Paris 1941, pp. 55-59. Eng. tr., pp. 42 ff.) too optimistic and generous, and due to the circumstance that Fr. Congar seems to consider heresies, especially Protestantism, very theoretically.

²⁹⁷L. LAMBINET in his book: *Das Wesen des katholisch-protestantischen Gegensatzes*, Einsiedeln-Köln 1946, analyzed the opinions of distinguished theologians of the two denominations starting from the Reformation up until today.

cannot but absolutely dissociate the transcendent order from the immanent order. Bossuet, in his turn, was fond of reproaching the Protestants with a kind of monism, while his great adversary, Leibniz, always referred to the irreducibility of the two antagonistic terminologies: that of realism and that of idealism. Protestantism, according to him, represents the vital, purely spiritual but non-metaphysical aspect of Christianity, while Catholicism brings to it what is rather metaphysical, while being engaged in the world. Schleiermacher, in turn, seeks the justification of these differences by means of a characteristically romantic and idealistic view: according to him, the ideal being, one at its origin, will be differentiated in space and time, because of its inevitable development. Similarly, Christianity, one at its origin, manifests itself in multiple ways throughout the course of history, producing different denominations. Among the most recent, Troeltsch and Dilthey both reduce these differences to an anthropological category, that of the *Weltanschauungstypen*, while Nygren sees the root of this difference in the two forms of love: the one anthropocentric (*eros*) and the other theocentric (*agapé*).

L. Lambinet summarized in a magnificent synthesis²⁹⁸ all that has been written from the phenomenological perspective on the divisions between Protestantism and Catholicism. On the natural plane, Catholicism would oppose Protestantism, like Southern culture to Nordic culture. As for the evolution of Western thought, the ancient mentality would have been followed by the modern attitude of the Protestant man. From the perspective of the history of religions, the Catholic-Protestant opposition would reproduce the difference between priestly and prophetic religions. On the supernatural level, there are a number of clues in the New Testament revelation that at first glance seem to justify the desire to regain a mentality that is at the same time Catholic and Protestant, viz., a Petrine and Pauline Christianity²⁹⁹. It is easy to see that all these divisions belong to an especially psychological domain and are particularly apt for a phenomenological description.

Yet there is a notable difference between Catholics and Protestants regarding the theological interpretation of these phenomenological divisions. For the Protestant theorists of the ecumenical movement and of the “Branch theory”, these divisions represent equally justifiable manifestations of Christianity, and therefore they find no difficulty in assigning different roles to the

²⁹⁸L. LAMBINET: *Op. cit.*

²⁹⁹See especially the recent work of J.-L. LEUBA: *L'institution et l'événement. Les deux modes de l'œuvre de Dieu selon le Nouveau Testament. Leur différence, leur unité.* Neuchâtel-Paris 1950.

separate Churches in one united and universal Church. One would vainly seek in their texts the philosophical justification of the phenomenological consideration as the supreme category. But this does not mean that there is no truth at all in the denominational phenomenology. In any case it should be noted that these different manifestations of Christianity are not all on the same plane, as Lambinet warns us. The reasons are many. Above all, the possible deviations in Protestantism are, as history shows us, much more dangerous than the ones in the Catholic type of Christianity. Moreover, the Catholic principle has always shown itself capable of integration and enrichment, while Protestantism, without denying itself, could never adapt and assimilate “Catholic” elements. But what is most important is the fact that the mystery of the Incarnation can be inserted with all its consequences only in a system that religious phenomenology calls the Church of the *analogia entis*, of realism, or, to use Schelling’s expression, the Petrine Church, which is undoubtedly that of Rome³⁰⁰.

Without adopting this middle path of the *analogia entis* in anthropological, philosophical, and cultural matters, the very best intuitions are doomed to failure, as the history of Protestantism illustrates. The Reformation, while relying on principles as fundamentally Christian as the absolute primacy of grace, glory, and the Word of God, could not but separate from the Church, because it combined with these principles a mentality diametrically opposed to the spirit of Revelation, that of Ockhamism with all its implications. The most recent work of Fr. Bouyer, *Du Protestantisme à l’Église*³⁰¹, gives very penetrating developments on the continual conflict which Protestantism has thus evoked. On the other hand, all this is a unionist lesson of primary importance for Catholics, who must make every effort to ensure that the true face of the Church is never obscured and that the fundamental principles of Christian Revelation, so powerfully contrasted by the Reformation, are not placed in the background.

³⁰⁰The work of W. H. VAN DE POL: *Het Christelijk Dilemma, Katholieke Kerk Reformatie*. Roermond 1948, published on the occasion of the Amsterdam Congress, also stresses the importance of emphasizing the philosophical, cultural, and theological principles underlying Catholicism and Protestantism. See especially the chapter: *Psychologische Beletsel*, pp. 170-231.

³⁰¹L. BOUYER: *Du Protestantisme à l’Église*. Paris 1954.

2.6 The Catholic response: criticism and integration

1

The Protestant ecumenical movement has only increased the deep interest that the Catholic Church has always shown regarding Christian reunion. The testimonies par excellence are the papal statements which for a century have more and more frequently addressed the ecumenical problem³⁰². At the same time, the Catholic proponents of the cause of Christian unity have made a remarkable effort to draw the attention of large sections of the faithful to the great importance of this problem from the ecclesiastical, historical, cultural, and social viewpoints.³⁰³ Octaves of prayer for unity, informal conversations with other non-Catholic churches, and the presence of Catholic observers at ecumenical conferences have also greatly contributed to the deepening of interest in unity.

On the strictly ecclesiological level, too, the problems of unity have imposed new duties on Catholic theologians. Against the principles of non-Roman Catholicism, who would have liked to reduce the role of the Catholic Church to that of a witness of the legal aspect in all of Christendom, it was necessary to show the fullness and the mystical richness of the Catholic idea of the Church. The ecumenical movement, as M. Pribilla has pointed out, has evoked a more explicit self-awareness in Catholic ecclesiology. In other words, there has been a general recognition of the need to elaborate more carefully the interior aspect of the idea of the Church, the unionist method, and the entire content of the idea of catholicity³⁰⁴. In fact, movements such as the liturgical renewal and the Catholic social action have clearly indicated, according to M. Pribilla, that

³⁰²Cf. R. AUBERT: *Le Saint-Siège et l'Union des Églises*. Brussels 1947. J. SCHWEIGL: *De unitate Ecclesiae orientalis et occidentalis restituenda, documenta S. Sedis ultimi saeculi (1848-1938) illustrata*. *Periodica de re morali, canonica, liturgica*, 34 (1939) pp. 209 ff. E. C. MESSENGER: *Rome and Reunion*. London 1934.

³⁰³About the extensive literature on the question of unity, see: A. LILIENFELD: *Pour l'union. Documents et bibliographie*. Prieuré d'Amay 1927. A. SÉNAUD: *Christian Unity. A bibliography*. Genf 1937. H. R. BRANDRETH: *Unity and reunion. A bibliography*. London 1945. A. ESTEBAN ROMERO: *Nota informativa-bibliografica sobre el Ecumenismo*. *Rev. espan. Teol.* 12 (1952) pp. 153-172.

³⁰⁴M. PRIBILLA: *Um kirchliche Einheit*. Stockholm, Lausanne, Rom, Freiburg (Br) 1929, pp. 295 ff. Many similar remarks can be found on the necessity of a new methodology on the part of Catholic ecclesiology in the work of A. RADEMACHER: *Die Wiedervereinigung der christlichen Kirchen*. Bonn 1937.

Christ has communicated to his Church not only the solid ligaments of the hierarchy, but that He has also predicted that it will always find in itself the creative and truly charismatic forces which will provide the Church, in all submission to the magisterium, a new impetus and exert a reforming influence. A church living solely according to the law and to the administrative requirements would be a religious bureaucracy and not Christ continuing his life and his action mysteriously in the souls.

Parallel to the interior aspect of the Church, it was equally important to examine in detail the multiple relationships of this heavenly essence of the Church to its earthly structure. It may be rightly said that the touchstone of all ecclesiological work consists in showing clearly that the divine life is not given to us in fullness and according to its proper condition, which is glory, but adapted to our terrestrial condition, according to the sensitive, perfectible, and social laws of human life. All this implies the double plane and the double logic of the divine life introduced into earthly existence: the duality of the celestial substance already given and of the work to be done collaboratively. This ecclesiological position aims to avoid, above all, the less felicitous consequences of a unilateral insistence on the idea of the Church as a perfect society: an insistence so familiar to an apologetic method, which often runs the risk of blurring the difference between that society in itself always perfect and what it is in fact, in earthly existence, laden with human weaknesses. A problem all the more important, since the differences in Christianity, as we have just seen, concern the mode of human existence of the divine substance of the Church. Protestants, by virtue of their thesis of justification, do not believe in the real gift; therefore, the goods of the Covenant are not yet present in the visible Church, whose role is exhausted in proclaiming and promising the Kingdom to come, but she cannot claim to be a bearer of grace. The Orthodoxes disdain the visible Church for opposite reasons: for them, it is the full presence of the heavenly gifts that takes away its complete meaning for the visible Church.

It goes without saying that the theological dialog with the ecumenical movement singularly favors the deepening of our views on the note of catholicity. This tendency aims to bring out the idea of the universality of truth beyond a sometimes narrow insistence on quantitative catholicity. The idea of integrating all the crumbs of truth scattered throughout humanity commands the new presentation of this note of the Church. We now like to emphasize not catholicity as a fact, but rather the universal

capacity of truth of the Church³⁰⁵. Such an orientation allows Fr. Congar to state that not only is the catholicity of the Church imperfectly explicit, but that the union of separated christianities can bring a real enrichment to the Church³⁰⁶. In this respect, it should not be forgotten that the great divisions of Christianity correspond, broadly, to ethnic and cultural communities, so that the differences of values, which are developing within a certain people or culture, are currently lacking in the Catholic Church, and their reintegration “would truly enrich the Church and reveal it to herself: for the Church, once again, is a living being, who becomes aware of himself only by living and that reaches an explicit awareness of his own law and possibilities, only by exercising them”³⁰⁷. It is not difficult to see how much the practical development of this idea could contribute to the success of our ecumenical work.

2

The question thus arises of the theologian’s duties in the light of the complexity of the new problems posed by the ecumenical movement. The duties exist, and the efforts of Catholic ecclesiology have already been the subject of interesting remarks from the Protestant and Orthodox side³⁰⁸.

What Fr. Pribilla summarized in a few striking words in the aftermath of Stockholm and Lausanne deserves mention, because it is so characteristic

³⁰⁵“The Church proposes all the dogmas on the totality of things; it states principles true for all, capable of bringing together in the truth men of all classes and conditions. Universality of redemption and healing for humanity, universality of response to what in man is the total request, assumption in the unity of the ultimate good and satisfying all that is in man”. Y. Congar, *op. cit.*, p. 116.

³⁰⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 314 ff.

³⁰⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 317. These are the principles that K. Adam remarkably applies to the problem of a possible reconciliation of Lutherans with the Catholic Church. (*Una Sancta in katholischer Sicht*. Düsseldorf 1948). See also the recent work of M. SCHAEFER: *Die katholische Kirche im Lichte der evangelischen Anliegen*. Limburg 1953.

³⁰⁸“The Church of Rome, to which the existence and growth of the ecumenical movement poses an insistent question, makes efforts to free herself from the rigidity of the definitions of Trent and from the anti-Protestant complex which has determined her reactions for four centuries. Möhler and Scheeben in the last century opened a path where the most experienced Roman theologians now commit themselves: beyond a too servile and too exclusive allegiance to Thomism and beyond the medieval and especially post-Tridentine legal institutionalism, they move toward a more biblical and patristic theology and ecclesiology, with the help, on the cultural level, of the liturgical movement of the Benedictines”. R. PAQUIER *art. cit.*, p. 12. It should also be noted that this remark contains together with a part of truth, some regrettable illusions about “legalism and post-Tridentine apologetics...”.

of the aspirations of this kind: to serve the cause of union, a theological dilettantism is not enough; “no doubt obtuse dogmaticians who, unable to appreciate a different way of thinking and without regard for the mentality of others, hasten to launch anathemas, are not in the least called to this task. Whoever as an apostle wants to go to men, must have something of the attitude of St. Paul in adapting himself to others”³⁰⁹.

Fr. Congar sums up the theological work imposed on Catholic ecclesiologists in order to facilitate the cause of the union: First, he stresses the importance of the psychological roots of ecclesiological work. It is necessary to clarify, he says “the thorny problems of the psychology of various Christian groups”. The current and transient forms of error also call for a delicate discussion; misunderstandings require a fraternal explanation. Suggestions for possible pathways between the separated groups should be suggested; “in short, in all that involves direct contact with our separated brothers and the concrete work of rapprochement, it seems indispensable that theologians—i.e., researchers invested with a function by the Church, but without a strictly hierarchical mandate—try to prepare the groundwork, to indicate the main directions and the landmarks”³¹⁰.

Then he advocates a broad attention on the part of ecclesiologists to the concrete implications of abstract dogma. Against the hierarchy, whose role is to bear witness to the revealed datum, “the role of the theologians is... to elaborate the notion of the Christian reality taken in the very conditions of its incarnation in humanity. Theology owes its very existence to the incarnation of the revealed in the life of the believing and thinking humanity; it must give its attention not only to the statement of the revelation on the mystery of the Church, but also to the embodied reality of this Church and to the concrete conditions of its incarnation”³¹¹.

This call to widen the horizon of theological work is all the more urgent as we take into consideration the often unilateral development of our theology, especially ecclesiology, since the great rupture of the 16th century. “Generally, our theology has become, both under a too exclusively ‘scholastic’ influence, and under the pressure of the necessities of controversy, notably specialized; it has become all too often unilateral, developing the most systematic aspect of things which are mostly opposed to even the legitimate aspirations of non-Catholics dissidents or unbelievers”³¹². Heresy proved to be not only an opportunity to develop the dogma, but also a risk

³⁰⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 296.

³¹⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. XIV.

³¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. XIV.

³¹² *Op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

for theologians to consider this same dogma in a too partial aspect, the one that is opposed to the condemned error. In fact, the official texts of the Councils, the anathemas carried for example against the theses of Baius or Jansenius, are always confined to one aspect of the truth in question, without pretending to expose all the revealed doctrine in the matter. This is why the lazy or opportunistic theologians, Congar continues, who do not bother to pursue profound studies of Scripture, of the liturgy, of the Fathers, etc., “finally the apologists, who by profession are destined to combat the errors of the moment and to consider the Church by its outermost sides: in short, the majority, at least the majority of those who speak, write, and make themselves heard, hold against error a hardened truth that is incomplete if we stick to its occasional formula: unilateral and partial”³¹³.

This is why he demands that Catholic theologians have a frame of mind favorable to mutual relations, to the total abandon of prejudices and of resentment, to make a work of serious information possible. In short, a soul that is evangelical, fraternal, amicable, that is not pursuing her “personal” victory, but tries to enrich others, through a loyalty that goes hand in hand with kindness and humility³¹⁴.

3

This irenic method, sketched out in broad outlines by Fr. Congar, has been the subject of an in-depth study by Fr. Lialine, which deserves to be analyzed in detail. The questions that present themselves in his work, about the theological method, betray an orientation very different from that which characterizes most of our treatises on the Church. Its developments are grouped into three chapters, to explain in the first place the theory of the irenic method, then to apply it to inter-confessional Catholic-Orthodox relations, and finally to infer the main characteristics of the irenic theology.

The dialectic of the irenic method consists in conscientious information, which does not suffer from conventional unilateralism, but, with the aid of a serious examination of conscience, aims to put the relative and the absolute in their respective places. Thanks to this method and its wide views devoid of any falsely apologetic bearing, the unfounded oppositions disappear, and true oppositions appear in their true light.

It must not be forgotten that the irenic method is at the service of the Catholicism conceived in the manner we have just seen in Fr. Congar’s explanation; therefore, the irenic method applies not only to the ecclesiology

³¹³*Op. cit.*, p. 35.

³¹⁴“De la méthode irénique”, *Ir* 15 (1038) pp. 3-28; 131-153; 236-255; 450-459.

that is proper to the separate christianities, but to all that is in contact with it, namely: the realm of terrestrial human realities (politics, culture, education), especially philosophical anthropology, psychology, and history. On the cultural and political level, the irreducible oppositions will be minimal, in the opinion of Fr. Lialine. But the domain of Christian philosophy and the religious life of Christian groups contain a greater number of major oppositions. Suffice it to say that on this plane must be approached the philosophy of subjective religion, the phenomenology of it, the spirit of different devotions, and the various types of holiness, problems on which there are fundamental divergences.

The most delicate area of this application is undoubtedly the question of the theologian's attitude toward authority, two pitfalls are both to be avoided; on the one hand, one must not press too much the importance of the decisions of the magisterium and, on the other, not minimize them. A distinction is necessary in this respect between what is fallible and infallible; then it is necessary to elaborate, in its richness, the truth infallibly taught by the ordinary magisterium, a fruitful as well as a difficult work. This irenic method, referring to the complete Tradition, aims either to elaborate a doctrinal conciliation or at least to explain the opposition.

The theology that emerges from utilizing the irenic method aims to restore the true proportions of dogma; it "considers, by virtue of its theandric character, the divine truth in its human clothing; and finally it appreciates the demands of a living theology, because it is related to Tradition taken in the fuller sense. It is not a theology flattering the separated Christians, misinformed about apostolic Tradition and human things, made with the help... of Denzinger, employing arguments of convenience, confining itself to one viewpoint"³¹⁵. The irenic theologian observes a loyalty to the action of the Holy Spirit, which will make him avoid an indiscreet, suspicious, fearful attitude, and will save him from simplistic solutions to historical and psychological problems. The irenic theologian "will want to go to the school of the sensitives, seers, and existential thinkers", and that will allow him to become catholic in an eminent sense³¹⁶.

The upheavals produced by the irenic theology are primarily theological insofar as it impels one to "seek the truths dispersed in the different religious societies and all belonging to the same Tradition essentially safeguarded in the hypothetically true society"³¹⁷. Nor does it exclude the possibility of a

³¹⁵ *Art. cit.*, p. 28.

³¹⁶ *Art. cit.*, p. 133.

³¹⁷ *Art. cit.*, p. 137.

certain enrichment of Catholic ecclesiology, nor a convergent path toward the eschatological *pleroma*, animated by the idea of “the Church of the future” (*Zukunftkirche*). This Church of the future, in the eyes of irenic ecclesiology, is not an ideal, “an ecumenism grouping human diversities as everyone pleases, but a divine idea, continuing to be better understood and better embodied, a catholicity uniting the diversities in a higher unity whose divino-human modalities would still fall, by their human side and partly, under the irenic discussion between Roman and non-Roman Catholics”³¹⁸.

In the second part of his study, the author applies the irenic method to Catholic-Orthodox interconfessional relations. He denounces the methodological mistakes—above all, the insufficient information which takes an autocephalous Orthodoxy independently of the others, instead of inquiring firstly on the whole of Orthodoxy. The author also severely criticizes spiritual “uniatism”³¹⁹. The third methodological fault is committed, according to the author, by those who give too much importance to peripheral things, liturgical language, or discipline. What are the ways, then, to avoid these pitfalls? It is necessary, says Fr. Lialine, “to become acquainted with the hermeneutics of the sciences of the mind (*Geisteswissenschaften*), philosophies of life (*Lebensphilosophien*), existential philosophies, etc., which, whatever may be their metaphysical value, bring very important elements for interpreting psychologico-historical phenomena and discovering the essential and accidental absolutes”³²⁰.

Irenic ecclesiology will understand why the anthropological ideal of the average Catholic and non-Catholic are so different; on a philosophical level it will show a particular understanding of German idealism³²¹. As for the study of devotions and mystical-ascetic ideals, Fr. Lialine advocates an

³¹⁸*Art. cit.*, p. 147.

³¹⁹The fundamental error of “spiritual uniatism” consists in its apriorism, identifying Catholicism with the particularisms of the Latin Church. This apriorism presses him to discover, at all costs, Latin elements among the Orthodoxes...

³²⁰*Cf. op. cit.*, p. 115.

³²¹It is worth here to report the opinion of Fr. Baron and Fr. Congar on German idealism: “Can we deny that no interaction has occurred among the currents of ideas determined by German philosophy and the elaboration of the thought of Khomyakov? We do not think so, and as has been said about the Catholic theologian Möhler or about V. Soloviev, Khomyakov could very well have been inspired by German idealism, even while opposing its principles” (FR. BARON *op. cit.*, pp. 58-59). According to Fr. Congar, German idealism has contributed to religious thought “the stimulant of a speculative, profound, mystical thought and the framework or the conceptual instrument of an organic and universalist conception of society and consequently of the Church.” (“La pensée de Möhler et l’ecclésiologie orthodoxe”, *Ir* 12 (1935), 325).

indispensable practical information. The lack of the latter has led most Western specialists of Orthodoxy to disfigure Orthodox pneumatism³²², so much so that these works do not represent the *trezvenie* (sobriety) which is the touchstone of Orthodox mysticism and without which all pneumatisms are, according to the *staretz*, only *prelest*, illusions³²³. Among the remedies the author indicates against such defects, the theory of integral knowledge, heart of the Slavophile message, occupies a place of honor. Integral knowledge implies, in addition to the strictly rational elements: intuition, affective knowledge, knowledge by connaturality, etc. “The cognitive role of irenic charity would find here precise indications and could lead to an irenic development of Western and Eastern gnosologies”³²⁴.

This living, irenic ecclesiology is further characterized by its attachment to the revelatory experiences of the real, by its vast culture, which has its source in life lived together with the societies and the men, “who have had or have history; who create or have created spiritual values in the most comprehensive sense of the term”³²⁵. Irenism develops “in a deep solidarity of all human creations”, because it is “itself solidarity in its being and especially in its intention”³²⁶. Such a theology would correspond to the wishes of the Orthodox who would like to meet, on the Catholic side, a creative theology that overcomes the notional and logical development of ideas, a theology which leads to the complete elaboration of Tradition; a theology which is brought out by the collective intelligence (*sobornost*)³²⁷.

It follows from the structure of irenic theology that the truth sought is not conceived in a purely logical way, but in its mysterious side, and this imposes on theologians a respect analogous to the sentiment of the sacred. Irenic theology, while proclaiming the primacy of truth, “goes beyond narrow intellectualism by its sense of mystery, of respect, and of love purged of all sentimentalism”³²⁸. It is the truth, one by nature, that makes the irenic theology unionist and invites it to rebuild the relative manifestations of a single truth and also to demonstrate their underlying ontological unity. Irenic theology is “scientific, creative, theological, ecclesiological, theandric,

³²²The author refers to works published in Germany during the last thirty years.

³²³*Art. cit.*, p. 240.

³²⁴*Art. cit.*, p. 246.

³²⁵*Art. cit.*, p. 249.

³²⁶*Ibid.*

³²⁷Berdyayev notes (*La réunion chrétienne*, in Russian, Paris 1933, p. 75) that the Catholic specialists of Orthodoxy are the most repugnant to the Orthodoxes, and the books such as K. PFLEGER: *Geister, die um Christus ringen*, will contribute incomparably more to the problem of reunion. (from *Lialine*, p. 249).

³²⁸*Art. cit.*, p. 253.

(the natural does not stifle the supernatural, the opposite does not occur either) historical, humanistic, personalist”³²⁹. It is hermeneutic in the fuller sense, because it respects the life that does not systematize and does not want to sacrifice anything of the reality, that it respects “up to the imponderable differential which can sometimes trigger the most shattering irenic shock”³³⁰.

In conclusion, we can say that the method and the theological and ecclesiological ideal of Fr. Lialine go far beyond the frameworks of scholastic and positivo-scholastic theology. Instead of becoming bogged down in a “too notional and abstract” exposition of the revealed datum, his method appeals to the vitalist, concrete aspect of the truth. His main concern is to embrace all areas of reality, to bring out the full Catholic truth. His exigences have a sound foundation and at the same time do not despise the values already acquired by the theological work. However, it should be noted that the call made by the various authors for the integration of every non-Catholic value stops before reaching the end of the ecclesiological work. It is essential to specify that these elements are “integrable”. Without this, similar requests could bring about the danger of relativism.

4

Alongside the elaboration of the principles of a Catholic ecumenism and of the irenic method, the rediscovery of Möhler’s ecclesiology constitutes the third characteristic of the present trends of Catholic ecclesiology in ecumenical matters. We have had the opportunity to see in the preceding chapter the main characteristics of Möhler’s work, particularly his concretism and vitalism. It remains to summarize here, in broad strokes, the motives which have rendered him, in the eyes of many Catholic ecclesiologists, the theologian par excellence of the unification of the churches. After all that we have just seen about the new directions of Protestant ecclesiology and of the ecumenical movement, it will not be difficult to guess that Möhler’s ecumenical contribution consists precisely in having emphasized the idea of a Church lived by the faithful. His two great works were written to serve the cause of unity, to facilitate mutual understanding between Protestants and Catholics, and to provide effective proof that only the Catholic Church organically possesses the values sought by Protestantism.

According to Fr. Congar³³¹, *Unity* excels “by the great breadth and

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

³³⁰ *Art. cit.*, p. 255.

³³¹ Y. CONGAR: La signification œcuménique de l’œuvre de Möhler. *Ir* 15 (1938) pp.

the assimilative value of the principles that it implements, by the richness, depth, and fertility of viewpoints that he integrates into his vision”³³². Möhler, he says, did not disdain in this work to profit to a large extent from the new viewpoints of contemporary Protestant theology, represented by Schleiermacher and Neander. He recognized the primacy of life, introducing into Catholic theology a specific theory of knowledge, which is why he was repeatedly considered the father of modernism.

The return to the Fathers, which he advocated, Fr. Congar continues, later became the mantra of the ecumenical movement, as the primacy of love in the cause of union became one of the mottoes³³³. *Unity*, despite its imperfections, contains some fundamental intuitions so consistent with the oldest tradition, with such broad viewpoints, “that the whole has a real Catholic quantity and a real value of assimilation and response regarding the viewpoints or the genuine queries of our separated brethren”³³⁴.

Möhler’s other masterpiece contains no less authentic values for Catholic ecumenism. We think here, first of all, of its irenic character in a serious controversy, sign of the reawakening of the confessional sense. These loyal struggles have shown that theological controversy is preferable to indifference and that Catholics have gone beyond their spiritual torpor and started walking on the road toward mutual understanding³³⁵. *Symbolic*, says Fr. Congar, is an example that it is necessary to discuss ideas, not persons, assuming good faith and goodwill on both sides, to avoid lies and insults. The author of *Symbolic* considered in the dissident confession “a way of realizing Christianity, a particular temperament or genius, in which certain values have been the object of an acute perception and have received a very special development”³³⁶. Möhler, in seeking the essentials of the Protestant problem in anthropology, had proved also on this point to be the precursor of current trends.

There is no better evidence of the ecumenical influence of Möhler’s work among Catholics than the collection of studies of German and French theologians whose title is *L’Église est Une*, published under the direction of Fr.

113-130.

³³² *Art. cit.*, pp. 121-122.

³³³ This important influence of patristic research on the cause of union has been emphasized by O. ROUSSEAU: *Tendances à l’unité en dehors du mouvement œcuménique*. VSpir 88 (1953) pp. 79-84.

³³⁴ *Art. cit.*, p. 123.

³³⁵ *Art. cit.*, pp. 115 ff.

³³⁶ *Art. cit.*, p. 121.

Chaillet³³⁷. The book, according to the latter³³⁸, not satisfied with giving an idea of Möhler's thoughts on union, proposed to elaborate the doctrinal outline of Catholic unity. In a careful reading of the introduction, the main ideas of the book are no longer hidden: in the first place the emphasis on the historical sense in theology³³⁹, the synthesis to be made between modern thought and integral Christian heritage³⁴⁰, the positive estimate of romanticism as a mystical current, and finally the tendency to see in idealism the dialectic of progress³⁴¹.

Fr. Sertillanges³⁴² seems willing to give the philosophy of an ecclesiology by highlighting the dynamic relationship between natural religion and the Church, in sentences that recall Bergson. K. Biehlmeier³⁴³ and J. Ranft³⁴⁴ in turn evoke the organic, vital, and ascending character of the history of the Church and of the Tradition. The other studies which we have already seen in the previous chapter betray the same concrete and vital aspirations.

It must also be admitted that the work had the general public in view, a circumstance which robs it of much of its strictly scientific value, so much so that many passages in the book seem overburdened with a rhetoric which hardly helps the precision of the ideas. But what is most reprehensible in this collection of studies is that most authors succumb to uncritical enthusiasm and ignore the non-negligible weaknesses of the system of *Unity*. No matter how great Möhler's values are—we have well emphasized them—they do not allow for a clearly outlined theological position. For sure the studies of Geiselman and of Lösch well highlight the self-criticism of Möhler in the *Symbolic*, but it is also correct to wonder if the visible center of the unity of the Church still maintains its fundamental role regarding the relation between unity and diversity, which is the subject of the essay of Fr. de Montcheuil³⁴⁵.

³³⁷Paris 1939. (The German Edition, *Die Eine Kirche*, published by H. Tüchle. Paderborn 1939).

³³⁸Cf. Introduction.

³³⁹Cf. p. 9.

³⁴⁰Cf. p. 10.

³⁴¹Cf. p. 14.

³⁴²Religion et universalité. EU, pp. 21-32.

³⁴³L'histoire de l'Église. EU, pp. 82-101.

³⁴⁴La tradition vivante: Unité et développement. EU, pp. 102-126.

³⁴⁵La liberté et la diversité dans l'Unité. EU, pp. 234-254. We defended, from our viewpoint, the basic correctness of Möhler's *Unity*. But to see how susceptible it is to an interpretation in the Protestant spirit, let us read the ironic passages of F. Heiler on Möhler's "purported catholicity." (Im Ringen um die Kirche. München 1931, cf. the chapter titled: Die religiösen Bewegungen im römischen Katholizismus der Gegenwart, pp. 174-197).

Thus, by willing to enumerate the new directions that Catholic ecclesiology has taken in the face of the ecumenical movement, we see how, in the eyes of Catholic scholars that deal with this question, an elaboration of the interior aspect of the Church proves indispensable to facilitate the bringing together of separated Christianities with Rome; there is also a demand for an extension of the theological, especially ecclesiological, method. The qualities required of the theologian have multiplied because of the complexity of the task to deal with. In addition to information on apologetic or metaphysical questions, the new methods and principles we have just seen also require a psychological and anthropological orientation, a soul open to vital values, a sense of history, a return to Christian sources, and above all an objectivity against subjective narrowness. Instead of questions of textual criticism, the principles of synthesis, the complete development of theandrisms, must henceforth command the research.

2.7 The missionary movement and Catholic ecclesiology

It is very appropriate to conclude this chapter devoted to ecclesiological influences, which are coming from outside on the Church, by the examination of the interaction occurring for now about thirty years between the missionary movement and ecclesiology. On the one hand, ecclesiology, in particular the idea of the Mystical Body, gave a dogmatic foundation to missiology; on the other hand, several problems raised by missionary action evoked valuable reflections among the theologians that dealt with ecclesiological renewal. If we take the most representative works of missiology of the last thirty years, one sees more and more frequently one or more chapters on the Mystical Body. The works of B. Arens³⁴⁶ and of P. Charles³⁴⁷ are a clear testimony of this. This trend of recent missiology is even more evident in the missiological synthesis of A. V. Seumoï³⁴⁸, and it seems to penetrate even into the manuals of missionary law³⁴⁹. This orientation of missiology was confirmed by the doctrine of the encyclical *Evangelii præcones*, which

³⁴⁶B. ARENS: *Manuel des missions catholiques*. Louvain 1925.

³⁴⁷P. CHARLES: *Missiologie*. Paris 1939. See especially the chapters: "Dogmatique missionnaire fondamentale", (pp. 48-62); "L'Encyclique sur les missions", (pp. 92-99); "La mystique de l'adaptation" (pp. 201-217).

³⁴⁸A. V. SEUMOÏ: *Introduction à la missiologie*, ed. by the Administration der Neuen Zeitschrift für Missionswissenschaft. Schöneck-Beckenried, Switzerland 1952.

³⁴⁹Cf. S. PAVENTI: *La Chiesa missionaria*. I-II. Roma 1950.

gave rise to a non-negligible missiological reflection³⁵⁰. Although it remains true that the ecclesiological ideas set forth in these works are limited to generalities, in any case, from the methodological viewpoint, ecclesiology now appears as the leading idea of missiology.

As for the other side of the question, that is, the influence exerted by the demands of missionary action on ecclesiology, it is possible to find some interesting doctrinal repercussions. The missionary work—being mainly adaptation to the races, cultures, and ideologies still not assimilated and sanctified by the Church—calls for an eminently comprehensive and flexible doctrinal attitude. This requires first of all a renunciation of the intentions, even indirect, of trying to transform the natives into Western men³⁵¹ and, at the same time, a more in-depth study of the relationship between the Church and the cultures³⁵². A more intensive missionary action will seek its justification in an idea of the Church based on its dynamic aspect. Finally, a more intimate contact with Eastern philosophical systems makes it urgent to distinguish in a very subtle way what the Western element in Christianity is from what is universally valid³⁵³. Once again, the notion of catholicity must undergo a profound rethinking in the face of the demands posed by the missionary work. Of course, a comprehensive attitude, attentive to the values of pagan religions and benevolent in its judgments, will not be without some dangers, that of relativism in particular. The other danger that the same optimistic attitude can generate would be that of understating the consequences of original sin in pagan religions. The ecclesiological repercussion would be a certain neglect of the importance of ecclesiastical unity and of the absolute transcendence of the supernaturality of the Church. Once more, a balanced presentation of the aspects of the Church will help to avoid these pitfalls.

³⁵⁰J. ROMMERSKIRCHEN: *Bibliographiæ Encyclicæ Evangelii Præcones*. ED 5 (1952) pp. 320-326.

³⁵¹A. HUONDER: *Der Europäismus in der Missionsarbeit*. Aachen 1921.

³⁵²Cf. H. DE LUBAC: *Le fondement théologique des Missions*. Paris 1946, p. 73.

³⁵³Cf. J. DANIÉLOU: *Le mystère du salut des nations*. Paris 1947, pp. 55 ff.

Chapter 3

Returning to the sources

In the previous two chapters, we have seen what factors brought about a new orientation in ecclesiology and how they played this role. It is essentially the promotion of the interior, mystical, vital, dynamic, experiential, and subjective aspect of the Church. It was inevitable for all this to have repercussions on the way in which Catholic ecclesiologists would approach the study of the sources of the theology of the Church: the Bible, the Fathers, and the Great Scholastics. And indeed the ecclesiological renaissance is characterized by a strong impulse given to the studies of exegesis and history.

These studies have a character of their own. The study of the Scripture and of the Tradition, regarding the Church, is not approached with the same mentality as in the previous epoch. It is not any longer an ecclesiology of controversy that seeks its biblical and patristic support; rather, its aim is to find the elements of a dogmatic, harmonious, and balanced treatise on the Church in the richness of Tradition. In parallel to this movement of integration of the dogmatic values of Tradition, we see an effort to retrieve in the biblical and patristic thought the ideas particularly dear to the modern mentality: the interior and mystical aspect of the Church, its living conscience, symbolism, etc. To tell the truth, any return to the sources carries many dangers. Firstly, that of a romantic historicism, the temptation to yield to the fascination of the “primitive” Church. Moreover, the difficulty lies in the choice between what is still valid in Tradition and what is wholly related to this or that era. Thus, the traditional element can become an indispensable help for progress, but also an impediment to adapt to the new requirements. In short, the return to the sources is always an arduous task, because it must follow closely the idea of Card. Newman about the Living

Tradition of the Church: “What the Catholic Church once has had, she never has lost... Instead of passing from one stage of life to another, she has carried her youth and middle age along with her, on to her latest time. She has not changed possessions, but accumulated them, and has brought out of her treasure-house, according to the occasion, things new and old.”¹.

Our task will therefore be to review the main works published in the last thirty years in this area. It will not be, of course, a kind of summary of the content of these works, but we will only point out, in their method and in their principal results, the themes which are characteristic of modern trends in ecclesiology. We will see that there is a real progress, but also some unilateralism.

To maintain the objectivity of our judgment, we must not lose sight of the opinion of Mgr. Journet, who, speaking of the various facets of the Christian intelligence, stated that although equally necessary to the theological work, they were not simultaneously found together in each single theologian². In other words, the unilateralism of the individual theologian being inevitable, he must be appreciated inside the whole movement to which he belongs.

Only a comprehensive overview will allow us to note that, apart from peripheral deviations, we can speak of a certain unilateralism, but not of a crisis in ecclesiology. Neither the Pauline problem nor the Augustinian problem present in recent ecclesiology manifest a crisis of the “great ecclesiology”, once it is admitted that theology is not just the work of isolated individuals, but that of the common thought of the theologians, where interdependence and interaction play a very important role.

3.1 Recent research on Biblical ecclesiology

1

The development of Biblical thought on the Church is fairly recent. The great ecclesiologists of the past century were inspired more by the tradition of the Greek Fathers, as demonstrated by Möhler’s *Unity*, Passaglia’s *De Ecclesia*, or Scheeben’s *Mysteries of Christianity*. The other attempts either do not go beyond general ideas, such as Katschthaler’s *Dogmatics*³, centered on the idea of the Kingdom of God, or approach the biblical teaching from

¹J. H. CARD. NEWMAN: *Historical Sketches*. Ed. Longmans. Vol. II, p. 368.

²CH. JOURNET: *Introduction à la théologie*. Paris 1947, p. 316.

³*Theologia dogmatica catholica specialis*. 4. Vol. Ratisbonae 1877-88.

an apologetic angle⁴.

Even *The Theology of Saint Paul* by H. Th. Simar⁵, does not say a word about the Mystical Body, when enumerating the leading ideas of Pauline theology⁶. To present the Pauline idea concerning the essence of the Church⁷, the author limits himself to two metaphors: that of the Temple and that of the body of Christ, devoting only two pages to the latter. Moreover, this book deals mostly with polemical questions, particularly with Protestant theories about justification in St. Paul. We cannot share the opinion of J. Ranft⁸ who considered this work to be a remarkable contribution to a better knowledge of the Church.

The article by J. Méritan⁹ on the ecclesiology of the epistle to the Ephesians does not attain the true depth of Pauline thought on this question because it merely highlights that “Catholicity and unity are the two great ecclesiological data of this epistle,” in noting that “the hierarchy does not appear with its definitively constituted officials and personnel. The supreme authority which has since been called the papacy is passed over in silence”¹⁰. E. Commer’s work is limited to speculative analyses of the biblical images of the Church¹¹.

The decisive turning point was made by the article by F. Prat on the essential idea of St. Paul’s theology¹²; this article, a prelude to his great work, *La théologie de saint Paul*, is characterized by its positive character, free from all apologetics, and it puts the idea of the Mystical Body at the center of Pauline thought. But the first to express better the profound idea of biblical ecclesiology is Fr. Mersch. His well-known work¹³ exerted an unparalleled influence not only in the biblical domain, but also on patristic and scholastic research.

One could stress the mystical value of this work, its rich manner of ex-

⁴Cf. BARTMANN: *Das Himmelreich und sein König nach den Synoptikern*. Paderborn 1904, or by the same author: *Das Reich Gottes in der hl. Schrift*. Münster 1912.

⁵*Die Theologie des heiligen Paulus*. Freiburg (Br) 1883. 2nd ed.

⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 21-25: the main ideas are, according to the author: the catholicity and the justification.

⁷Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 229-236.

⁸Cf. *Die Stellung der Kirche im dogmatischen System*. Aschaffenburg 1927, p. 131.

⁹*L’ecclésiologie de l’épître aux Ephésiens*, BB 7 (1898) pp. 343-369.

¹⁰*Art. cit.*, p. 369.

¹¹*Die Kirche in ihrem Wesen und Leben*. Wien 1904 Italian translation: *L’essenza della Chiesa*. Venezia 1905, pp. 35 ff.

¹²*L’idée-mère de la Théologie de saint Paul*, Et 83 (1900) pp. 202-223.

¹³*Le Corps mystique du Christ. Études de théologie historique*. 2 Vol. Paris 1933-1936. 2nd ed. Eng. tr., *The Whole Christ: The Historical Development of the Doctrine of the Mystical Body in Scripture and Tradition*. Milwaukee 1938.

pression, and recall the enthusiastic reviews that this book has inspired¹⁴, but the rediscovery of the first object of the biblical revelation, the reinstatement of “the mystery of Christ in us”, constitutes its greatest value. That mystery, according to Fr. Mersch, is a prodigy of unity. “This unity affects our being from every point of view. It unites us with one another; it unites us each and all together with God; it unites us each and all together with Christ”¹⁵. It is this union based on the grace accorded to redeemed men, between them and with Christ, which constitutes the object of Fr. Mersch’s researches; or, in other words, the mystical aspect of the Church dominates biblical revelation, whose most perfect expression is the Pauline metaphor: the body of Christ.

2

The Synoptics, according to Fr. Mersch, offer scarcely any texts concerning the idea of the Mystical Body, but the actions of Christ which they present hint at the Mystical Body, since they are carriers of grace. The historical person of Jesus is the center from which salvation and grace flow; the Mystical Body and the earthly life of Christ are intimately correlated, just as the kingdom of heaven, the center of Jesus’s teaching, is in close relationship with his person. The Kingdom is none other than the mystery of the interior life, so much so that the author can rightly wonder if the kingdom and the Mystical Body would not be identical¹⁶.

The hierarchy or more precisely the apostles act only in the name of Christ; he communicates the inner strength necessary for their missions, and he teaches in the words of his disciples; He sanctions ecclesiastical sentences. The kingdom survives the collapse of the world through the promised presence of Christ, and on the last day we will discover that all the acts of Christians mysteriously touch Christ himself. Questions so widely discussed, such as that of the primacy of Peter, do not appear in Fr. Mersch’s perspectives. Nor is he interested in questions concerning the visibility of the kingdom and its eschatological structure. This ecclesiology of the Synoptics, according to Fr. Mersch, is not expressed “in the form of theorems and

¹⁴For example, here are some Catholic reviews: O. ROUSSEAU: Une étude sur le Corps mystique du Christ. *Ir* 8 (1933) pp. 5-21 — L. MALEVEZ: Le Corps mystique du Christ à propos du livre du P. Mersch. *NRT* 61 (1934) pp. 30-43.

¹⁵*Op. cit.*, p. XVII. Eng. tr., p. 3.

¹⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, ch. II: “Le Royaume de Dieu et le corps mystique dans les Évangiles synoptiques”, pp. 22-70. Eng. tr., ch. II: “The Synoptic Gospels: The ‘Kingdom’ and the Mystical Body”, pp. 35-73.

theses”¹⁷; it is more than an abstract teaching; “before all else, that truth is Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ teaches it not only by His words, but simply by being Himself”¹⁸.

Therefore, the ecclesiolgist must above all contemplate the living person of Christ, because to know the Mystical Body, he must know the greatest theological datum: the life of the Master. The author defends himself for abandoning the theological method and letting himself be dragged into psychology alone; his concern is “to seek the Christian truth in its first manifestation and in its plenitude: in the person and life of the Master”¹⁹. Theology, ecclesiology in our case, “differs from other sciences in that it deals with a doctrine which, besides being a fact is also a person”²⁰.

Thus, the theological method, he continues, having to adapt itself to its object, cannot give up meditation and contemplation; it cannot do without reliving the evangelical narrative, plunging into it; in a word, it is the life and the soul [of the faithful] that must be grasped. This commitment to the concrete, in the eyes of Fr. Mersch, is a delicate but necessary work in theological labor. No doubt it entails the danger of sliding into conjectures and probabilities, for “there is little opportunity here to apply philological and dialectic methods of control. This is not a question of textual criticism or of evaluating syllogisms; it is a question of reconstructing hystorical facts in one’s own mind and soul, and of keeping silence in order to hear them speak for themselves”²¹.

Nothing shows more clearly how much Fr. Mersch cared about the invisible and pneumatic aspect of the Mystical Body than his studies of St. John²². After comparing the vision of the first chapter of Revelation with that on the road to Damascus, he brings out the role of Christ in the lives of Christians. According to the author, the great metaphors—light, life, vine—attest to the same truth: Christ, who lived in Judea, is the very one who lives in us. Through him we are vivified, as illustrated by the speech to Nicodemus and by the sermon about the Bread of Life. This life in him and through him implies a unity which leads to the Trinity itself; the words of the Lord, “that they may be one, as we are one,” take on a special meaning not only in St. John, but in the Fathers, for adequately expressing the greatness of the Church. Therefore, unity, a sign of Christ, is ultimately the

¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 28. Eng. tr., p. 41.

¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 28. Eng. tr., p. 41.

¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 29. Eng. tr., p. 41.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 29. Eng. tr., pp. 41-42.

²² Cf. ch. VIII-X, pp. 206-269. Eng. tr., pp. 151-195.

Trinitarian love in Christians²³. These same remarks are also valid for the idea of the Mystical Body in St. Paul, which we shall see in more detail.

In short, Fr. Mersch affirms the essential concordance of the notions of kingdom, mystery, and life, characteristics of the Synoptics, St. Paul, and St. John²⁴. But this unity of doctrine does not remove certain differences: St. Paul looks at the mystery rather from the side of the members²⁵, while Saint John sees it under the Trinitarian aspect²⁶. It is the militant body that is in foreground in St. Paul, while for St. John the Church is “a transcendent reality, belonging more to heaven than to earth and in which the glory of the Man-God continues. The main peculiarity of the fourth Gospel consists in this very thing. More than the others, John shows in ‘those that are Christ’s’ a reality of a theandric order”²⁷. It is true that the kingdom of the Synoptics speaks rather of a subjection; St. John starts from the idea of the new existence, of the regeneration; St. Paul sees himself as the herald of mystery, of a hidden design; but basically they all say the same thing: our incorporation into Christ²⁸.

The greatest merit of Mersch’s biblical research is to have drawn out the Scriptural teaching on the interior aspect of the Church; he also shows how the idea of our incorporation into Christ is the center of the biblical revelation. But he introduces a considerable distinction between the notion of the Mystical Body and that of the Church. His working hypothesis, according to which the idea of the Mystical Body only refers to the interior aspect of the Church, is hardly justified. The Christian mystery is always theandric; the structure of the Church, its hierarchical aspect, etc., are an essential part of the mystery. One of the aspects of the Church can only be explained with the help of the others. Not that Fr. Mersch made a total abstraction from the external aspect of the Church, far from it, but he only accounts in his developments for the interior aspect of the Mystical Body. He is wrong in trying to find in revelation and tradition an idea of the Mystical Body independent, to a certain extent, from the idea of the visible Church. Thus, his developments, which are extremely valuable in highlighting the interior aspect of the Church, have greatly reinforced a tendency that lends itself, in some popular works, to dangerous inaccuracies:

²³Cf. pp. 261-264. Eng. tr., pp. 184-187.

²⁴Cf. ch. XI. “Conclusion sur l’Écriture sainte”, pp. 270-281. Eng. tr., pp. 196-205.

²⁵“In Christ we all form but one body, one Mystical Christ”, p. 271. Eng. tr., p. 197.

²⁶“Abiding in Christ and He in us, we live by Him, as He lives by the Father, and we are one in Him as He is one with the Father.” p. 271. Eng. tr., p. 197.

²⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 274. Eng. tr., p. 199.

²⁸Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 277-8. Eng. tr., pp. 201-3

a separation between the Mystical Body and the Church. In parallel with this attitude strongly oriented toward the primacy of interiorism, sign of the new tendencies, the style of Fr. Mersch betrays also an adaptation to the new theological ideal: a language which tends to unite the technical precision, so necessary in a dogmatic work, with a certain dynamism, and sometimes a little too much lyricism. These remarks also apply to his later developments²⁹.

We have already considered the exegetical work of Peterson, in connection with dialectical ecclesiology, above. Among the works attempting to highlight the dogmatic, interior, and vital character of biblical ecclesiology, it is necessary to mention first of all the study by Fr. Congar on the doctrine of the unity of the Church in Scriptures³⁰. In the author's view, the biblical idea of the Church is of paramount importance not only for the unionist movement, but above all for achieving a view of the mystery of the Church where the derived elements are considered in light of the essential elements to which they are connected. The biblical idea of the Church could make it possible to specify the relationship between certain important notions with the aim of restoring the honor of some neglected aspects of ecclesiology³¹.

The major themes of a biblical ecclesiology envision the Church as the kingdom of eternal life in Christ, the insertion of individuals into which happens through faith, the sacraments, and "sacrament-persons" (hierarchy). The visibility and juridical aspect of the Church are considered from the sacramental viewpoint; the whole structure of the Church procures and preserves the common good: grace. "All its exterior life, all its social ordering, are but an expression and an instrument of an interior life, which is the life of Christ. The whole external and visible activity of the Church goes to realize what is, indeed, its inner essence: the life of all mankind in Christ"³². According to Fr. Congar, the notion of life dominates the biblical idea of the Church, and it is formed and develops as a function of this life. Therefore,

²⁹It should be noted here that the study of A. KLAUS: *Die Idee des Corpus Christi Mysticum bei den Synoptikern* (TG 28 (1936) pp. 407-417) adds nothing of significance to the ideas Fr. Mersch developed. The same remark applies to the article by H. BLEIENSTEIN: *Der mystische Christus der heiligen Schrift*, ZAM 9 (1934) pp. 193 ff. The articles by A. VITTI, published at the Gregorianum, do not join the current trend characteristic of ecclesiology. (*Rassegna di Teologia Biblica: Ecclesiologia*, Gr 14 (1933) pp. 588-603; *Ecclesiologia dei Vangeli*, Gr 15 (1934) pp. 409-438).

³⁰Y. CONGAR: *Esquisses du mystère de l'Église*. Paris 1941; a work containing three studies, the first of which is: *L'Église et son unité*, pp. 1-57. Eng. tr., *The Mystery of the Church*. Baltimore 1960; *The Church and Its Unity* is at pp. 58-96.

³¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. VI.

³²*Op. cit.*, p. 57. Eng. tr., p. 96.

this biblical theology and the historical and critical problems that it raises are fully revealed only to those that are within the life of the Church.

This insistence on the idea of life corresponds to the perspective of Sacred Scripture, as well as the idea of community that constitutes the core of the studies of J. Daniélou³³ and of E. Hocedez³⁴. Moreover, we find the most authentic interpretation of the Bible by looking at the life of the Church throughout its history, as the article by G. E. Closen³⁵ suggests.

The mystical, vital, concrete, community aspect, which we indicated in the works above, clearly characterizes the new tendencies of ecclesiology in the biblical domain. No doubt a new trend does not always mean unquestionable progress, which is especially true in our case. Without speaking of the doctrinal inaccuracies, we deplore the total absence of works dealing with biblical ecclesiology in all its aspects. We are only at the beginning of a work of integration, of which we still only see milestones.

3

The Pauline idea of the Church being the object of recent research par excellence, we cannot avoid dealing with it. The object of our study is not to formulate a precise judgment on the exegesis of Pauline texts. We only want to highlight the recent results in this area, the trends they manifest, and the influences of modern thought that can be detected in it.

Recent research on the ecclesiology of St. Paul has gone through the following phases: first, there has been the mystical orientation, represented by the works of Fr. Mersch³⁶ and A. Wikenhauser³⁷. Then there has been the reserved and critical attitude of L. Deimel³⁸ and D. Koster³⁹. Between these two extremes, several authors have shown themselves in favor of a middle way. Finally, the in-depth study of L. Cerfaux⁴⁰ seeks to solve the problem in a way quite independent from previous research. All the authors unanimously emphasize the major importance of St. Paul's ideas in

³³Le signe du temple ou de la présence de Dieu. Paris 1942. 13th ed. The humanity of the Savior taken in its totality—viz., the Mystical Body—constitutes the total and definitive Temple of God in the history of salvation. Cf. pp. 28-29.

³⁴Notre solidarité en Jesus Christ et en Adam, Gr 13 (1932) pp. 373-403.

³⁵Das Leben der Kirche als Deutung der hl. Schrift, ZAM 16 (1941) pp. 167-182.

³⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, ch. IV-VII, pp. 87-206. Eng. tr., pp. 85-150.

³⁷Die Kirche als der mystische Leib Christi nach dem Apostel Paulus. Münster (W) 1937.

³⁸Leib Christi. Freiburg (Br) 1940.

³⁹Ekklesiologie im Werden. Paderborn 1940.

⁴⁰La théologie de l'Église suivant saint Paul. Paris 1943.

ecclesiological matters. Fr. Mersch calls Paul the “Apostle of the Mystic Christ”⁴¹; Fr. Tromp, in turn, evokes the crucial role played by Pauline ideas in the later evolution⁴². Wikenhauser considers him the first and the greatest theologian of the Church⁴³.

But this great importance attributed to St. Paul has led, in most writers, to a narrowing of views; either they consider later developments in the idea of the Church, the Body of Christ, as deviations, or they strive to introduce more recent elements into the Pauline idea⁴⁴.

The central idea of Pauline ecclesiology, around which theological researches and discussions are directed, is the mystical, ontological, and supernatural character of the unity of Christians with Christ and with each other. In the eyes of Mersch⁴⁵ and of Wikenhauser⁴⁶, not to mention the less important authors⁴⁷, the “mystic” does not exclude the “real”, and metaphor, a necessary way of speaking about the objects of the faith, removes nothing from their reality. Their conclusions are aimed above all at this supernatural ontology.

It is interesting to mention in this connection a few of their definitions. Here is the opinion of Wikenhauser: “The Pneuma that Christians receive is all substantially the same in each of them. It is the spiritual essence of Christ, and it communicates to the believers a new way of being”⁴⁸. The mystical person, who, in the eyes of the same author, constitutes the union of Christians with Christ, is founded on the mysterious activity of Christ, by which it inserts Christians into his being and life. “This unity of the believers with Christ, however, is basically something different from what we usually understand using the term “moral person”. In this mystical

⁴¹ *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 89. Eng. tr., p. 86.

⁴² *Corpus Christi quod est Ecclesia. Introductio generalis.* Romæ 1946. 2nd ed., p. 87.

⁴³ “Tieferes ist über die Kirche nie gesagt worden und kann auch über aie nicht gesagt werden”. *Op. cit.*, pp. 1-2. According to T. Soiron, Pauline ecclesiology is particularly apt to contribute to the solutions of the problems of contemporary society. (*Die Gesellschaftprobleme im Lichte paulinischer Theologie.* KG 6 (1933) pp. 36-48).

⁴⁴ Regarding these narrowing of views, it must be noted that it is generally overlooked how much the existence of the Church is linked to the mystery of the Cross. The encyclical has already warned of this, and this is why the recent work of G. Sciarretta will render very useful services to fill this gap in the studies of Pauline ecclesiology. (*La Croce e la Chiesa nella Teologia di S. Paolo.* Roma 1952).

⁴⁵ Fr. Mersch cites a good number of Catholic and Protestant authors who profess the same supernatural mystical reality of the Body of Christ (cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 112-114). Most of the notes (including the one quoted here) are not present in the Eng. tr.

⁴⁶ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 98 ff.

⁴⁷ We think of Koester, Gruden, Jürgensmeier, etc.

⁴⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 98.

person, Christ is the “I” (there is no “collective I” in him); he is the one that defines his essence. It therefore results from the fact that he integrates human individuals into the community of his own being and life”⁴⁹. The essence of the Church, expressed by the word “pleroma” cannot be other than the possession of the divine life: “the connection with Christ and the participation in his divine life which depends on it is the capital point in the Pauline concept of the Church as the Body of Christ”⁵⁰.

W. Koester in turn speaks of a supernatural-ontological transformation of man, due to the participation in the Eucharistic body of the Lord, which makes a Mystical Body of a multitude⁵¹. Jürgensmeier is no less forceful about the reality of the Mystical Body: “The Christian is bound to Christ in the most intimate way in his being and in his life. And from Him some heavenly forces flow continually on the believers to the point that they live entirely in Christ. Christ has become their life, and they themselves live in Him. Christ and believers are grafted into the same new being in the unity of the Mystical Body”⁵². This insistence on the ontological reality of the Mystical Body is such that Wikenhauser and Fr. Mersch could state that this idea of “body” in St. Paul can be found even in the passages which do not deal about it explicitly; that is why the union of the faithful with Christ remains more important than the union of the faithful among themselves. In their view, likewise, the idea of a societal organization (organization, social structure, “corporeality”) is always secondary, even in the great epistles (1 Cor. 12, Rom. 12).

The mystical character, vigorously emphasized, has particularly garnered this tendency the severe criticism of Koster and Deimel, so much so that N. Oehmen was of the opinion that “the result of the Deimel inquiry, if it will prevail, must necessarily lead to a disruption of modern ecclesiology”⁵³. In fact, the works seen above deal almost exclusively with the mystical aspect of the Pauline doctrine and do not attempt to establish the links which unite this mystical aspect with the visible aspect of the Church, a negligence which has provided an opportunity to expand immeasurably the boundaries of the Church regarding inclusion in it. On the other hand, there is no shortage of books, especially popularizations, which thought they could justify their more or less pantheistic or Gnostic ideas by referring to the metaphors of St. Paul. Moreover, the authentic meaning of Pauline ideas was all the more

⁴⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 123.

⁵⁰*Op. cit.*, p. 191.

⁵¹Die Idee der Kirche beim Apostel Paulus. Munster (W) 1928, p. 49.

⁵²Der mystische Leib Christi als Grundprinzip der Aszetik. Paderborn 1933, p. 39.

⁵³N. OEHMEN: L’ecclésiologie dans la crise. *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

difficult to extricate, since tradition and later theological thought interpreted the doctrine of St. Paul on the Mystical Body in a sense which, even if not opposed to the mystical one, at least exceeded the immediate data available in the thought of the Apostle.

Deimel points out, first of all, that the expression “Mystical Body” is not found in Paul’s epistles; moreover, according to him, the word “mystic” generally evokes a metaphorical sense. In addition, the current use of the word “mystic”, according to Deimel, means irrational, magical, mythical, unknown, inconceivable⁵⁴. The theological notion of mysticism also is reduced to the experience of the supernatural union between God and man, to the loving contemplation of this union⁵⁵. Deimel, who has in mind only Schweitzer’s exaggerated and pantheistic ideas⁵⁶, has rightly written that the passages of St. Paul are not susceptible to cloudy, mythical, and mysterious interpretations⁵⁷; but this does not allow us to forget the traditional meaning of the word “mystic”: supernatural reality.

Regarding the word “body”, he also falls into excess by claiming that this word in the Pauline metaphor expresses only the societal organization of men: “What does conceiving the Church as the Body of Christ presuppose in the natural order? It is the disposition and communal manner of being of man, inscribed in his nature... This constitutes the most obvious limitation of the scope of this doctrine. In this way it is clearly manifested that every mystical element remains entirely outside the perspective of this doctrine”⁵⁸.

Fr. Koster, while admitting the supernatural-real meaning of the word “mystic”⁵⁹, limits, in perfect agreement with Deimel, the meaning of the metaphor “body” to the societal aspect of the Church. The large defect of the “mystical” interpretations consists, in his eyes, precisely in having ignored the metaphorical character of the expression⁶⁰.

⁵⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, p. VI.

⁵⁵“Die katholische Theologie versteht unter Mystik die Erfahrung der übernatürlichen Liebes- und Lebensgemeinschaft des Menschen mit Gott, bestehend im Schauen, Lieben und Verkosten göttlicher Wahrheiten, Werte und Wirkungen”. *Op. cit.*, pp. 35-36.

⁵⁶*Op. cit.*, pp. 36 ff.

⁵⁷“... die mystische Wolke in die der Leib Christi gehüllt worden war, ist gründlich verfliegen...” *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

⁵⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 55.

⁵⁹He enumerates the senses: mythical, affective (subjective experience, object of the experience), metaphorical (spiritual sense), supernatural-real (effect of the creative activity of God); cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 34-35.

⁶⁰“Der richtige Gebrauch von “mystisch” in dieser vierten Bedeutung (supernatural-real) sagt die Übernatürlichkeit weder vom Bild-Wort noch von der Sache aus, von der das Wort genommen ist, sondern allein von der, die im übertragenen Sinn durch das Wort gemeint ist” *op. cit.*, p. 35.

Therefore, Deimel says, it is not the grace — which is only our personal union with God — that creates the supernatural community of the Church, but the charisms that are the sources of the activity of charity⁶¹. According to the charisms, dispositions to act, one becomes a member of the Body of Christ⁶². Unilateral views on what the word “mystic” can mean arise repeatedly in Deimel’s book⁶³. He insists especially on the fact that when the word “mystical” was added to the expression “body of Christ”, it was understood in the “allegorical” sense that it has when applied to Holy Scripture. So it cannot be said that for him the Body of Christ is a reality of the mystical-ontological order⁶⁴, but that it only signifies the sanctification of the societal bonds in the Church⁶⁵. In the end, in our opinion, the criticism Deimel and Koster formulate is not justified because it is based on an overly one-sided, if not erroneous, interpretation of the mystical reality and of the semantics of the word “body”.

Let us now take a quick look at the works that present a middle position in this matter.

W. Koester admits not only the supernatural-real mystical meaning, as we have just seen⁶⁶, but also the societal significance of the Pauline metaphor. “According to the Pauline conception,” he states, “the fraternal community is a society, an institution of salvation with regulations and functions since its very beginning, because it is essentially a society. This is involved in conceiving the Church as a *soma*, an organism, the Body of Christ, which must grow until redemption, ordained to all humanity, has become the lot of all, and all peoples have entered the Church”⁶⁷. L. Kösters also proposes an intermediate solution by reducing the doctrine of the great epistles to the external organization of the Church⁶⁸. Fr. Tromp, in turn, takes the same position⁶⁹. J. C. Gruden agrees with the views of Fr. Tromp;

⁶¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. VI.

⁶²Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 110.

⁶³See especially p. 117, where he is only preoccupied with demonstrating that being a member of the Body of Christ is a purpose of faith, but by no means a purpose of mystical experience.

⁶⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 35.

⁶⁵“Die Kirche bedeutet als “Leib” Christi jenen Zustand in dem das Gesellschaftliche geheilt ist... Der mit den Gnadengaben und der Liebe ausgerüstete und in den Dienst des Ganzen gestellte Christ bedeutet den äussersten Gegensatz zu dem nur seinen Trieben nachgehenden Massenszenen”. *Op. cit.*, p. 165.

⁶⁶Cf. above, p. 156.

⁶⁷Die Idee der Kirche beim Apostel Paulus. Münster (W) 1928, p. 30.

⁶⁸Die Kirche unseres Glaubens. Freiburg (Br) 1935; cf. p. 154.

⁶⁹Cf. *op. cit.*, chapter “Doctrina Sancti Pauli Apostoli”, pp. 75-86; especially pp. 75-76.

in his opinion the word “body” in St. Paul expresses the two aspects of the Church⁷⁰, and he defends the sense of the supernatural reality in the word “mystic” in its Christian usage⁷¹. Finally, K. Prümm does not merely interpret the “body” of Christ in the societal sense, but also believes that he can discover the supreme authority of the universal Church in it⁷².

In the works examined so far, the idea of the Mystical Body is more or less separated from the rest of the Pauline doctrine on the Church and claims an independent place in it. Wikenhauser in turn thinks that in order to understand the idea of the Mystical Body in St. Paul, a knowledge of his doctrine on the Church in general, although very useful, is however not essential⁷³. This position was not without drawbacks: it greatly contributed to contrasting a “mystical” ecclesiology with a “legal” idea of the Church, based on an incomplete presentation of Pauline ecclesiology. The work that we are going to discuss intends to fill these gaps. Although the book by L. Cerfaux⁷⁴ does not pretend to provide us with a complete ecclesiology of St. Paul, it nevertheless greatly helps us to grasp the basic orientation and stages of this ecclesiology—in short, its genesis⁷⁵. Let us therefore see the main ideas of St. Paul on the Church as presented to us in this book.

The ecclesiology of St. Paul is built to serve the cause of unity in early Christianity and closely follows the stages of its history⁷⁶. The first of these stages is the strengthening of the Judeo-Christian community in Jerusalem and the admission to the Christian faith of the first non-Jews. This phase is reflected in the thought of St. Paul in the form of the theology of the people of God. It was necessary to show that instead of carnal descent, faith in Christ incorporates this people. The unity of Christianity was at stake in the tension between the two peoples, Jews and Gentiles. The Apostle’s effort thus focused on developing the true concept of the people of God, as

⁷⁰The Mystical Christ. St. Louis-London 1936; cf. p. 10.

⁷¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 53.

⁷²“... es wurde auch vielleicht durch die Leib-Christi-Vorstellung allein schon die weitere Einsicht geweckt, dass es eine die Gesamtkirche erfassende, sie auch äusserlich zu einem Leibe zusammenschliessende Obergewalt geben müsse”, p. 279, in *Christentum als Neuheitserlebnis*. Freiburg (Br) 1939; cf. the chapter “In der hierarchischen Kirche” pp. 265-308. A somewhat strange suggestion which is also found in Fr. Tromp cf. *op. cit.*, p. 83.

⁷³Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 3.

⁷⁴La théologie de l’Église suivant saint Paul. Paris 1943 2nd ed. 1948.

⁷⁵A research on the genesis of St. Paul’s ecclesiology is not important, in the view of Fr. Mersch. Such a viewpoint is negligible according to him when it comes to St. Paul. (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 119. Eng. tr., p. 101.). He thinks that the theology of the Mystical Body is already completely formed in the vision on the road to Damascus.

⁷⁶“... the theology (of St. Paul) is modeled on the Christian reality”. *Op. cit.*, p. 172.

presented to us by the Epistles to the Romans and to the Galatians. The concept of the people of God is no longer limited to a particular nation; however, it does not cease to express primarily a very concrete reality: the community of those who invoke the name of God. The theology of the Church begins from the very start with a theology of the people of God⁷⁷.

The second phase of St. Paul's ecclesiology also seeks to respond to the need for unity. But these are now particular churches, while in the previous phase the name "Church" is the title par excellence of the community of Jerusalem and means the messianic realization of the assembly of the desert in the Old Testament⁷⁸. With the foundation of the Hellenistic communities, it was necessary to speak of particular churches and no longer of "the Church", or, if one continued to use this expression, the meaning was widened from the simple community of Jerusalem to the whole diaspora of the messianic people⁷⁹. The epistles to the Corinthians, which mainly concern this second phase, seek to establish and protect the unity within a particular church. The Apostle highlights the idea of unity in several ways: by the formulas of unity⁸⁰, by the notion of the unity of life in Christ, of the unitary organization, and finally of the unifying role of the Body (historical and Eucharistic) of Christ.

The third phase of St. Paul's thought on the Church is reflected in the epistles of captivity. On the one hand, the outcome of his collection seals the unity of Judeo-Christians and Hellenist Christians and brings about a universal consideration of all the particular churches. On the other hand, the contact of Christianity with the environment of Ephesus makes it necessary to broaden the notion of the Church to embrace the entire cosmos in it, the higher powers and the reconciled elements. "The mystery of unity in Christ will therefore have two poles, one cosmic, the other ecumenical"⁸¹.

After having seen the genesis of the ecclesiology of St. Paul, we must see how Cerfaux's particular solutions contribute to the problems with which the previous authors dealt. Firstly, let us take the notion of "Body of Christ". Here Cerfaux paves a completely original path. He ranks neither among those who see in it only the notion of an invisible, mystical Church, nor among those who think of finding an external organization, a "corporeality" in it, nor simply among those who see in it both. His solution is more

⁷⁷Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 2.

⁷⁸Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 86-88.

⁷⁹Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 156-157.

⁸⁰The formulas of unity are: the *logoi* of unity, the symbols of unity, and the allegorical comparisons such as sowing, building, bride, and body.

⁸¹*Op. cit.*, p. 228.

nanced. He rightly emphasizes that an overly deep distinction between the mystical aspect and the visible aspect of the Church does violence to Pauline thought: “Christian life is both social and individual; in a Christian, Pauline theology always sees his *esse christianum* and thus his existence inside the Christian group”⁸².

Certainly, he states, the word “body” in St. Paul—neither as a Hellenic comparison, nor as the Eucharistic body of the Lord—never directly refers to a visible organization, a community, a social body. According to Cerfaux the semantic evolution of the word “body” (*soma*) does not admit such a meaning until around the 2nd-3rd century⁸³. On the other hand, he does not accept the definition of Wikenhauser, for whom the Body of Christ in St. Paul is the mystical, invisible unity of believers in Christ⁸⁴. His position is: “the totality of Christians as a spiritual organism is mystically identified with the body of Christ. Let us not go beyond this assertion. We unduly exceed it, either because we identify the organism with the person of Christ, or because we speak of a Mystical Body of Christ, of a collective person that would form the Church”⁸⁵.

At first glance, is this solution equivalent with that of Wikenhauser? No, because Cerfaux does not see a definition of the Church in the words of St. Paul: “the Church which is his body”⁸⁶. He emphasizes that in this equation, the word “Church” still retains its primordial meaning of “people of God”. Therefore, the above expression directly indicates the duality of the nature of the Church, its earthly existence, and its heavenly and mystical aspect. The secret of the Church is precisely that it has a hidden celestial existence⁸⁷.

It should be noted, however, that this solution does not take into account the fact that the Hellenist analogy of “body” is not so far from the meaning of an organization, a corporate body, as Cerfaux thinks. It is all the more remarkable that this analogy in St. Paul always applies to a concrete assembly of Christians and represents their unity, their interior, exterior order at the same time and their dependence on their superiors (apostles, etc.). Consequently, the subsequent interpretation⁸⁸ which sees the visible orga-

⁸² *Op. cit.*, p. 166.

⁸³ Cf. especially his philological analyses, pp. 208-210.

⁸⁴ “Die Kirche ist für ihn (Paulus) die mystische Einheit aller Christusgläubigen”. Wikenhauser, *op. cit.*, p. 98.

⁸⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 215.

⁸⁶ Eph. 1, 22.

⁸⁷ Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 286-287.

⁸⁸ Cerfaux indicates that of St. John Chrysostom, Pelagius, and St. Thomas. Cf. p.

nization of the Church in the analogy of “body” does not distort Pauline thought, but develops its content⁸⁹.

In short, and this is most important, in St. Paul the two aspects of the Church are intimately united. Surely Cerfaux’s book will help ecclesiology to free itself from a unilateral view of the Mystical Body. We also add that, contrary to Mersch and Wikenhauser, Cerfaux refuses to admit that the expression “in Christ” (*in Xristo*) always means in St. Paul the supernatural ontological contact of the Christian with Christ⁹⁰. On this point Fr. Mersch and Wikenhauser have conceded too much to the “mystical” temptation.

In conclusion, it remains for us to point out that the book of Cerfaux well reflects current trends in ecclesiology not only by its object, but also by its method. In the introduction he does not fail to note that recent theological essays are fortunately guided not by individualism but “by a larger movement of civilization”⁹¹. Besides this orientation towards the collective, the organic, Cerfaux bases his developments to a large extent on the analysis of the concrete life of the early Church and on the experience of St. Paul himself⁹².

When we consider all the biblical studies on the Church, which we have just reviewed, we see how much, despite their relatively great wealth, their orientation suffers from a certain unilateralism. Considerable gaps are revealed, especially if one notices that the idea of hierarchy and the theandric mediation of the Church in general are still awaiting their biblical clarification. The ecclesiology of the Synoptics is still to be worked out; in this respect the developments of Fr. Mersch are limited to only one aspect. As for questions of method, we can see that a kind of lyricism is hardly fa-

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⁸⁹The encyclical, when it speaks of the visible aspect of the Church, as of an organic and hierarchical body (*ed. cit.*, p. 35), clearly refers to St. Paul. “If the Church is a body, it is therefore necessary for it to constitute a single and indivisible organism according to the words of St. Paul: “Although we are many, we are but one body in Christ” (Rom. 12:5)”. Cf. also: L. MALEVEZ: “L’Église Corps du Christ”. *Sens et provenance de l’expression chez saint Paul*. *Rech SR* 30 (1944) pp. 27-94.

⁹⁰Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 162. The fact that the Church already has here on Earth the nucleus of its future glorification by virtue of its close connection with the glorified body of Christ has been powerfully emphasized with the help of numerous Pauline texts by P. MICHALON: *Église, corps mystique du Christ glorieux*. *NRT* 84 (1952) pp. 673-687.

⁹¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. VI.

⁹²Due to well-known reasons, the Epistle to the Hebrews was not treated by these authors as part of the Pauline ecclesiology. In the studies of TEODORICO DA CASTEL S. PIETRO, it is shown how full it is of reminiscences of the Pauline idea on the Church. (*Alcuni aspetti dell’ecclesiologia della lettera agli Ebrei*. *Biblica* 24 (1943) pp. 125-161; 323-369. — *La Chiesa nella lettera agli Ebrei*. Turin-Rome 1945).

avorable to doctrinal precision. On the other hand, the exegesis of Peterson and Fr. Mersch has succeeded in integrating the vital, concrete aspect of biblical revelation that would respond effectively to the aspirations of our time. However vehement the discussions on the Pauline problem were, they do not permit us to speak of a crisis in ecclesiology. We have just seen that the criticism formulated by Deimel regards non-Catholic works; in what concerns Koster's ideas on the Mystical Body as a definition of the Church, the encyclical no longer allows similar opinions. In short, developing the mystical aspect of the Church based on biblical teaching is not a crisis, but an indisputable progress.

3.2 Recent research on the ecclesiology of the Fathers

1

The new tendencies in theology are distinguished, in the first place, by a return to the Fathers. "We have become more aware that, theology being the science of revelation, it is always important to return to what was revealed to find in it all the original wealth, to discover all the still undeveloped, perhaps even forgotten virtualities"⁹³. To tell the truth, this movement of return to the Fathers is not a recent development. The beginnings of ecclesiological renewal in the 19th century were already inspired by the Fathers; suffice it to cite Möhler⁹⁴, Passaglia, and Scheeben. The main characteristics of this return can be clearly seen in these authors: instead of composing repertoires of arguments using patristic texts to settle apologetic questions, they seek to understand the spirit of the Fathers better.

According to Möhler, the society of the Fathers is a spiritual environment, and knowing them is a way to enter in communion with their spirit. Only through a vital intelligence can one approach the Fathers, because their doctrine is immersed in the life of primitive Christianity, in its primordial and germinal values. For Möhler, in the writings of the Fathers, the impression of novelty, freshness, and joy emerges from every page; the perpetual exultation of the emerging Church dominates there. Certainly, the way in which Möhler approaches history and tradition is fundamentally romantic.

⁹³R. AUBERT: *Les grandes tendances théologiques entre les deux guerres*. Coll. Mechl. 16 (1946) p. 20.

⁹⁴Regarding Möhler's patristic orientation, see especially the study by Fr. Congar: *L'esprit des Pères d'après Möhler*; in *Esquisses du mystère de l'Église*. Paris 1941, pp. 129-148 (Eng. tr., pp. 147-186), and that of G. Bardy: *La voix des Pères*. EU, pp. 61-81.

He benefits from Schleiermacher's thesis and puts the community factor in interpreting Tradition first, and he considers the Church as the atmosphere of all the religious life of the Fathers.

There is no doubt that such a way of approaching the doctrinal content of the works of the Fathers is the cause of the unilateralism which is revealed at every step in *Unity*. The position achieved by Möhler in *Symbolic* owes much to a more in-depth study of the Fathers, which shows that the Fathers, in addition to their concretism and vitalism, also have more rational and strictly objective elements. However, the romantic spirit alone should not be made responsible for the preponderance of the idea of life regarding the interpretation of the ecclesiology of the Fathers. More recent studies, such as those by G. Bardy⁹⁵ that analyze the patristic ecclesiology of the same period and were able to use the results of the discussions of Möhler's *Unity*, do not fail to note that the idea of the Church during the first centuries is more lived than thought, more realized than systematized, because "facts preceded thought, and the latter is still rudimentary"⁹⁶.

After Möhler the restoration of traditional thought about the Church gains a particular impetus through the work of the main figures of the Roman School, Passaglia and Franzelin⁹⁷, who depended mainly on Petau and Thomassin, and through their works they met the Greek Fathers. While Passaglia⁹⁸ represents a theology of the biblical, patristic images and gives mainly an analysis of the concepts, Scheeben, his great disciple, is always more systematic, and without losing the mystical temper of the Greek Fathers, closely follows their subtle explanations. After Scheeben this refreshing orientation was interrupted for several decades. The best forces of patristic research among Catholics were engaged in the apologetic task, at the turn of the century, of a continuous battle against the theses of the Harnack school. A little later, in the aftermath of the First World War, the question of Roman primacy attracted more attention, in connection with the Malines Conversations, and brought in scholars such as P. Batiffol. His grandiose synthesis, embracing the Catholicism from the Apostolic Church until the time of St. Augustine, remains above all a work of apologetic rather than

⁹⁵G. BARDY: La théologie de l'Église de saint Clément de Rome à saint Irénée. Paris 1945. La théologie de l'Église de saint Irénée au Concile de Nicée. Paris 1947.

⁹⁶G. BARDY: La théologie de l'Église de saint Irénée au Concile de Nicée. Paris 1947, p. 8.

⁹⁷Cf. A. KERKVOORDE: La théologie du Corps mystique au XIX^e siècle. NRT 67 (1945) p. 419.

⁹⁸According to Passaglia, the study of the tradition "multo esse gravioris momenti ac ii arbitrentur qui illam aut obiter negligenterque versant aut etiam funditus praetermittunt". De Ecclesia Christi. Ratisbonae 1853, p. 80.

dogmatic orientation⁹⁹.

In this area, too, Fr. Mersch is the most remarkable representative of the new trends, with his great work that contains a synthesis of the patristic tradition on the Mystical Body. Among the Fathers, St. Athanasius and St. Augustine, in particular, received most of the attention of the ecclesiologists, and the latter up to the point that we began to speak of the Augustinian problem of ecclesiology. The division of this chapter is thus offered in a natural way: firstly, we will approach the research on the Greek tradition and then the research and discussion on the ecclesiology of St. Augustine.

2

Without any doubt, the ecclesiological tradition of the Greek Fathers and the current theological mentality meet on many points. In the first place, we must note the synthetic aspect of redemption, the inclusion of the human race in the Incarnate Word. From this viewpoint, the main ideas of St. Irenaeus, St. Athanasius, St. Hilary, and St. Cyril of Alexandria are of paramount importance.

In St. Irenaeus¹⁰⁰, the idea of recapitulation dominates, and it is extremely rich in ecclesiological data. It represents Christ as the one who wants to redeem, sanctify, and unite all created beings, all ages, and all material and spiritual things to give to the Incarnation its full meaning. For St. Irenaeus the “fullness” of Christ, the effect of recapitulation, is the Church; therefore, the recapitulation that includes “a theory of the Redemption, of the Church, and of grace; a conception of the Saviour’s life, and of the Christ-life in the faithful”¹⁰¹ can rightly be considered a synthetic doctrine on the Mystical Body.

This way of introducing into the thought of St. Irenaeus, as Fr. Mersch does, the idea of the Mystical Body, which is actually of more recent origin, is not without drawbacks. Fr. Mersch, who sees in the Mystical Body the invisible supernatural and ontological union of souls to Christ and their union among themselves, does not always clearly distinguish the thought of the Fathers from his own.

According to Fr. Mersch, the doctrine of recapitulation in St. Irenaeus

⁹⁹Regarding Batiffol’s ecclesiological work, one will find valuable information in the article by G. BARDY: *L’œuvre de P. Batiffol*. RevSR 19 (1929) pp. 122-141.

¹⁰⁰Cf. in Mersch, the chapter entitled: “Saint Irénée et la récapitulation”, Vol. I, pp. 315-348. Eng. tr., pp. 227-247.

¹⁰¹*Op. cit.*, p. 336. Eng. tr., pp. 239-40.

aims to demonstrate the mysterious aspect of ecclesiastical unity; it expresses “how salvation and union with God come to us in the Church, and how in the unity of the Church we are all united, entirely, even corporally, with one another, and how all together we are united to God in the Saviour who recapitulates all things”¹⁰². The ecclesiology of St. Irenaeus is a soteriology where the Holy Spirit plays the main role. The dogmatic treatise on the Church, the main concern of ecclesiology today, seeks to link the Church as closely as possible to its Head, to its Savior, and sees in the Holy Spirit the soul of the Church. We can easily see the agreement between the current aspirations of ecclesiology and the major themes of St. Irenaeus¹⁰³.

The doctrine of St. Athanasius attracted attention by its vitalism and the fact that all of his theology is based on the doctrine of the vital unity between Christ and his Church. Besides the developments of Fr. Mersch, we have the work of Fr. Bouyer. Fr. Mersch¹⁰⁴ follows the chronological order of the works of St. Athanasius. He finds that it is the idea of the deification of the Christian, which for St. Athanasius includes all that is understood today by the Mystical Body of Christ. In fact, the main theme of his struggle against Arianism aims to demonstrate the divinity of Christ by referring to the divine supernatural life of Christians themselves. In the eyes of St. Athanasius, Fr. Mersch says, the divine life of Christians is “so abundant and so evident that in order to believe to in Christ’s resurrection one need only see the vitality which the Church receives from her Head”¹⁰⁵. St. Athanasius lays the foundation for a new method of exegesis which interprets the Scriptures, and especially the passages concerning Christ, with respect to the idea of the “body of Christ”, Head and body together. His *On the Incarnation* represents the Church as an extension of the Incarnation.

Fr. Mersch emphasizes that the doctrine of St. Athanasius on the Church

¹⁰² *Op. cit.*, p. 337. Eng. tr., p. 240.

¹⁰³ The ecclesiology of St. Irenaeus is the theme of the work of L. SPIKOWSKI: *La doctrine de l’Église dans saint Irénée*. Strasbourg 1926. For sure this is not a book inspired by Möhler. He concentrates his ideas on the apologetic questions, on the problem of the magisterium, and on the authority of the Scriptures. Regarding the mystical side of the Church, the author almost completely overlooks the great synthesis of the recapitulation. The chapter concerning the constitution of the universal Church is limited to the apologetic analysis of the famous text: *ad hanc enim Ecclesiam...* As for the sanctifying role of the Church, the refutation of Gnosticism and Montanism are in the foreground; there is little mention of the Holy Spirit. We think that a little contact with the ideas of Möhler, whose *Unity* does not even appear in the bibliography, would have saved the author from unilateralism.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *op. cit.*, ch. IV: “Saint Athanase. Divinité du Verbe et divinisation du corps mystique. L’arianisme”, pp. 374-409. Eng. tr., pp. 263-287.

¹⁰⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 378. Eng. tr., p. 266.

is intimately connected with his life as a bishop. The mystery of the Church was for him a lived mystery, as Möhler already said: “Athanasius held on to the Church as a tree whose roots extend far and deep stands on the ground; he considered himself but a member of the Church, as holding on to it through all its past existence. Athanasius had, so to speak, deep roots in the Church. He identified himself with her, and the past of the Church was always present to his mind. He taught that Jesus Christ is internally united to his Church, as he is united to humanity, so much that he is one person with it, and that the Church is in a way Christ himself”¹⁰⁶.

Fr. Bouyer’s work does not aim to draw a systematic ecclesiology from the works of St. Athanasius¹⁰⁷, but only to find the key to an authentic interpretation of his thought. Fr. Bouyer intends to refute the alleged Hellenization of Christianity by St. Athanasius, a theme of liberal Protestants. He shows that St. Athanasius, instead of transposing the Gospel from the sphere of life to that of an abstract dogmatism, concentrates all his efforts “to keep for this Christianity all its character of new life”¹⁰⁸. Given that the unity of life between Christ and Christians is the main idea of the theology of St. Athanasius, we can say that this theology is eminently Christo- and ecclesiocentric and written in terms of life and according to a “vitalist scheme”, to take up Fr. Bouyer’s expression¹⁰⁹. Christ and the Church constitute an indissoluble unity for St. Athanasius; to inculcate this unity, he constantly resorts to the Pauline expression “body of Christ”¹¹⁰.

Fr. Bouyer does not fail to emphasize that such a theology can bring several correctives to the narrowing of our theological views. Above all, he advocates the unity between Christology and soteriology, sometimes too much separated from one another in modern treatises¹¹¹. There are questions, he says, where unity and a global view must prevail over the multiplicity of details. In addition, it would be necessary to take up certain themes such as the redemption being already implied, in a certain way, in the Incarnation; the potential inclusion of the human race in the Incarnate Word; and the

¹⁰⁶ Athanase le Grand et l’Église de son temps en lutte avec l’Arianisme. Transl. by J. Cohen. Paris 1840. t. DT 28 (1950) pp. 292-312; 361-394.

¹⁰⁷ L’incarnation et l’Église-Corps du Christ dans la théologie de saint Athanase. Paris 1943.

¹⁰⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹⁰⁹ “We are indeed here at the center of the theology of Athanasius... that we must live a truly divine life and that this life is literally the life of Jesus Christ in us”. *Op. cit.*, pp. 46-47.

¹¹⁰ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 10.

¹¹¹ Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 124.

Church as preformed in Christ¹¹². Thus the apologetics of St. Athanasius is based on the realism of supernatural life.

Without doubt, Fr. Bouyer concludes, modern individualism, especially in its exaggerated form, as it manifests itself in liberal Protestantism, will never be able to understand the fundamental affirmation of St. Athanasius: "Christians and Christ make but one sole being, the Church (regenerated humanity) being the body of Christ with all the realistic force of the expression used by St. Paul"¹¹³.

In St. Hilary, who can easily be connected with the Greek Fathers, Fr. Mersch¹¹⁴ highlighted the doctrine on the relationship of the Incarnation to the human race. The energetic expressions of St. Hilary on this point have already merited him the accusations of his contemporaries; Protestant historians of dogma reproached him for having lost sight of the incommunicable aspect of the Incarnation; several Catholics thought they could exonerate him by resorting to oratorical imprecisions.

Instead of being content with simplistic solutions, Fr. Mersch brings out the fundamental unity of the human race, which in his eyes justifies the thought of St. Hilary. He rightly adds that rather than a Platonic formation, it is the Christian revelation that leads St. Hilary to consider individuals in the unity of their species¹¹⁵. The Christian origin of this position is all the more incontestable since St. Hilaire regards this unity of the human race as a *sacramentum*.

It is therefore easy to understand that this relationship of the Incarnate Word to the whole human race leads him to support a physical deification in which the Eucharist plays a primary role. This central position of the Eucharist in the Mystical Body is also one of the points that most attracts the attention of modern ecclesiologists. We will see several more examples of this.

The main idea of St. Hilary on the relationship between the Incarnation and all of humanity reaches its perfection in St. Cyril of Alexandria¹¹⁶. His attention "is now directed more exclusively to this Incarnate Word; emphasis is placed on His interior constitution, so to speak, and upon that property

¹¹²Cf. his conclusions, pp. 124-131.

¹¹³*Op. cit.*, p. 127, cf. also pp. 147-148.

¹¹⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, ch. V. "Saint Hilaire. Divinisation par inclusion mystique dans le Verbe Incarné. L'incarnation continuée par l'Eucharistie. Incarnation collective ou incarnation unique?" pp. 410-437. Eng. tr., pp. 288-306.

¹¹⁵Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 420. Eng. tr., p. 295.

¹¹⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, ch. VIII. "Saint Cyrille d'Alexandrie. L'Incarnation et le Corps mystique", pp. 487-524. Eng. tr., pp. 337-64.

which enables Him to contain us all mystically and to make us divine”¹¹⁷. This inclusion of the human race in the Incarnation makes it clear that Christ carries all men, whose nature is in Him; thus, in His unique Incarnation, all men are deified in a certain way.

There is certainly a strong resemblance between the theologies of the Mystical Body of Anger, Mura, and Mersch, and this insistence on the Incarnation, a distinctive mark of the theology of St. Cyril. This shows once more that the ecclesiological renewal, which undoubtedly took place under the sign of the idea of the Mystical Body, would not have been possible without a return to Tradition. From this angle one would find the root of statements such as those of Fr. Mersch: “Ultimately there is only Christ, only the Incarnation. [...] The Church’s whole life and her marvelous harmony of doctrine, all have their sole source in the life and unity of the Saviour. To have the whole Christ is to have the whole of Christianity, just as the complete Incarnation is the expression of the whole of Christian doctrine”¹¹⁸. No one will be surprised that this virtual capacity of humanity in Christ can be subject to false, even pantheistic interpretations, as we have shown at the end of the first chapter of our work. But it is also true that the universality of the human nature of Christ, which belongs to the intentional order according to the Scholastics, can and must be assimilated by a theology in which one of the pivots is the idea of the Mystical Body¹¹⁹.

While the above mentioned works only highlight the central idea of St. Cyril’s ecclesiology, a series of articles by Fr. du Manoir has the merit of having highlighted not only the interior aspect of this ecclesiology, but also of relating it to its external structure. The author thus avoided what may seem unilateral in recent research on the ecclesiology of the Fathers¹²⁰. The author presents the interior aspect of the Church utilizing the image of a living organism. This interior aspect is the reproduction of the Trinitarian unity, and the Pauline idea of the *body of Christ* would be the most adequate expression of it in the eyes of St. Cyril. Nothing shows to what high degree of perfection his doctrine has arrived better than the use of the expression *mystical union*, by which he designates the union of the members

¹¹⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 489. Eng. tr., p. 338.

¹¹⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 524. Eng. tr., p. 358.

¹¹⁹ Cf. L. MALEVEZ: L’Église dans le Christ. RSR 25 (1935) pp. 257-291; 418-440; especially pp. 437-438.

¹²⁰ H. DU MANOIR: L’Église, Corps du Christ, chez Cyrille d’Alexandrie. Gr. 19 (1938) pp. 573-603; 20 (1939) pp. 83-100; 161-188; 481-506. These articles are now an integral part of his synthesis: Dogme et spiritualité chez Saint Cyrille d’Alexandrie. Paris 1944. Partie IV, pp. 287-366.

of the Mystical Body. Of entirely secondary importance is the fact that the expression *Mystical Body* is not found in his works. Without employing this expression, he teaches its content¹²¹. The principal characteristics of the living organism that is the Church are unity, diversity, the communion of the members with the Head and of the members among themselves, growth, and consummation in unity. There is a strong insistence in St. Cyril on the dynamic aspect of the Church, whose importance for a correct interpretation of his thought is considerable. In this dynamic aspect of his ecclesiology we find one of the decisive arguments against Harnack: St. Cyril, far from adopting the idea of a universal (pantheistic) incarnation, always speaks of an individual, unique Incarnation, having a universal value, a collective effect¹²².

Regarding the external aspect of this ecclesiology, Fr. du Manoir underlines that in St. Cyril “this ecclesiology is much more *lived* than *thought* and *expressed* explicitly”¹²³. The bishops, metropolitans, and the whole episcopal body are at the service of the communication and preservation of the divine life in the faithful. The mission of the hierarchy is a deaconry of the Spirit¹²⁴. Regarding the Roman primacy, Fr. du Manoir demonstrates that the ideas of St. Cyril on this subject were already very firm long before his dispute with Nestorius and that, therefore, his recourse to Rome was not “self-serving”.

Besides this synthetic aspect of the Church as Mystical Body, we have little to say about the research among the greatest of the Greek Fathers which, alas, too hastily touched on the very interesting ecclesiology of St. Ignatius of Antioch, especially regarding the Trinitarian and Christological aspect of the hierarchy. According to Fr. Mersch¹²⁵, for St. Ignatius the visible unity of the Church, culminating in the bishop, expresses at the same time the invisible unity of the faithful. These two kinds of unities are inseparable from each other because they reproduce the unity of the Incarnate Word. The heresy denounced by the letters of St. Ignatius recognized precisely a Christ without a real body and a Christianity without bishops. The thought of St. Ignatius is a faithful echo of the biblical message: unity in the Trinity is communicated to Christians, and the unity of the latter redounds back to the Trinity. This movement of the thought of St. Ignatius is to be

¹²¹Cf. *art. cit.*, pp. 84-85.

¹²²Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 94.

¹²³Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 162.

¹²⁴Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 506.

¹²⁵Cf. *op. cit.*, ch. titled “Ignace d’Antioche et l’unité de l’Église dans le Christ.” pp. 294-305. Eng. tr., pp. 213-226.

remembered¹²⁶.

The Catechetical School of Alexandria [*Didascalium*]¹²⁷ has little on the Mystical Body. The synthetic idea developed by this school is the wisdom which marks their doctrine on the Mystical Body with a moral character. It is the wisdom that operates the union to Christ and in Christ. The Mystical Body in them “a reality of an intellectual and ascetic order, and we may say without hesitation that after all it is a spirit rather than a body. It is a kind of spiritual environment, a vital atmosphere consisting in a particular manner of thinking and of willing”¹²⁸.

The Cappadocians seek rather the personal, intimate side of the Mystical Body, the life of Christ communicated to His members by the Christian mysteries¹²⁹. St. John Chrysostom¹³⁰ stands out for his realism regarding the Eucharist and almsgiving, precious details which call for their integration into ecclesiology.

Certainly, the developments of Fr. Mersch, while highlighting the main ideas of the Greek Fathers concerning the Mystical Body, are not exhaustive. Important doctrines on the Church have been found¹³¹, and more could also be found among them, which Fr. Mersch did not touch upon. As we have already said about research on Holy Scripture, it would be very desirable to study in depth the patristic doctrine on the hierarchy and on the eschatological aspect of the Church. Fr. Mersch’s book has some shortcomings, which can be explained by the fact that it was limited to deal with the mystical aspect of the Church and that was his prerogative. It would be excessive to accuse him of error; at most we could blame him for being unilateral by restricting the expression “Mystical Body of Christ” to the interior aspect of the Church; still, we could not find in him any attempt to dissociate the two aspects of the Church. He rendered a signal service to the cause of ecclesiology by showing the riches traditionally included in the idea of the

¹²⁶The article by J. VIEUJEAN: La doctrine de saint Ignace d’Antioche sur l’Église (Revue ecclésiastique de Liège 26 (1935) pp. 253-258) says nothing in particular. The article M. VILLAIN: Une vive conscience de l’unité du Corps mystique: Saint Ignace et saint Irénée (RAp 56 (1938) pp. 257-271) doesn’t add anything special to Fr. Mersch’s developments.

¹²⁷Cf. in Mersch, *op. cit.*, pp. 349-373. Eng. tr., pp. 248-262.

¹²⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 358. Eng. tr., p. 253.

¹²⁹Cf. in Mersch ch. VI. “Les Cappadociens” pp. 438-463. Eng. tr., pp. 307-322.

¹³⁰Cf. in Mersch. ch. VII. “Saint Jean Chrysostome, docteur de l’Eucharistie et de l’aumône” pp. 464-486. Eng. tr., pp. 323-336.

¹³¹We think especially of the research of Fr. TROMP: *De Corpore Christi mystico et Actione Catholica ad mentem S. Joannis Chrysostomi*. Romæ 1933. By the same author: *De Spiritu Sancto, anima Corporis mystici*; I. Testimonia selecta e Patribus graecis; II. Eadem e Patribus latinis. Romæ 1932; but these studies rather constitute a repertoire of texts, a working instrument.

Mystical Body, whereby his work continues to be one of the most important contributions to ecclesiology.

3

Regarding the teaching of the Latin Fathers, it is difficult to find adequate words to express the importance of the Doctor of Hippo. The development of patristic ecclesiology in the West proves it once again. In fact, the Latin Fathers who precede St. Augustine only prepare the stones for the grandiose building erected by his genius, and those who follow him can only repeat, explain, and preserve what he wrote and preached about the Church. As research has shown, one cannot expect a rich teaching on the Church from those who enlightened the Latin Church before St. Augustine. We have noted only that in Tertullian some significant passages on the idea of the Mystical Body¹³² and even the deeper thought of St. Cyprian regarding the unity of the Church do not have sufficient solidity¹³³. But despite its deficiencies, the pre-Augustinian era has vivid evidence proving how the idea of the Mystical Body was a lived and real dogma in the daily life of the Christians. The major proof is the literary work of two great men of the Church, St. Jerome¹³⁴ and St. Ambrose¹³⁵. What they say is not original; they learned it from the Greek Fathers whose essential teaching they present with lucid simplicity. But the way they present it deserves special attention. The realism of their language on the engagement of the mystery of the Mystical Body even exceeds in depth the inimitable expressions of St. Augustine. But in the end, the Doctor of Hippo held the most attention of those who sought above all, by returning to Tradition, to go beyond the unilateralism of the *De Ecclesia* manuals. This research was directed by the concern to find the mystical essence of the Church in him and to relearn the appropriate religious attitude towards the mystery of the Church¹³⁶.

At the bottom of this return of current ecclesiology to the thought of St. Augustine there is surely something attractive that, since his death, all the Christian generations have felt towards the Doctor of Hippo. As his

¹³²Cf. É. Mersch. *Op. cit.*, II, pp. 11 ff. Eng. tr., pp. 371-373.

¹³³*Ibid.*, pp. 15 ff. Eng. tr., pp. 373 ff.

¹³⁴E. SCHWARZBAUER: *Die Kirche als Corpus Christi mysticum beim hl. Hieronymus*. Roma 1930.

¹³⁵J. RINNA: *Die Kirche als Corpus Christi mysticum beim hl. Ambrosius*. Roma 1940.

¹³⁶One finds in F. HOFMANN the observation of this orientation in the recent studies on the ecclesiology of St. Augustine: «... nach dem eigentlichen Wesen der Kirche und nach der religiösen Haltung, die daraus folgt...» (*Der Kirchenbegriff des hl. Augustinus*. München 1933, p. VII).

life, pastoral work, and thought were eminently dynamic, similarly was his influence felt through the centuries in a very characteristic sense: Augustine and his work remained forever the inexhaustible inspiration of movements of reform within or outside the Church. That the Church, especially since the abuses committed by Luther and the Jansenists regarding the thought of St. Augustine, had looked reservedly at the orientations which were claimed to be St. Augustine's, will be easy to understand, but all this hardly justifies post-Tridentine ecclesiology having too much forgotten St. Augustine's ideas. Today, when we are again caught up in a current of reform in the Church, ecclesiology had to necessarily turn to the writings of the Doctor of Hippo to find the elements of an ecclesiology whose guiding idea is a movement of interiorization, a dynamic tendency of the sign towards what it contains, from the structure of the Church toward what it protects, from *communio sacramentorum* towards *communio sanctorum*¹³⁷.

Furthermore, as K. Adam pointed out¹³⁸, the ecclesiology of St. Augustine is so communitarian that it is particularly apt to inspire and guide the aspirations of our time. It is this dogmatic orientation and the search for vital values that best distinguish new works from those written at the turn of the century¹³⁹.

Two ways were offered to the authors for approaching the ecclesiology of St. Augustine: the genetic method and systematic synthesis. In practice, Fr. Mersch¹⁴⁰ and Fr. Hofmann follow the path traveled by the thought of the Doctor of Hippo, without failing to make systematic summaries, while J. Vetter¹⁴¹ aims to present Augustinian ecclesiology in its most advanced form. In our opinion, a synthetic account of the very diverse phases of the theology of St. Augustine cannot do without a preliminary study of the genesis of his ecclesiology. The ignorance of this principle is precisely the reason why the work of Vetter did not succeed in highlighting the weaknesses of St. Augustine's ecclesiology.

As for the theological method among these three authors, Hofmann has nothing characteristic of the method, enriched with subjective elements, of current ecclesiology. His preoccupation consists above all in remaining faithful to Augustine's thought and illustrating it with the greatest possible

¹³⁷Cf. Y. CONGAR: *Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église*. Paris 1950. Eng. tr., *True and False Reform in the Church*. Collegeville, MN 2011.

¹³⁸K. ADAM: *Die geistige Entwicklung des heiligen Augustinus*. Augsburg 1931, p. 53.

¹³⁹As examples: T. SPECHT: *Die Lehre von der Kirche nach dein hl. Augustinus*. Paderborn 1892. P. BATIFFOL: *Le catholicisme de saint Augustin*. Paris 1920.

¹⁴⁰See *op. cit.*, Vol. II. ch. II-IV. "Saint Augustin", pp. 35-138. Eng. tr., pp. 384-440.

¹⁴¹*Der heilige Augustinus und das Geheimnis des Leibes Christi*. Mainz. 1929.

number of texts; his language reveals no trace of lyricism. Vetter's study, which would rank more among popular works than in the genre of technical studies, betrays a clear orientation towards the concrete, vital aspect of truth.

But Fr. Mersch, who once again expresses his ideas on method, concerning his developments on St. Augustine¹⁴², best represents the new trends in ecclesiology with regard to the methodological question. To understand the doctrine of St. Augustine, it is indispensable to penetrate the rich soul of the great doctor in its various aspects; in his eyes the ecclesiological problem of Augustine is a problem of soul, and there, in the soul of St. Augustine and the work of God in this soul, he wants to look for "an explanation of certain distinctive traits of his doctrine of the Mystical Body"¹⁴³.

He looks at the idea of the Mystical Body in St. Augustine in such close relation to interior things that "it is very useful to know the psychology of this man's soul if we are to understand clearly his concept of the things of the soul"¹⁴⁴. Thought consisting for St. Augustine not so much in bringing concepts together as in seeking the truth in oneself, the author feels obliged to follow in this way the great doctor and to find the truth not only in the formulas, but by the resonances aroused within the soul¹⁴⁵. This author's esteem for the subjective aspect of his subject is reflected in his style, which is not always precise.

It is not difficult to understand that the major themes of Augustinian ecclesiology, by their very nature, have attracted special attention from current ecclesiology. This would also explain to a large extent why our authors have contented themselves with highlighting the points of St. Augustine's doctrine which interested them, ignoring the fact that this doctrine, as it is found in St. Augustine, still leaves much to be desired. Hofmann's scrupulously scientific approach avoids this danger, but Fr. Mersch and Vetter say precious little about the unfinished aspect of Augustinian ecclesiology.

The main themes of this ecclesiology can be reduced to the interior aspect of the Church. Grace is considered there as the essence of the Church, and the idea of predestination ultimately governs membership in the Church. These three authors are unanimous regarding the Pauline origin of this ecclesiology, and all three admit that St. Augustine was right in seeing in the Pauline metaphor of the body of Christ the mystical union of Christians

¹⁴²Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 35-44: Introduction à la doctrine de saint Augustin; he explains the psychological origins there. Eng. tr., pp. 384-389.

¹⁴³*Op. cit.*, p. 37. Eng. tr., p. 385.

¹⁴⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 42. Eng. tr., p. 387.

with the Savior¹⁴⁶. The eternal sources of the Mystical Body are located within the Trinity, and this explains why St. Augustine does not insist on the distinction between transient and eternal membership in the Body of Christ.

This heavenly aspect of the Church is linked to the Platonic mentality of St. Augustine, for whom the true meaning of the Body of Christ is an eternal idea in God; the earthly Church being an imperfect realization of it, it must constantly strive towards its absolute ideal. The central role of charity and the essentially metaphysical holiness of the Church are the ideas of St. Augustine which have captured the attention of modern ecclesiology.

It is the merit of Fr. Mersch to have devoted a separate chapter¹⁴⁷ to the study of the preaching of St. Augustine where the saint shows himself the most. There, in this psychological and realistic exposition of the doctrine, his true greatness manifests itself. "While there may be some dispute concerning Augustine's title to the highest rank in the metaphysics of dogma, he has no equal in explaining the interior and psychological aspect of our faith"¹⁴⁸. Fr. Mersch points out the role of St. Augustine's contact with his faithful in the deepening of his doctrine on the Mystical Body. According to him, St. Augustine remains forever the model of the theologian who only wants to think and rethink his faith in its most complete identification with the life of the Church. Current ecclesiology will find in St. Augustine the concrete and mystical side of the Church and its application to the whole domain of the interior life: prayer, suffering, and the whole life of the individual Christian

¹⁴⁶"Like Paul, Augustine cannot conceive the Church as a mere multitude made up of disparate elements." (Mersch, *op. cit.*, p. 121. Eng. tr., p. 430). Fr. Hofmann sees precisely, in this relation to the Pauline idea, the decisive proof that for St. Augustine, following St. Paul, the unity of the Church is a mystical unity (cf. *op. cit.*, p. 152 and p. 421). J. Vetter considers the developments of St. Augustine on the Mystical Body as "eine geistesverwandte Entfaltung des paulinischen Gedanken". (*Op. cit.*, p. 19). It is interesting to note in this connection that the studies of S. J. Grabowski on the ecclesiology of St. Augustine reach the same conclusion that we have just seen in Hofmann and Mersch. Without admitting with Hofmann (*op. cit.*, p. 148) and Vetter (*op. cit.*, p. 8) that the idea of the Mystical Body should be considered the center of the theology of St. Augustine, he readily accepts that the mystical unity of Christians dominates Augustinian ecclesiology. (Saint Augustine and the Mystical Body of Christ. TS 7 (1946) pp. 72-125). This interior aspect of St. Augustine's ecclesiology is betrayed above all by the fact that according to St. Augustine sinners belong only to the external, legal aspect of the Church. (Sinners and the Mystical Body of Christ according to Saint Augustine. TS 8 (1947) pp. 614-667; 9 (1948) pp. 47-84).

¹⁴⁷Cf. ch. IV. "La prédication. Le Christ vivant dans la vie intérieure de l'Église et des chrétiens", pp. 84-138. Eng. tr., pp. 412-440.

¹⁴⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 84. Eng. tr., p. 413.

are always ordered to the whole Mystical Body.

As we said above, grace dominates the ecclesiological thought of St. Augustine and introduces a kind of unilateralism into it. The principle of theandrist, the sacramental structure of the Church, the importance of the humanity of Christ, and the hierarchy do not yet receive enough light. From this as yet imperfect theological position, the Augustinian problem of ecclesiology results.

In turn, J. Tyciak demands the restoration of the Augustinian spirit in ecclesiology by opposing it to the legal conception of the Church¹⁴⁹. His book, already mentioned above,¹⁵⁰ is basically an uncritical review that does not correct Augustinian ecclesiology. Beside this unconsidered claim of the Augustinian system, one will find the criticisms severe and sometimes unjustified which impute to Augustine “deviations” of current ecclesiology and which consider its ecclesiology as “killed” by the Vatican Council¹⁵¹. According to Fr. Koster, the *De Ecclesia* schema of the Vatican Council was “rejected” by “most” of the bishops because it represented the Augustinian concept on the *body of Christ* metaphor¹⁵².

When Fr. Koster reproaches St. Augustine for having misunderstood the role of the character regarding membership in the Church¹⁵³, in our opinion he exaggerates. We cannot accept Koster’s complaint against the developments of Fr. Hofmann either, when he accuses him of having presented the system of St. Augustine with corrections without having highlighted the contradictions and the material heresy of the holy Doctor¹⁵⁴. We would admit Koster’s criticism if it were directed against the enthusiasts of whom we have just spoken, and not only against Hofmann. Nowhere does the latter

¹⁴⁹“Die Theologie des Ostens und das Abendland” in *Der Christliche Osten* pp. 38-58. *Geist und Gestalt*”, by J. Tyciak, G. Wunderle, P. Werhun. (Regensburg 1939, pp. 38-58).

¹⁵⁰Christus und die Kirche. Regensburg 1936, cf. especially pp. 104-107.

¹⁵¹Fr. Koster interprets in this sense the sentence of K. Adam: “Endgültig wurde er, (der Kirchen- und Petrusbegriff der afrikanischen Theologie) erst 1870 getötet”. (Gesammelte Aufsätze. Augsburg 1936, p. 117).

¹⁵²Cf. “Ekklesiologie im Werden”. Paderborn 1940, p. 48. The reader is able to pass judgment on the following assertion of Koster that Augustine introduced the mystical notion into the Pauline metaphor.

¹⁵³“Hätte Augustin vermocht, was Thomas vermochte, die Gleichbildung mit dem Priester Christus durch die Charaktere als gliedschaffende Teilnahme am Priestertum Christi zur Konstituierung der Kirche zu unterscheiden von der Gnadenähnlichkeit durch den Gnadenstand mit dem begnadeten Priester Christus zur Gotteskindwerdung der Eigen-Person und nicht den Charakter und seinen Sinn durch den immer wieder betonten Gnadenpersonalismus zu verschleifen, dann würde manches in Ekklesiologie anders geworden sein”. *Op. cit.*, p. 47.

¹⁵⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 58.

try to substitute Augustinian ecclesiology, as it stands, for the legal aspect of the Church; nor does he ignore the weaknesses of this system¹⁵⁵. On the contrary, his developments show that the sacramental theory of St. Augustine, despite its imperfections, is situated in the line of theological evolution and constitutes a stage of capital importance.

In short, Koster strives to reintegrate in the treatise of the Church the richness of the Augustinian doctrine which, in spite of certain less successful aspects, make of its author the most important representative on the Church in the Latin tradition¹⁵⁶.

4

That most of the recent studies on the notion of the Church among the Fathers have been elaborated from the viewpoint of the idea of the Mystical Body is entirely in accordance with the major orientation of the recent trends of ecclesiology. Furthermore, these studies are more concerned with the thought of such-and-such a Father and not with the development of such-and-such an ecclesiological idea through the patristic era. However, we can indicate some works which tried to follow the thought of the Fathers in this way.

Let us first consider the longest section of the work by Fr. Tromp¹⁵⁷, where we find a rich variety of nuances on the idea of the Mystical Body among the Fathers. They spoke of the Mystical Body sometimes as the union of all creatures through the Logos, sometimes as the communion of saints or as the Church of the two Testaments, or finally as the body of the faithful under their legitimate pastors, to signal the broadness of an idea extremely rich in content. That such doctrinal richness does not encourage an inconsiderate ecumenism is too obvious, because the Fathers, while manifesting a generously open mind, harshly reject and condemn schism as the most serious evil among Christians. But at the same time the richness of the nuances of the idea of the Mystical Body among the Fathers can alert the overly categorical minds, eager to group everything into convenient and superficial divisions, that the definition of an aspect of a complex question

¹⁵⁵It suffices to think of the criticism he made of the Platonic ontology of St. Augustine, the source of the deficiencies in his ecclesiological system (pp. 422 ff.); he also highlighted the acute dualism between visible and invisible in St. Augustine (pp. 423-424).

¹⁵⁶Regarding the researches on the ecclesiology of the Latin Fathers after St. Augustine, we have little to report. We add to the bibliography cited by Fr. Mersch (*Op. cit.*, II, pp. 401-406. Not present in the Eng. tr.) the study by J. F. Sagüés: *La doctrina del cuerpo místico en san Isidoro de Sevilla*. EE 17 (1943) pp. 227-257.

¹⁵⁷S. TROMP: *Corpus Christi quod est Ecclesia*. Roma 1946, 2nd ed.

should not lead to the suppression of the other aspects. This is, moreover, the profit that Fr. Tromp was the first to derive from his study, stressing that *the Catholic Church: Mystical Body of Christ*, is the meaning par excellence of this expression¹⁵⁸. Later, we will see in detail that such a conclusion turns out to be of major importance regarding the correct interpretation of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*.

It is easy to see that the richness of patristic thought on the Mystical Body may contain profound views which can shed new light on problems which have heretofore been discussed in a rather apologetic more than dogmatic way. Colson's work on the development of the episcopate in the ancient Church shows that being aware of the leading dogmatic ideas of the thought of the Fathers can often give a more satisfactory solution than textual criticism alone.¹⁵⁹ In fact, the universality of Redemption and the real visibility of the Incarnation, fundamental ideas of Pauline and Johannine theology, seem to govern the different realizations of the hierarchical functions in the ancient Church. In the light of this dogmatic viewpoint, we can better understand, than with the help of philological analyses, why the organization of the communities established by St. Paul was not entirely the same as that of the communities founded by the Johannine apostolate. It was a natural consequence of the Pauline insistence on Christ, the only Head of redeemed humanity, that each particular church should reflect the unity of the Mystical Body as far as possible, which is why they were only governed by the apostolic delegates. On the contrary, the emphasis St. John placed on the visibility of the Incarnation postulated the establishment of the image of the visible Incarnation: the bishop of a local community. The Western tradition, following the thought of St. Paul, thus developed under the influence of the idea of unity in the Head, and thus it arrived, more quickly, at the awareness of the Roman primacy. In turn, the Johannine tradition, by insisting on the mystery of the episcopate, image of the Incarnation, became the foundation for the episcopal monarchies which would have to soften "the Pauline concern for the unity of the universal Church in a sole Body which, taken alone, could have risked transforming what is essentially a communion into a sort of imperialism"¹⁶⁰.

It was also emphasized that precisely the deep understanding of the idea of the Mystical Body helped the Fathers speak unabashedly about sins in the Church. Unlike post-Tridentine apologetics, the Fathers spoke more ex-

¹⁵⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 171.

¹⁵⁹ J. COLSON: *L'évêque dans les communautés primitives. Tradition paulinienne et Tradition johannique de l'Épiscopat des origines à saint Irénée*. Paris 1951.

¹⁶⁰ *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

placitly of the role of divine forgiveness in the holiness of the Church. The explanation of such symbols as that of the moon eclipsed by the sun¹⁶¹ or that of forgiven sinners¹⁶² are an opportunity for the Fathers to inculcate a more dynamic consideration of the holiness of the Church. Given such a dogmatic attitude, they had less need for laborious historical and psychological explanations about sin in the Church. Furthermore, such an idea of the holiness of the Church always inspired them with actions of reform, because the continual purification of the Church is one of the major proofs of its holiness.

The recent research on the ecclesiology of the Fathers having for its principal object the interior aspect of the Church could not fail to approach what the Fathers wrote on the Church as spouse¹⁶³ and mother¹⁶⁴. But this interior aspect of the ecclesiology of the Fathers is manifested above all when they compare the Church to the Blessed Virgin. Recent publications on this subject¹⁶⁵ follow the lines drawn by the remarkable study of A. Müller¹⁶⁶. Its conclusion, particularly instructive for ecclesiology as for mariology, has thrown an uncommon light on the very root of supernatural existence. What creates this existence and ensures its fruitfulness is the docile reception of the word of God. In other words, the mystery of Mary and the Church are not two different things; basically they are both the same mystery, that of justification¹⁶⁷, where the priority of action always belongs to God, the “masculine” element, and where man is always receptive, the “feminine” element. The most perfect realization of this encounter between the divine and the human remains forever the divine maternity of Mary. As justification is a deification, a participation in the mystery of the Incarnate Word, fruit of the divine Spirit and the humble Virgin, we can say that “Mary is the perfect Church; she is its full realization.” And on the other hand, “the mystery of the Church is essentially the mystery of Mary”¹⁶⁸. Quite simply,

¹⁶¹H. RAHNER: *Mysterium Lunæ. Ein Beitrag zur Kirchentheologie der Väterzeit.* ZKT 63 (1939) pp. 311-349; 428-442; 64 (1940) pp. 61-80; 121-131.

¹⁶²J. DANÉLOU: *Rahab, figure de l'Église.* Ir 22 (1949) pp. 26-45.

¹⁶³L. WELSERHEIMB: *Das Kirchenbild der griechischen Väterkommentare zum Hohen Lied.* ZKT 70 (1948) pp. 393-449. — H. ENGBERDING: *Die Kirche als Braut in der ostsyrischen Liturgie.* OCP 3 (1937) pp. 5-48.

¹⁶⁴J. MADOZ: *Mater Ecclesia. Devoción a la iglesia en los primeros siglos.* EE 16 (1942) pp. 393-449. — J. C. PLUMPE: *Mater Ecclesia: An Inquiry into the Concept of the Church as Mother in the Early Christianity.* Washington D.C. 1943.

¹⁶⁵*Études mariales. Marie et l'Église. I-II.* Paris 1951-52.

¹⁶⁶A. MÜLLER: *Ecclesia-Maria. Die Einheit Marias und der Kirche.* Freiburg (S) 1951.

¹⁶⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 222.

¹⁶⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 232.

this mystery is but the deepest aspect of redemption, which is, in the final analysis, the marital union of the divine and the human¹⁶⁹. So it is entirely according to the logic of the mystery to call both Mary and the Church wife and mother¹⁷⁰.

5

The centuries which lie between St. Augustine and the great epochs of the Middle Ages do not promise, at first sight, a doctrinal richness sufficient to attract the attention of researchers. Even Fr. Mersch is content with a very summary exposition¹⁷¹, confining himself to showing that, “St. Augustine continues during the Middle Ages to exert a notable influence upon the doctrine of the Mystical Body as well as upon theology in general, and that at the same time other important developments are being set on foot”¹⁷². Although he realized that the High Middle Ages contains a great deal on the relation of the Eucharist to the Church¹⁷³, he only give us some brief information of its developments.

Besides the relationship between the Eucharist and the Church which dominates this ecclesiology, undoubtedly under the influence of St. Augustine, the ecclesiological developments found in it relate for the most part to questions such as the existence of the Church before Jesus Christ, the membership of sinners in the Church, the grace of the Head, and the necessity of the Church for salvation¹⁷⁴. All this is treated there, as one would expect, with a method which is mostly based on the symbolic theology of the Fathers¹⁷⁵. But the latter part of the period witnessed a decisive turning point towards the scholastic method, and this is the reason why one will find, in the immediate predecessors of the great scholastic doctors, almost all the ecclesiological elements which they will express with greater lucidity

¹⁶⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 217.

¹⁷⁰Other research can only contribute additional ideas to the clarity of such a conclusion. We note a few examples: I. RIUDOR: *Maria Mediadora y Madre del Cristo Místico en los escritos eclesiásticos de la primera mitad del siglo XII*. EE 25 (1951) pp. 181-218. — J. HUH: *Das Mariengeheimnis beim Kirchenvater Ambrosius*. Dans *Alma Socia Christi*. Acta Congressus Mariologici-Mariani. Roma 1952. Vol. V. Fasc. I, pp. 101-128.

¹⁷¹Cf. *op. cit.*, ch. V. “Durant le Haut Moyen-Âge. Échos de saint Augustin” pp. 139-157. Eng. tr., pp. 441-450.

¹⁷²*Op. cit.*, p. 140. Eng. tr., pp. 442.

¹⁷³Cf. *ibid.*

¹⁷⁴J. BEUMER: *Zur Ekklesiologie der Frühscholastik*. Sch 26 (1951) pp. 364-389. *Ekklesiologische Probleme der Frühscholastik*. Sch 27 (1952) pp. 183-209.

¹⁷⁵J. CHÂTILLON: *Une ecclésiologie médiévale: L'idée de l'Église dans la Théologie de l'École de Saint-Victor au XII^e siècle*. Ir 22 (1949) pp. 115-138; 395-411.

and doctrinal solidity¹⁷⁶.

The work of F. Holböck¹⁷⁷ first tried to summarize the doctrine of many theologians of the High Middle Ages on this point. The subject was of great interest, all the more since the Eucharist and the Church had for centuries also been called “mystical bodies”, proof of the fundamental union between these two mysteries of faith. The main themes identified by Holböck refer above all to the Eucharistic symbolism of the Church, based both on the Eucharistic species and on their content¹⁷⁸. Holböck found that the ideas of the Eucharist as the efficient cause of the Church, and as the sacrifice of the Mystical Body, are characteristic of the theologians of the High Middle Ages¹⁷⁹; it is puzzling that the bibliography of the work of Holböck does not contain the articles of Fr. de Lubac, published in 1939 under the title *Corpus Mysticum*¹⁸⁰; no doubt they would have shown him the theological significance of the change which was taking place at that time in the meaning of the expression *corpus Christi mysticum*. Like Lattey¹⁸¹ and Fr. Tromp¹⁸², he limits himself to the simple observation of the fact of this change without attempting to sketch its theological background¹⁸³.

The merit of Fr. de Lubac is to have identified the real driving forces that have led theologians to transfer the expression *corpus mysticum* from the Eucharist to the Church. Without going into the historical details regarding the hesitant stages of this transition, we would like to highlight these reasons as Fr. de Lubac notes them.

First of all, a profound change in the theological mentality takes shape throughout the centuries of the High Middle Ages. We are witnessing the decline of a theological attitude which was nourished by the theory of the illumination of St. Augustine and which, instead of trying to solve the dialectical problems posed by faith, stuck to the contemplation of the mysteries based on the symbolism of Scripture and Tradition. It was not difficult

¹⁷⁶A. LANDGRAF: Die Lehre vom geheimnisvollen Leib Christi in den frühen Paulinenkommentaren und in der Frühcholastik. DT 24 (1946) pp. 217-248; 393-428. 25 (1947) pp. 365-394; 26 (1948) pp. 160-180; 291-323; 395-434.

¹⁷⁷Der eucharistische und der mystische Leib Christi in ihren Beziehungen zueinander nach der Lehre der Frühcholastik. Rom 1941.

¹⁷⁸Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 190-208.

¹⁷⁹Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 209-237.

¹⁸⁰H. DE LUBAC: *Corpus Mysticum*. Étude sur l'origine et les premiers sens de l'expression. RSR 29 (1939) pp. 257-302; 429-480; 30 (1940) pp. 40-80; 191-226.

¹⁸¹*The Church* in “Papers from the Summer School of Catholic Studies”. Cambridge 1928, p. VII.

¹⁸²Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 93.

¹⁸³Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 187-189.

to see, continues Fr. de Lubac, that the dialectical preoccupation of the following epoch, despite its incontestable contributions, could not preserve and appreciate the great ecclesiological values of the previous epoch. Among these values we should particularly mention the close union between the Eucharist and the Church, in which the Eucharistic symbolism embraces the reality of the Church, while the deified life of the Church in turn evokes the real presence of the Eucharist, as the effect its cause. The word *mysticum* also equally retains its traditional meaning, serving to indicate three realities simultaneously: the memorial of the passion, the presence of Christ, and the living Church of the Eucharistic Christ.

The Eucharist from this angle turns both to the past, to Calvary, and to the future, to the edification of the Church¹⁸⁴. “So much so that, in this perspective of totality and unity, there is virtually no need to search for formulations or expressions to distinguish ‘one body from the other’”¹⁸⁵. The idea of a real continuity between the Head and the members of the one Body governs the idea of the Church in them. The movement of their thought always goes beyond the sociological order of the Church to considering the Church as the *corpus Ecclesiae Spiritu vivificatum*. In other words, the ecclesial body must in reality become the body of Christ, *corpus Ecclesiae conficiatur*¹⁸⁶, and “just as bread and wine are ‘consecrated’ by the priest in order to be changed into the body and blood of the Christ, so communion consecrates us”¹⁸⁷.

After having highlighted the richness of this tradition, Fr. de Lubac brings out the contrasts by evoking the unilateralism of the dialectical era which will follow. The rationalism of the Berengarian controversies, the concern to make speculation prevail in all areas of the faith¹⁸⁸, the forgetting of the traditional meaning of the word mystical, the neglect of symbolism, and the attenuation of the ecclesial reality are the grievances Fr. de Lubac articulated against scholasticism. In addition, he invokes the dangerous effects of the new idea of the Church, developed by medieval canonists who tried to assimilate excessively the Mystical Body to the visible body “chiefly to the benefit of the most exterior element of the Church in its most contingent

¹⁸⁴Cf. *Corpus Mysticum*. L’Eucharistie et l’Église au Moyen-Âge. Paris 1949. 2nd ed., pp. 79-80. Eng. tr., *Corpus Mysticum: The Eucharist and the Church in the Middle Ages*. Notre Dame (IN) 2007, p. 66.

¹⁸⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 34. Eng. tr., p. 23.

¹⁸⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 103. Eng. tr., p. 88.

¹⁸⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 97. Eng. tr., p. 82.

¹⁸⁸“The doctrinal interest was shifting. The need for unity was being replaced by a need for analysis, and what had been the subject of mystic fervor was increasingly perceived as a source of dangerous confusion”. *Op. cit.*, p. 112. Eng. tr., p. 96.

forms—that is the power claimed by the papacy over temporal matters. This lack of prudence would exact a heavy price.”¹⁸⁹. The Protestant reaction wasted no time in completely dissociating the Mystical Body of Christ from the visible body of the Church.

The energetic and sometimes exaggerated language of Fr. de Lubac earned him strong criticisms, among which we note that of Fr. Nicolas¹⁹⁰. He does not dispute the merits of the book of Fr. de Lubac, nor the advisability of responding to the aspirations of the modern man, but he remarks that modern thought, while placing itself under the sign of the assimilation and integration, runs the danger of becoming as partial a theology as the one from which it wants to escape. The historical method of Fr. de Lubac, insisting on the contrasts of successive epochs, suggests to Fr. Nicolas “a perpetual fear of a fixity of the truth... Let the theology of the Middle Ages be reworked, he says, if it is partial. May all that is obsolete, incomplete, limited in it fall! But let it not be said that what was true or valuable then has since ceased to be so for our minds”¹⁹¹.

In the foreword to the second edition of his book¹⁹², Fr. de Lubac responds to the criticism of Fr. Nicolas by admitting the exaggerated nature of his style, as the source of misunderstandings. But he rejects the accusation of being led by a contempt for reason and particularly for scholasticism. He again specifies his positive objectives: first, to react against a kind of laziness of theological speculation which does not go beyond a certain pattern of thought, then against modern self-sufficiency “which induces our contemporaries to attribute to themselves a better understanding than their forebears, simply because they were born after them”¹⁹³, and finally against a systematic depreciation of certain epochs of Tradition.

The main aim of Fr. de Lubac’s book is undoubtedly that of reaching the historical understanding. His integration effort starts from the principle of M. Scheler, who asked that we take into consideration the nature and inherent value of each phase of evolution and that “development is not only progress, but that it is always and simultaneously decadence”¹⁹⁴. The values par excellence of this period, in the eyes of Fr. de Lubac, are the Augustinian theory of enlightenment and the ontological symbolism. Fr. de

¹⁸⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 131. Eng. tr., p. 116.

¹⁹⁰ M.-J. NICOLAS: *Théologie de l’Église*. BT 46 (1946) pp. 372-398.

¹⁹¹ *Art. cit.*, p. 387.

¹⁹² Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 7-10. Eng. tr., pp. xxiii-xxvi.

¹⁹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 9. Eng. tr., p. xxv.

¹⁹⁴ M. SCHELER: *Nature et forme de la sympathie* (French tr. 1928) pp. 53-55; quoted from Fr. de Lubac, p. 264. Eng. tr., p. 236.

Lubac says the former is much more than the theory of a simple author; it is the witness of a state of intelligence whose value later periods have not duly recognized¹⁹⁵. Symbolism results from the sacramental origins of the notion of the Mystical Body, given that “the Church and the Eucharist are formed by one another day by day”¹⁹⁶. Returning to symbolism is of great interest, of urgent necessity, all the more so “because without it the very strength of the corporate aspirations which can currently be felt at the heart of the Church, and which are in particular driving the liturgical movement, cannot be without peril. Here or there, it could degenerate into a naturalist impulse”¹⁹⁷.

3.3 Recent research on the ecclesiology of Scholasticism

1

Fr. de Lubac, defending himself from a contempt for scholasticism, was keen to point out how much the Thomistic synthesis is “nourished by tradition and firmly balanced”¹⁹⁸. It would be difficult to characterize better what we are looking for now in scholastic ecclesiology. Today’s ecclesiological movement, which has subjected the post-Tridentine idea of the Church to revision, “represents, as a whole, a return to something earlier than the polemic anti-Gallican and anti-Protestant positions, a return to the infinitely wider and deeper viewpoints of the great theological tradition of the Fathers and the great scholastics, and in particular to that of St. Thomas”¹⁹⁹.

The works that we are going to analyze on this subject are a proof that “more and more one realizes that the great theologians of the Middle Ages were not only readers of Aristotle, but also religious who thought their faith in a spiritual atmosphere, in the light of a religious tradition”²⁰⁰. Of course there is a problem with scholasticism; one can sometimes find in it a truly excessive insistence on the rational aspect of the revealed data; it is indisputable that philosophical preoccupation has often made one forget the importance of a more direct contact with the sources of revelation, but it would also be wrong to be wary of scholastics in the name of biblical and

¹⁹⁵Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 264. Eng. tr., p. 236.

¹⁹⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 293. Eng. tr., p. 260.

¹⁹⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 293. Eng. tr., pp. 260-261.

¹⁹⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 8. Eng. tr., p. xxiv.

¹⁹⁹Y. CONGAR: *Esquisses du mystère de l'Église*. Paris 1941, p. 60. Eng. tr., p. 98.

²⁰⁰R. AUBERT: *Art. cit.*, p. 19.

patristic theology. One must be very careful not to underestimate “such honest, humble, rigorous, and religious work, when we know it well from St. Thomas Aquinas or from other great scholastic doctors”²⁰¹.

One can say that the works in question approached in this sense the ecclesiology of all the great scholastics—in the first place, that of St. Thomas. The fact that the ecclesiologies of the great scholastic doctors agree with each other on broad structural lines explains why the works of research agree as well from the doctrinal viewpoint, which allows us to analyze them simultaneously. From a methodological viewpoint, it is important to note that the most successful works are those which, despite the rigor of the historical method, have not lost sight of the current aspirations of ecclesiology. All this is quite evident in the works of Mersch and Congar, but it is interesting to note that Silic sees precisely in this lack of contact with current problems the deficiency of the work of Culhane, his forerunner in research on the ecclesiology of St. Bonaventure²⁰².

One can only regret that the great scholastic syntheses do not contain a separate treatise on the Church. Certainly, if St. Thomas returned, as Fr. Gardeil remarked²⁰³, he would not fail to insert into his *Summa Theologica* long questions on the Church, and the example of the Angelic Doctor would undoubtedly be eagerly followed by other scholastic theologians. But all that entirely avoids the question, namely, why do we not find in the theological *Summas* of the scholastics a separate treatise on the Church? This fact gave rise to various explanations. They all amount to finding that the theological principles of St. Thomas do little to encourage the formation of such a treatise. Fr. Congar thinks that St. Thomas intentionally did not write one²⁰⁴. And M. Grabmann goes so far as to affirm that the ecclesiological thought of St. Thomas cannot be synthesized according to the divisions of recent treatises²⁰⁵. In fact, scholasticism has rather supposed the integral idea of the Church, without explaining it in all its aspects²⁰⁶. The reason is, as J.

²⁰¹Y. CONGAR: Bulletin d'ecclésiologie. RSPT 31 (1947) p. 88.

²⁰²R. SILIC: Christus und die Kirche. Ihr Verhältnis nach der Lehre des hl. Bonaventura. Breslau 1938, p. 1. — D. CULHANE: De corpore mystico doctrina Seraphici. Mundelein (U.S.A.) 1934.

²⁰³Cf. CH. JOURNET: L'Église du Verbe Incarné. Vol. I. Paris 1941, p. XI. Eng. tr., p. XXV.

²⁰⁴Y. CONGAR: L'idée de l'Église chez saint Thomas d'Aquin. In Esquisses du mystère de l'Église. Paris 1941, pp. 59-92; cf. pp. 60-61. Eng. tr., pp. 97-117; cf. pp. 98-100.

²⁰⁵M. GRABMANN: Die Lehre des hl. Thomas von Aquin von der Kirche als Gotteswerk. Regensburg 1903, p. 68.

²⁰⁶J. RANFT: Die Stellung der Lehre von der Kirche im dogmatischen System. Aschaffenburg 1927, p. 75.

Ranft correctly points out, that the medieval mentality was so immersed in an ecclesial atmosphere that the idea of the Church was to appear in it as a general law of architecture and not only as a single stone in a huge building²⁰⁷. Furthermore, it should be noted that the Church, contrary to most of our *De Ecclesia* manuals, is for St. Thomas, above all, a life, a body in the biological sense of the word, and it must be conceived not according to sociological categories, but in the order of life²⁰⁸. Therefore, the reasons which explain the absence of a treatise on the Church in the *Theological Summa* do not favor the efforts which try to compile, using selected texts, a Thomistic treatise on the Church according to the frameworks of our manuals²⁰⁹. Certain parts would be totally lacking there, and what is even more essential, the selected texts would intend to serve concerns quite different from their context.

Undoubtedly, the insistence on the concept of life best explains the purpose of the authors in question, who all emphasize that the Church, in the thought of St. Thomas, is something concrete, real, and living, in the strict meaning of the word²¹⁰. Consequently, it is grace that comes to the fore of the Thomistic idea on the Church, as Grabmann succinctly expresses it: “Everything in the Church is either an effect and an action of this grace of the Holy Spirit that acts interiorly or a path, a disposition, to this grace”²¹¹. According to Geiselman, St. Thomas defines the idea of the Church from a strictly supernatural viewpoint: the principle of grace and that of participation in the divine life²¹². J. Ranft is no less categorical when he states: “St. Thomas regards grace as primordial in his system on the Church”²¹³. Research on the ecclesiology of St. Bonaventure does not fail to note this primacy of the spiritual: Communion in grace is the master idea of the ecclesiology of the Seraphic Doctor, according to R. Silic²¹⁴, who often refers to the striking words with which the Seraphic Doctor expressed his thought on the essence of the Church: *abundans collatio gratiæ Christi*.

To justify this insistence on the primacy of the spiritual in the ecclesiology of the scholastics, we have frequently highlighted this text by St. Thomas: *id quod est potissimum in lege novi testament, in quo tota virtus*

²⁰⁷ *Op. cit.*, p. 63.

²⁰⁸ Y. CONGAR: *Op. cit.*, p. 65.

²⁰⁹ We have in mind the work of G. Paris, cited above, p. 12.

²¹⁰ M. GRABMANN: *Op. cit.*, p. 71.

²¹¹ *Op. cit.*, p. 90.

²¹² J. GEISELMANN: *Christus und die Kirche nach Thomas*. TQ 107 (1926) pp. 198-222; 108 (1927) pp. 233-255; cf. p. 203.

²¹³ *Op. cit.*, p. 74.

²¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

*ejus consistit, est ipsa gratia Spiritus Sancti...*²¹⁵. But the rest of the article from which this passage is taken is no less remarkable, as K. Adam has shown: “St. Thomas emphatically emphasizes that in the New Covenant, the gift of the grace of the Christ is the principal element (*potissimum*), in which all the force of the Christian religion consists (*in quo tota virtus ejus consistit*); and as a result doctrine (*credenda*) and worship (*agenda*) only come second (*quasi secundaria in lege nova*)”²¹⁶. So it is entirely in accordance with the thought of St. Thomas to say with Fr. Darquennes that the legal structure of the Church in the Angelic Doctor is necessary not for itself, but for the unity of the Mystical Body²¹⁷. The substance of the Church can therefore only be supernatural life, but the scholastics hasten to add that this new life develops initially in the theological virtues. Hence, the substance of the Church, which is its unity, its mystical union with Christ, is a concrete life, thanks to the psychological rooting of faith, hope, and charity. We can therefore understand why the authors in question highlighted this doctrine with unusual care, which, without diminishing the objective reality of the Church, considers it primarily in its lived aspect. The Church, body of Christ, writes Käppeli in interpreting the thought of St. Thomas, is then the community of those who belong to God by virtue of a supernatural knowledge and love²¹⁸.

Once such a predominance of grace in the idea of the Church has been established, we understand that its supernatural ontological nature is unanimously professed by the great scholastics and that the current movement towards a more internalized idea of the Church thought to find strong support in them. A unity based on grace²¹⁹, the prototypes of which are the Trinity and the Incarnation, the essential principle of which is the Holy Spirit, source of grace, cannot be purely moral. “The Church no longer appeared to be a simple moral unity maintained by social ties and provided

²¹⁵I-II. qu. 106. a. 1. — Cf. also: “Decor Ecclesiae principaliter in interioribus consistit sed etiam exteriores actus ad eundem decorem pertinent in quantum ab interiori progrediuntur et in quantum interiorem decorem conservant”. (IV. Sent. dist. 15. q. 3. a. 1. sol. 4).

²¹⁶K. ADAM: Le mystère de l’Incarnation. Et. 238 (1936) p. 36.

²¹⁷A. DARQUENNES: De Juridische Structuur van de Kerk volgens Sint Thomas van Aquino. Leuven 1949, p. 19.

²¹⁸T. KÄPPELI: Zur Lehre des hl. Thomas v. Aquin vort Corpus Christi mysticum. Freiburg-Paderborn 1931, p. 43. This supernatural knowledge is obviously the virtue of faith which thus becomes the foundation of the concrete existence of the Mystical Body. — O. DOMINGUEZ: La fe, fundamento del cuerpo místico, en la doctrina del Angélico. CT 76 (1949) pp. 550-586.

²¹⁹“Diese Einheit beruht... auf der Gnade, ist mystischer nicht bloß moralischer Natur” (T. KÄPPELI, *op. cit.*, p. 133).

with a collective life which flourishes through spiritual exchange between its members, but a real and mystical organism”²²⁰. Fr. Mersch says: “The reality of a mysterious organism and of a supernatural life flow must needs have struck them with compelling force”²²¹.

We therefore understand that among the scholastics the notion of the Mystical Body is situated primarily at the level of life and not at that of the institution (structure of the Church). This is why not only are Catholics its members, but also all rational creatures elevated to the state of grace, the angels and all the just since the first man, Adam. In this the scholastic doctors are only the faithful echo of the patristic tradition, so rich and varied regarding the different acceptations of the expression “Mystical Body”. Losing sight of the difference between the traditional and modern way of defining the Mystical Body would undoubtedly lead to establishing the same forced opposition between the doctrine of St. Thomas and that of the encyclical, which is found in the work of Mitterer²²². According to him the encyclical would have corrected the doctrine of St. Thomas in the same way Pius IX did a century ago for the doctrine of the Angelic Doctor on the Immaculate Conception. In our opinion, the encyclical, taking up the equally traditional identification of the Roman Church with the Mystical Body of Christ, only corrected one deviation: that of the Protestant ecumenical movement which proposed the idea of the Mystical Body as embracing all the separate churches. Unfortunately, Mitterer seems to forget the fact that, not only among other scholastics, but also throughout the Patristic era, the idea of the Mystical Body was not proposed as the exclusive meaning, but as the notion par excellence of Church. Not only would it be difficult to assume that the encyclical has corrected in that way the whole tradition, but, in the question of membership in the Church where the problem arises, the encyclical itself, as we shall see, suggests a more extensive sense of the Mystical Body, thus admitting the dominant role of the notion of life in the idea of the Mystical Body.

2

Supernatural life as the dominant idea in the notion of the Church among scholastics is intimately linked to a Christological foundation, to the doctrine of Christ, Head of the Church. The ecclesiology of St. Bonaventure contains

²²⁰T. KÄPPELI, *op. cit.*, p. 109.

²²¹*Op. cit.*, p. 184. Eng. tr., p. 462.

²²²A. MITTERER: *Geheimnisvoller Leib Christi nach St. Thomas Aquin und nach Papst Pius XII.* Wien 1950.

this doctrine in its most developed form. As Berresheim's work has shown, we find in St. Bonaventure a wealth of ideas regarding the action of the Head in the foundation of the Church, the function of the magisterium, and the priesthood²²³. According to Berresheim, the idea of the Mystical Head dominates the notion of the visible Church to such an extent that the great Doctor deduces from it the four notes, infallibility, and eternity of the Church²²⁴. St. Thomas, as Käppeli has shown, writes no less extensively on the grace of the Head²²⁵; this fact suggested, even to Fr. Mersch, to look at the questions on the grace of the Head as to a true ecclesiological treatise among scholastics²²⁶.

The scholastics, after having established all the details concerning the function of the head with regard to the body, applied them with meticulous care to the Mystical Body of Christ. This parallelism is reduced, in the last analysis, to the fact that there is a conformity between Christ and the Church and that the Head, which is the principle of the members, exerts a continual influence on them²²⁷. It is necessary, however, to note an idea particular to St. Bonaventure: Christ as the heart of the Church. While in St. Thomas and most scholastics the Spirit is called the heart of the Church²²⁸, the Seraphic Doctor found it better to apply the concept of heart to Christ to emphasize more forcefully the central position of Christ in the universe, against Averroism²²⁹. "Bonaventure's doctrine, *Christus cor*, is the most mature fruit of his theology and piety. Coming from the Christocentric conception of his later works, it portrays, better than any other, the character of his spirit"²³⁰.

The idea of Christ as Head of the Church naturally leads us to the theandric notion of the Church which ultimately accounts for its existence in a sacramental structure. At the base of this theandricism of the Church one finds the physical contact that exists, according to St. Thomas, in virtue of

²²³H. BERRESHEIM: *Christus als Haupt der Kirche nach dem hl. Bonaventura*. Ein Beitrag zur Theologie der Kirche. Bonn 1939, pp. 154 ff.

²²⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 402.

²²⁵*Op. cit.*, pp. 45-58.

²²⁶*Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 173-176. Eng. tr., pp. 457-459.

²²⁷T. KÄPPELI: *Op. cit.*, pp. 45 ff. — R. SILIC: *Op. cit.*, pp. 15-21. It is obvious that, for St. Thomas, Christ is the Head of the Mystical Body first and foremost as its Redeemer, as E. Sauras shows: *Thomistic Soteriology and the Mystical Body*. Th 15 (1952) pp. 543-571.

²²⁸S. Th. III. q. 8. a. 1.

²²⁹B. SILIC: *Op. cit.*, p. 68.

²³⁰*Ibid.*, p. 74.

the sacraments, between our body and that of Christ²³¹. Grabmann rightly sees in this physical influence of the humanity of Christ on the Church the reason which elevates it into another sphere of being and which makes it the extension of the Incarnation, the Mystical Body of Christ²³². “This influx,” Fr. Mersch writes, “is not simply a moral entity, a legal communication of merits and satisfaction. St. Thomas and his school, as well as many scholastics, declare that it consists in an activity in the physical order, *per efficientiam*. One would even say, reading certain passages, that it is a physiological causality, by vital continuity”²³³. But this “physiological” influx is never separated from the fact of the Incarnation, principle and norm of grace on earth, which protects St. Thomas from sliding into an entirely spiritualist interpretation of the idea of the Church, as Geiselmann points out²³⁴. St. Bonaventure sees, according to Berresheim, the foundation of the visibility of the Church precisely in its conformity with the twofold nature of Christ²³⁵.

The Christological aspect of the Church, which we have just seen, relates essentially to the mystery of the Eucharist. It is there that Christ’s relationship with his Church receives its coronation. In fact, the great scholastic doctors faithfully preserve the heritage of the High Middle Ages with regard to the close relations between the Church and the Eucharist. Nothing shows better the importance of this doctrine for them, according to Piolanti²³⁶, than the fact that central to the theology of St. Albert the Great is to never separate the Mass from the idea of the Mystical Body. As Grabmann interprets St. Thomas, the Mystical Body is most perfectly realized in communion²³⁷. The reason for this is—according to Berresheim, who sums up the doctrine of St. Bonaventure—that “the internal unity of the members with Christ and between themselves, achieved by the Eucharist, is a mystical unity. It is based on the identity of justification. The members have, because of the *gratia capitis*, a grace similar to the grace of Christ and the same grace between themselves”²³⁸.

It is true that each of the great scholastics sees the efficacy of the sacraments differently, but, on the essential points, there is unanimity among

²³¹T. KÄPPELI: *Op. cit.*, p. 115.

²³²*Op. cit.*, pp. 240-249.

²³³*Op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 185-186. Eng. tr., p. 463.

²³⁴*Art. cit.*, p. 211.

²³⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 147.

²³⁶A. PIOLANTI: *Il corpo mistico e le sue relazioni con l’eucaristia in S. Alberto Magno*. Roma 1939, pp. 196-201.

²³⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 270.

²³⁸*Op. cit.*, p. 323.

them. Let us think only of the *res sacramenti*, the unity of the Mystical Body. The species, *sacramentum tantum*, and the body of Christ, *res and sacramentum*, are ordered according to the sacramental structure for the production of the *res tantum*, the unity of the Church. Regarding the Eucharistic presence of Christ, Silic finds in St. Bonaventure an idea which would help to solve a question in current ecclesiology. St. Bonaventure is the first, he writes, who sees in the Eucharistic presence of the Lord a bodily presence of Christ in the Church. It is in this direction that we should seek, he continues, the theological explanation for this presence attested by the common sense of the faithful. We would thus have not only a deeper solution, but also simultaneously a safer one, which would avoid the difficulties of the solutions recently proposed concerning the pneumatic presence of the Lord²³⁹.

We still have to deal, to complete the doctrinal points which have drawn the attention of current ecclesiology toward the scholastics, of the sacramental structure of the Church. The authors are unanimous in pointing out that in St. Thomas the two aspects are not yet distinct and that the legal aspect is developed there in subordination to grace. Precisely because of this subordination, Grabmann indicates that the Angelic Doctor demands of all the members of the clergy more contemplation as they are more advanced in the hierarchy²⁴⁰. This idea is even more explicit in St. Bonaventure²⁴¹, who sees in the different degrees of the hierarchy the image of the tripartite division of the life of perfection. Without trying to condition the effectiveness of the sacramental action of the hierarchy on personal holiness, this position faithfully follows the profound conviction of the scholastics regarding the primacy of grace and the true nature of the relationship between the interior and exterior aspects of the Church. Fr. Congar strongly emphasized this fundamental unity of the aspects of the Church: “for St. Thomas there is only one Church whose interior substance is expressed in organized society and whose social apparatus has the spiritual realities of grace and finally the Holy Spirit for its soul”²⁴². Berresheim’s book only reveals the interaction between the two aspects of the Church in the thought of St. Bonaventure; this double rhythm in the Church has also been noted in connection with St. Thomas²⁴³. According to the theandric structure of the Mystical Body,

²³⁹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 205-256.

²⁴⁰ *Op. cit.*, pp. 98-99.

²⁴¹ R. SILIC: *Op. cit.*, pp. 34-54.

²⁴² *Op. cit.*, p. 85.

²⁴³ “Die Gnadengemeinschaft hier auf Erden, die sich auf Christus gründet, ist von einem Doppelrythmus beherrscht, vom Sinnlich-Sichtbaren, zum übersinnlich-Gnadentlichen,

grace is communicated to the Church through visible signs²⁴⁴. It is on this point that St. Thomas corrects the weaknesses of the Augustinian system. The Thomistic theory on the efficacy of the sacraments renders its due importance to the sacramental character in the building of the Church, which allows Geiselmann to call the ecclesiology of St. Thomas the ecclesiology of theological realism²⁴⁵.

The main result of the doctrine on the double mission is to mark for its part the theandric aspect of the Church, so studied by the scholastics and so dear to the current trends in ecclesiology. In Grabmann's eyes the idea of the Mystical Body unites, according to the thought of St. Thomas, these two missions in the Church—namely, the mission of the Spirit in the hierarchy and, by sanctifying grace, in individual souls²⁴⁶.

It is characteristic of these researches to have highlighted the kinship of the ecclesiology of the scholastics with the Pauline idea of the Body of Christ, with the Greek Fathers, and with the ecclesiology of St. Augustine. The passage from Fr. Congar cited above, speaking of the mysterious biological meaning of the word “body” in St. Thomas, supports the Pauline provenance of this expression. According to Grabmann, the Thomistic idea of the Church is conceived from the viewpoint of supernatural life and as such is directly linked to the thought of St. Paul and St. Augustine: “The Angelic Doctor is here still in contact with the Fathers, notably with St. Augustine and St. Paul, whose notion of the Church as *ecclesia corpus Christi* is dominated by the consideration of the supernatural vital forces. The Church is an organism full of living forces, the continuation and the development of the life of Christ in men of all times and in all places”²⁴⁷. So it is entirely in accordance with the orientation of new research that we hastened to highlight that St. Thomas looks, for example, at the Mystical Body as the central idea of the theology of St. Paul²⁴⁸

This new way of reading the scholastics made Geiselmann²⁴⁹ and Mersch discover that “the synthesis reached by the Scholastics is in substance exactly the same as that formulated eight hundred years earlier by St. Cyril of Alexandria [...] Cyril's style is more homiletic, and that of the Scholastics

und vom Übersinnlich-Gnadentlichen hin zum Sinnlich-Sichtbaren”. Geiselmann *art. cit.*, p. 208.

²⁴⁴Cf. in T. KÄPPELI: Les sacrements au service du Corps mystique, *op. cit.*, pp. 85-98.

²⁴⁵Cf. *art. cit.*, pp. 254-255.

²⁴⁶Cf. Grabmann, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

²⁴⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 71.

²⁴⁸J. ANGER: La doctrine du Corps mystique de Jésus-Christ d'après les principes de la théologie de saint Thomas. Paris 1949, p. 234.

²⁴⁹*Art. cit.*, p. 243.

is more deductive, but the system is exactly the same”²⁵⁰. However, despite the large number of points of connection to the tradition, the scholastics differ very much from the patristic mentality; they no longer speak the vigorous and life-filled language of the Fathers; in many respects the doctrine of the Fathers is no longer found in the medieval *Summæ*. One would especially seek in vain among the scholastics the ecclesiological symbolism of the tradition in its original richness. Fr. de Lubac explored the methodological reasons in detail, as we have seen. But, even if we do not emphasize the contrasts between patristic and scholastic ecclesiology so much, the path to a true theological progress can only be what Fr. Mersch traces: the integral synthesis of these two aspects, the concrete and the speculative²⁵¹.

3

Before ending this chapter, we must say a few words about Koster’s criticism of this researches on the ecclesiology of the scholastics. Distrustful of the mystical domain, he criticises them primarily for having considered the mystical side of the Church, separating it from the Church’s visible structure. To this are added the following complaints: an interpretation in the biological sense of the word “body” in St. Thomas, a misunderstanding of his properly ecclesiological passages, the imputation to St. Thomas of a conception of Church membership based on grace and not on character, and finally the presentation of the doctrine on capital grace (*gratia capitis*) as an ecclesiological theme²⁵².

If the authors Koster criticized—namely, Geiselman, Käppeli, and Mersch—speak more often of the mysterious life of the Church than of the structure of the Church, they do so because the external aspect of the Church is essentially subordinated to its interior aspect; moreover, the desire to go back to the Tradition was precisely with the aim of restoring honor to the mystery of the Church. As for the alleged separation of these two aspects, we have seen the opposite; at the center of their research is the principle of theandrisim. Finally, after what we have just said about the Pauline problem on the Mystical Body, Koster’s objection no longer has any basis. True, St. Thomas never minimized the legal aspect of the Church, and, as the study of Fr. Darquennes showed, the Angelic Doctor used all the richness of the sociological thought of his time to give a richer expression to the structure of the Church. But all this does not detract from the fact that the interior

²⁵⁰ *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 230. Eng. tr., pp. 483-484.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 297-299.

²⁵² *Op. cit.*, pp. 43 ff.

aspect of the Church takes precedence.

Besides, Koster's exaggerated opposition between character and grace regarding Church membership cannot be said to be well suited, since it necessarily introduces a double membership in Christ: inside the Church and outside the Church, which does not account for its universal mediation. As for the "low awareness" in important ecclesiological passages of St. Thomas, the way in which Koster establishes the importance of texts is quite arbitrary. Koster's last assertion, that the doctrine of capital grace is not an ecclesiological theme, was rejected by the very authority of the encyclical, the main idea of which is the vital influence of Christ on his Church.

Certainly one could find more or less serious gaps in these researches; for example, the role of the idea of the Mystical Body in medieval preaching has not yet been explored²⁵³. But whatever the shortcomings of these researches, it must be admitted that they have clearly shown what current ecclesiology should take from the school of scholastic doctors. To quote Fr. Congar's words: "In any case, it must be obvious that, if we are going to make up a treatise *De Ecclesia*, we must use for its making both theological as well as other elements, canonical, juridical, or sociological; and not just these without the first. While completing the more mystical doctrine of the Middle Ages by the study of other elements more strongly brought out subsequently [the function of the priesthood, the role of hierarchy, apologetics of the *vera ecclesia*, Church-State], we must not neglect the element which we have termed ecclesiological. It must be sought and separated—from the Trinity, the Divine *Missiones*, anthropology and ethic, Christology and soteriology, sacraments and hierarchic ministry"²⁵⁴.

²⁵³The original plan of Culhane's work would have devoted a greater place to this question, without having brought it to an end. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 2.

²⁵⁴Y. CONGAR: *Esquisses du mystère de l'Église*, p. 90. Eng. tr., p. 117.

Chapter 4

Systematic research on the Church

In the first two chapters, we have examined the factors that gave rise to the ecclesiological renewal. The works analyzed there aimed at showing the necessity of this renewal by appealing to the internal and external needs of the Church. We had the opportunity to see that these needs favored an internalization of the theology of the Church. The third chapter showed what direction has been taken following the idea of returning to the sources, in the last 30 years, regarding exegetical and historical studies of Catholic theologians on the Church. We now have to examine the works in which a concern for a speculative development of the question will be in the foreground. This is where we will have the opportunity to see what, finally, the results of recent ecclesiology from a theoretical viewpoint are. It is understood that many of these theoretical elements are already, more or less, addressed in the works analyzed in the previous chapters, and necessarily we could not do without alluding to them during our investigation. It will now be a question of highlighting them more directly and, above all, of showing how they converge toward certain common points that recent theoreticians of ecclesiology tend more and more to present henceforth as certain.

4.1 The mystery of the Church

1

The question of the nature of the Church was at the center of ecclesiological studies during this renewal. “The religious problem today,” writes

R. Grosche, “consists in the essence and reality of the Church”¹. Without wishing to diminish the importance of the ecclesiological work between the two wars, it must be recognized that the first investigations in this direction date from the 19th century. Cardinal Billot, specifying the two main questions of ecclesiology: “Where is the Church?” and “What is the Church?”, only takes up the thought of F. Pilgram, who had precisely indicated, ten years before the Vatican Council, the theological duty of our time in a deep understanding of the essence of the Church².

Möhler, also a pioneer in this area, highlighted the interior aspect of the Church without asking further questions about the nature of the mystical being of the Church. His concern was not directly speculative because, while highlighting the mystical side of the Church, he limited himself to describing the mystical life of the Church in the consciousness of the faithful. Only later, in the *Symbolic*, he recognized the importance of the idea of the Mystical Body³ which later became, thanks to the work of theologians of the Roman School, the main idea of the renewal⁴. They are the first to emphasize the importance of the expression “body of Christ” for a definition of the Church, and already Franzelin arrives at conclusions that hardly differ from those of much more recent works. Passaglia, focusing on the testimony of Scripture and of the Fathers, considers the Pauline metaphor the deepest definition of the Church⁵. The definition he gives highlights, above all, the supernatural membership of the Church to Christ, as to its Founder, to its Savior and Head⁶.

The *Schema* of the Vatican Council, written by Schrader⁷, begins with the question of the nature of the Church, which he calls the Mystical Body of

¹Pilgernde Kirche. Freiburg (Br) 1938, p. 23.

²Cf. *Tractatus de Ecclesia Christi*. Romæ 1921-22. 4th ed. I. § 2. - F. PILGRAM: *Physiologie der Kirche*. Mainz 1860.

³Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 332.

⁴Perrone, Passaglia, Schrader, and Franzelin were all professors from the Gregorian University. The phrase “Roman School” comes from A. Kerkvoorde: *La théologie du corps mystique au XIX^e siècle*. NRT 67 (1940-45) pp. 417-430.

⁵It should be noted that a metaphor, as such, is never a strict definition, but a description by comparison.

⁶“Ecclesiam apte luculenterque vocari corpus Christi mysticum, id est eorum omnium cœtum in quo se Christus manifestat suamque vitam explicat per quem conspicuus inter homines degit et per quem salutaria œconomix opus ita profert atque continuat, ut per eum homines a captivitate liberet veritatem doceat, justitiam donet et ad sempiternam coronam perducat”. *De Ecclesia Christi*. Ratisbonæ 1853, p. 38.

⁷Disciple of Passaglia and author of the book: *De Unitate Romana*. 1862, a book of heavy language but with a great wealth of ideas about the Roman primacy.

Christ. Then, the dogmatic part of the *Schema*⁸, the first chapter, presents the Church under its soteriological aspect⁹: the Incarnation of the Son of God is ordered to the realization of a Mystical Body to make men participate in grace. Grace unites them to their divine Head, destroys divisions and hostility between them, and makes them a Mystical Body by faith, hope, and charity. “Atque hæc est,” the *Schema* continues, “quæ ut fidelium mentibus objiciatur alteque defixa hæreat, satis nunquam commendari potest, præcellens Ecclesiæ species, cuius caput est Christus ex quo totum corpus compactum et connexum per omnem juncturam subministrationis, secundum operationem in mensuram uniuscuiusque membri, augmentum corporis facit in ædificationem sui in caritate”¹⁰.

The first annotation added to the *Schema* emphasizes that the expression “Mystical Body of Christ” is not only the most frequent but also the most perfect among the definitions of the Church¹¹. The second annotation indicates that the purpose of the definition is to highlight the inner essence of the Church, its strength and its divine aspect¹². The *Schema* thus aims to respond to the complaints of certain acatholics, in particular to a passage taken from the work of Mr. Jurieu¹³, who criticizes Catholic theologians for defining the Church without mentioning charity. The criticism of a good number of the Fathers of the Council against the *Schema* is certainly not a peremptory argument against an ecclesiology based on the Mystical Body, as Fr. Koster claimed¹⁴, but Fr. Mersch also exaggerates by considering the *Schema* the generally accepted opinion of the Council¹⁵. One should rather say, as Fr. Kerkvoorde does, that the *Schema*, without even being a reflection of common theological opinion, is nevertheless the work of theologians “who were at the height of contemporary thought”¹⁶.

⁸Mansi, Vol. 51. col. 539 ff.

⁹The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* chose the same starting point.

¹⁰Mansi, Vol. 51. col. 539.

¹¹See the related explication notes at col. 553-554.

¹²“... eodem schemate continetur ipsa intima ecclesiæ essentia et præstantissima, id est, divina eius species ac vis, a qua veluti a parte potiori ac nobiliori...”, *ibidem*.

¹³P. JURIEU: Le vray système de l'Église et la véritable analyse de la foy où sont dissipées toutes les illusions que les controversistes modernes, prétendus catholiques, ont voulu faire au public sur la nature de l'Église, son infaillibilité et le juge des controverses, pour servir principalement de réponse au livre de M. Nicole, intitulé: “Les prétendus réformez convaincus de schisme etc.”, avec une réponse abrégée au livre de M. Ferrand contre l'auteur. Dordrecht 1686. This work, an excellent representative of Protestant theology at this time, is based on the idea of the body of Christ.

¹⁴Cf. *op. cit.*, p. VI.

¹⁵Cf. *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 354. Eng. tr., pp. 563-564.

¹⁶*Art. cit.*, p. 428.

Franzelin approached the speculative problem of the essence of the Church in a very positive way, and his formulas were adopted by the Magisterium several times¹⁷. Franzelin, who had taken part in the writing of the second part of the *Schema*, sees the formal cause of the Church in the Mystical Body. In other words, the essence of the Church in its union with Christ goes beyond the moral order; it is intimate, real, and physical *secundum quid*¹⁸. Regarding the use of the metaphor “Mystical Body of Christ” in a definition of the Church, he thinks that this way of considering the Church is common not only among the Fathers and the Doctors, but familiar to the faithful, too, so much so that this definition is the Christian definition of the Church¹⁹.

Among the theologians of the 19th century, Scheeben best investigated this mystical aspect of the Church. His *Dogmatics* being incomplete, his thoughts on the Church are to be found in his developments on the Christian mysteries. His work *Les Mystères du Christianisme* remains until today, in the opinion of Fr. Stolz, the deepest explanation of the mystical essence of the Church. The great merit of Scheeben, according to him, is to have concentrated his thought on the Church into a single aspect and to have sought to understand it from the inside²⁰. In our opinion, it would be better to state that the main idea of Scheeben’s ecclesiology is the law of homogeneity between Christ and the Church. This law evokes an existence in a double nature tending with all its weight towards its divine side. This law of homogeneity is already sufficient proof that Scheeben has professed the mystical essence of the Church, which is for him “the noble bond which encloses and unites all its members, the mysterious force that reigns in it and animates it, and the celestial purpose which it pursues is inaccessible to the natural eye of man. They are inconceivable, incomprehensible”²¹.

It is not necessary to reproduce in detail, on this point, the doctrine of the

¹⁷His posthumous work: *Theses De Ecclesia Christi*. Romæ 1887; in the third section of his book, Franzelin analyzes the relationship between Christ and his Church according to the various orders of causality (theses XVII-XIX, pp. 296-333). The importance of this work was already pointed out by J. Bellamy: *La théologie catholique au XIX^e siècle*. Paris 1939. Cf. chap. X: *Le traité De Ecclesia et la démonstration catholique* (pp. 226-242); about Franzelin, see pp. 230-231. Cf. also the article by G. Courtade: J. B. Franzelin. Les formules que le Magistère de l’Église lui a empruntées. RScR 40 (1951) pp. 317-325.

¹⁸“Ista igitur unio intima, realis, secundum quid physica Christi Capitis cum Ecclesia corpore suo sane est in mysterio credenda per fidem et recte dicitur mystica ne propterea Ecclesia Corpus Christi Mysticum”. *Op. cit.*, p. 310.

¹⁹“...ut fere dici possit christiana definitio Ecclesiæ”, p. 308.

²⁰Cf. M. J. Scheeben und das Mysterium der Kirche. KG 8 (1935) pp. 116 ff.

²¹*Le Mystère de l’Église et de ses Sacrements* (tr. A. Kerkvoorde). Paris 1946, p. 542. Eng. tr., *The mysteries of Christianity*. St. Louis, 1954, p. 492.

ecclesiologists at the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries. The main concern of Gréa²² is precisely to show how the mystical essence of the Church is realized, thanks to the mediation of Jesus Christ and of the hierarchy. An essence that comes to the Church from the very being of God, that is also how the Trinitarian mystery “is reproduced in it by ineffable communications”²³. E. Commer devotes an entire book to the essence of the Church²⁴; there is a certain hesitation regarding his vocabulary. He uses the term moral to designate the supernatural-real being of the Church. By analyzing the Pauline metaphor, he comes to the conclusion that “the Church is truly the body of Christ in the moral sense and hence the fullness of Christ himself”²⁵. On the other hand, he insists on the real union grace creates between us and Christ, and, grounding it on the idea of the mystical marriage between Christ and his Church, he concludes that the spiritual conjunction in grace must also be physical²⁶. Let us not forget that in this same period of time works such as those of Grabmann and Prat identified this supernatural essence of the Church in the theology of St. Thomas and St. Paul. Although Fr. Clérissac does not deal at all in his work²⁷ with the problem of the essence of the Church, the content of his developments and his realistic expressions go in this same direction of the mystical essence of the Church, all the more so as the aim of the author is to explain all the actions of the Church from its complete union with Christ.

After World War I, the problem which had only attracted so far the attention of the most discerning minds rose to the fore in theological interest. The large number of articles and books on this subject is a proof of this. Fr. Bluett made an almost complete collection of the articles in question appearing from 1890 to 1940. According to this catalog, as many articles were published between 1920 and 1925 as during the previous twenty years. Between 1930 and 1935, there were five times more articles²⁸.

We have already shown above how research on the ecclesiology of St. Paul has converged on the question of the mystical entity of the Church. Studies on the patristic Tradition and Scholasticism have also left no doubt about the realistic meaning of the interpretation of the words of St. Paul

²²De l'Église et de sa divine constitution. Paris 1907. 2nd ed.

²³*Op. cit.*, p. 2.

²⁴*Op. cit.* above, (p. 167, note 11).

²⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 42.

²⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 66-67.

²⁷H. CLÉRISSAC: Le mystère de l'Église. Paris 1925. 3rd ed. of 1917. Eng. tr., The Mystery of the Church. Providence, RI 2016.

²⁸J. BLUETT: The Mystical Body: A Bibliography 1890-1940. TS 3 (1942) pp. 260-289, cf. p. 262.

throughout the centuries. Fr. Mersch's merit consists in "having definitively rejected the conception which he himself calls 'moral' of the Mystical Body; to have shown, on the basis of very bold and too much forgotten patristic texts, that the safest tradition has proposed an undisguised realism regarding the Mystical Body"²⁹. The thought of the partisans of a theology of the Mystical Body, J. Anger, E. Mura, and É. Mersch, is very clear on this point. E. Mura, after having listed some solutions proposed before him, comes to the conclusion that, given the complex nature of the union of the Church with Christ, we must speak of at least seven kinds of moral and physical union: legal union, moral union through charity, union through efficient causation, sacramental union, union in the Holy Spirit, union in the exemplary cause, and union in Christ, the universal final cause³⁰. Fr. Mersch, who speaks relatively little about this question in his posthumous work³¹, takes up the main idea of his historical study. Numerous authors profess the same doctrine. L. Kösters, while rejecting the chimera of an ethereal body, admits the mystical reality of the Church and underlines that "the mystical union with Christ is rather an interior but real union of our souls"³². For A. Vonier the pneumatic reality of the Church represents its essence. Defining the Church without the Pneuma, he says, is to ignore its essential element³³. Finally, let us quote Fr. Tromp, who among the recent authors has dealt more scholastically with this question: "Unio Corporis Mystici, utpote organisationis socialis et juridicæ fidelium, vivificatæ a Christo per Spiritum suum in effusione variorum donorum, gratiarum et charismatum, multiplices habet causas et aspectus; non est tantum moralis sed etiam physica, licet in ordine accidentalibus"³⁴.

The encyclical, while avoiding applying the word "physical-accidental" to the entity of the Church, proposes the word "mystical" for the doctrine professed by most of the theologians. According to the encyclical, the word "mystical" expresses the reality of grace and as such is singularly capable of distinguishing the Church from the body of the Lord; but, above all, of great importance because of current errors, it distinguishes it from any natural body, either physical or moral. The legal elements do not elevate "Christian society to a degree which absolutely exceeds the whole order of

²⁹L. MALEVEZ: *Le Corps mystique du Christ à propos du livre du P. Mersch*. NRT 61 (1934) p. 40.

³⁰*Le Corps mystique du Christ*. Paris 1934. I. cf. p. 35 et pp. 115-259.

³¹*La Théologie du Corps mystique*. Paris 1946. II. cf. pp. 195 ff. Eng. tr., pp. 216 ff.

³²*Op. cit.*, above (p. 176, note 68.) pp. 151-52.

³³*Das Mysterium der Kirche*. Salzburg 1934, p. 35.

³⁴*Op. cit.*, p. 24.

nature”; they are of a very lower order compared to spiritual gifts and their divine source, the Spirit³⁵.

Commentators on the encyclical had little to add to this detailed doctrine. Fr. Lialine sees it as the most important contribution of the encyclical and thinks that the expression “mystical” has created harmony between the two concepts of the Church, the “Pauline concept”, which would rather aim at the concrete existence of the Church, and the “Augustinian concept”, which prefers to consider the Church under its invisible, celestial aspect³⁶. According to Fr. Malevez, the word “mystical” is particularly apt to express the fundamental union between Christ and his Church, whose proper mode we ignore³⁷. On the other hand, T. Blanch y Sauret, a little too speculatively, complains that the encyclical only uses the word “mystical” which, according to him, lends itself to ambiguity. He would rather find there the expression “physical-accidental”, which in his opinion the encyclical intends by the term “mystical”³⁸.

2

We have just seen how much the mystical essence of the Church depends on the vital influx exerted by the Head on the members. It will therefore be easily understood that the new orientation, which was placed under the sign of the Mystical Body, could not fail to deepen the Christological aspect of the Church. But this relation of the Mystical Body to its Head implies not only the influx of the Head on his body, but also their mutual conformity, viz., the theandric principle, because this influx of Christ on his body is always exercised in a divine-human way.

Möhlner’s orientation in the *Symbolic* is already known to us. The theandric principle fulfills there a more apologetic than dogmatic role; however, its main features are well-developed: the visibility of the Church is rooted in the humanity of Christ, the visible side of the Church continuing his mediation. The external aspect of the Church then enters into the definition of its essence, so much so that insertion into Christ and into the Church takes

³⁵*Ed. cit.*, p. 72.

³⁶Une étape en ecclésiologie. Réflexions sur l’Encyclique *Mystici Corporis*. Ir 19 (1946) p. 296.

³⁷Quelques enseignements de l’Encyclique *Mystici Corporis Christi*. NRT 67 (1945) pp. 385-407; see especially pp. 386-388.

³⁸Comentarios a la doctrina del cuerpo místico de Cristo según la *Mystici Corporis*. Barcelona 1944. This commentary is limited to the first, theoretical, part of the encyclical and follows most of the developments of Fr. Tromp. Cf. especially pp. 26-53, devoted to a long analysis of the being of the Church.

place simultaneously.

Among the theologians of the Roman School, Passaglia analyzes the influence of Christ on his Church according to the four causes, but these valuable ideas are dispersed in a quantity of apologetic and patristic data which are not sufficiently synthesized. This allows us to move on to Franzelin, whose already quoted theses³⁹ successively envisage Christ as the efficient, formal, and exemplary cause of the Church. Christ, as an exemplary cause, gives the Church a theandric existence where everything is built according to the laws of the Incarnation. The visible aspect of the Church therefore fulfills the function of a sacramental sign which communicates, through the triple function of the hierarchy, the invisible gifts of the Spirit: truth, salvation, and sanctification. This conformity between Christ and the Church does not end with the earthly existence of the Church. The risen Christ is no less the type of the triumphant Church, especially regarding the resurrection and glorification of its members⁴⁰.

Scheeben, in turn, offers us even more profound ideas on this point. The theandric mystery of the Church is, in his eyes, “a most intimate and real fellowship of men with the God-man, a fellowship that achieves its truest and most perfect expression in the Eucharist”⁴¹. This intimate unity supposes a homogeneity between Christ and his Church, a similar existence in the double nature, visible and invisible. For Scheeben Christian marriage most faithfully translates the union of Christ and his Church, the ecclesiological significance of which he developed at length. “What is a Christian?”, he wonders. “In baptism he is received into the Mystical Body of the God-man through the character of Christ which is stamped upon him, and he belongs to it body and soul”⁴². In other words, the Christian is conditioned in all his existence by the bonds which attach him to his divine Head; he is an organ of Him; he can only act by virtue of his union with Him. Nowhere does his mystical union with his Head transform his natural activities as much as in marriage. The union of the spouses “becomes an organic member in the grand and richly varied alliance between Christ and His Church; a member encompassed, penetrated and carried by this mysterious alliance”⁴³.

In his own way, Dom Gréa approaches the Christological aspect of the Church. At the center of his development, he puts the idea of the “hierar-

³⁹XVII-XX. *Op. cit.*, pp. 296-346.

⁴⁰Cf. Thesis XIX. *Verbum Incarnatum multipliciter est exemplar ad quod Ecclesia Christi expressa est*, pp. 320-333.

⁴¹M. J. SCHEEBEN: *The Mysteries of Christianity. Trad. cit.*, p. 542.

⁴²*Trad. cit.*, p. 599.

⁴³*Trad. cit.*, p. 603.

chy”, used in the broad sense of reducing numbers to unity. In other words, the hierarchy is for Gréa a principle of order, unification, and communication, a way established by God himself. The Church then is nothing other than the return of men to the heart of the Trinitarian life, thanks to the mediation of the Incarnate Word, hieratic *par excellence*. This mediation continues in the function of the bishops, in the sacraments whose aim is to aggregate men into the Mystical Body, “so that Jesus Christ in turn may carry them within him in the eternal unity of God and his Son”⁴⁴.

For E. Commer the supernatural essence of the Church culminates in the presence of Christ, the Head of the Mystical Body, in it. This presence communicates its theandric character to the Church; and although the communion of saints is achieved by the union of the members among themselves, their personal bond with Christ remains, in the opinion of the author, the constitutive principle of the Church⁴⁵. Clérissac speaks of a kind of communication of idioms between the Church and Christ to such an extent that the mystery of the Church would reside “in the equation and convertibility of these two terms: Christ and the Church”⁴⁶.

It would be useless to quote the other authors of this period. We would find in each of their works one or more pages or chapters devoted to the Christological aspect of the Church without finding a systematic development on Christ as Head of the Church. C. Feckes was the first to perceive this shortcoming and attempt to rectify it. His work⁴⁷, one of the most important theoretical accounts of the Church, is divided into two parts, the first being a treatise on the Head of the Mystical Body.

A broad exposition of biblical and patristic teaching precedes his theoretical exposition on the question. Regarding the latter, Feckes benefits to a large extent from the study we already saw by Grabmann on St. Thomas. Christ as Head of the Church operates the deification of the members, this being the main effect of his role exercised in the Body⁴⁸. In the following chapters, the author develops the following themes: the humanity of Christ as an instrumental source of grace⁴⁹, the triple mediation of the Head⁵⁰, and the relationship of the members to their Head⁵¹.

⁴⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 69, on the use of the word “hierarchy”, cf. p. 16.

⁴⁵ Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 62-63.

⁴⁶ *Op. cit.*, p. 25. Eng. tr., p. 13.

⁴⁷ *Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche*. Paderborn 1934.

⁴⁸ Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 15-52.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 53-54.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 65-88.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 89-102.

Mura's ideas in this matter are based entirely on Käppeli's research on St. Thomas, while in Fr. Tromp only succinct information will be found. Fr. Mersch does not dwell at length on this subject, either.

But Feckes is correct when he writes that the awakening of the theological consciousness about Christ as head of the Mystical Body is the foundation of the modern experience of the Church. There, he continues, we find the core of the encyclical *Mystici Corporis*⁵². In fact, the encyclical keeps insisting that the Church should be called "not just any body, but the Body of Jesus Christ. And this follows from the fact that Our Lord is the Founder, Head, Support, and Savior of this Mystical Body"⁵³. The long pages devoted to the doctrine of the Head clearly demonstrate its importance for a better understanding of the Church. Christ is then the Head of the Church, according to the encyclical, because of his excellence. He governs it by laws and the hierarchy he has given it, but also by an actual action, either direct and invisible or through his Vicar and the Bishops. Then the Sovereign Pontiff deals with the part that is perhaps the most expressive of his presentation: the collaboration and conformity between the Head and the members of the same body. The members of the Mystical Body must collaborate with their Head to accomplish the work of Redemption. This mutual help between the members and the Head is "a formidable mystery, upon which we can never meditate enough"⁵⁴. This makes us understand once again how the true notion of the Mystical Body is opposed to any quietism or semi-quietism. To these reasons, the encyclical adds the conformity between the Head and the body, the fullness of grace of the Head, source of life for the body.

By highlighting the theandric aspect of the Church, derived from its conformity with its Head, the encyclical confirms a doctrine taught by theologians unanimously in recent times. In fact, as an instructive article from Fr. Tyszkiewicz⁵⁵, most ecclesiologists deduce the divino-humanity of the Church from its intimate relationship with the Incarnate Word. However, as he points out, the doctrine has not yet been fully addressed. Most works mention it only in passing, the evidence is not yet sufficiently established, and the possible exaggerations of this doctrine are not yet sufficiently highlighted.

Theandricism is not only concerned with the constitution of the Church, but also with all its essential factors and functions. Taken in its full sense,

⁵²E. FECKES: *Die Kirche als Herrenleib*, Köln 1949, p. 72.

⁵³*Ed. cit.*, p. 43.

⁵⁴*Ed. cit.*, p. 58.

⁵⁵S. TYSZKIEWICZ: *Où en est chez nous la doctrine de la divino-humanité de l'Église?* OCP 7 (1941) pp. 369-405.

it includes a clear distinction between the terrestrial and celestial Church without separating the one from the other. It also implies the likeness of the Church to its Head not only in his ideal being, but also in his daily annihilation (*kénosis*). The principle of theandrisms does not allow for considering the Church as the mere product of natural sociological forces, but brings it back to its free and positive institution made by Christ; finally, it also explains the dynamic tendency of the terrestrial Church towards its celestial ideal. By relying on this principle, the encyclical rejects a dangerous deviation, which, under the pretext of a more sublime, more spiritual ideal, disdains the visible nature of the Church and separates it from its mystical essence⁵⁶.

Once this close link between Christ and his Church has been established, it had to be expressed in a term which could well translate this unity of life and action. The idea of the mystical personality best expresses, according to several authors, the direct influence of Christ on His Church. In this regard, Fr. Clérissac⁵⁷ says that the Church includes three analogous terms: a human nature (the multitude of its members), a divine nature (its mystical entity), and finally the Holy Spirit, to whom is attributed the work of sanctification. We can then understand that the personality of the Church goes well beyond the concept of a moral person. It is by constituting a mystical person with Christ, that the Church offers a sacrifice of infinite value to the Father, that the merits of Christ spread throughout his whole body, and that the merits of the Church are clothed with infinite value. The three functions of the Church—magisterium, government, priesthood—also manifest his mystical person. The teaching of the Church and the development of dogmas essentially require the presence of the Lord; the agreement between the two aspects of the Church throughout history presupposes a higher force, the Holy Spirit. In other words, Christ and the Holy Spirit always act in and through the Church, and this is what constitutes its personality.

Mura sees the mystical personality of the Church in its absolute dependence on Christ, its Head. Just as personality is constituted, in the substantial order, by the dependence in being itself, where all the elements are found in relation to subsistence, so, all things considered, our dependence on Christ constitutes a union which can be called mystical person⁵⁸.

⁵⁶“It is not enough to state: one and indivisible; it also must be concrete and perceptible by the senses... Thus, it is a departure from divine to imagine a Church which cannot be seen, touched, and which would be only ‘spiritual’ (*pneumaticum*)...”, *ed. cit.*, p. 34.

⁵⁷*Op. cit.*, chap. III. “La personnalité de l’Église” pp. 43-59. Eng. tr., “The Personality of the Church” pp. 23-30.

⁵⁸*Cf. op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 246-259, cf. also: CH. JOURNET: *Le Christ, personnalité*

3

While studying the inclusion of the Church in Christ, one cannot ignore the ecclesiological mystery *par excellence*, the Holy Spirit, the soul of the Church. After Leo XIII wrote concisely: “suffice it to say, that if Christ is the Head of the Church, the Holy Spirit is its soul”⁵⁹, this theme has not ceased to absorb the mind of ecclesiologists. At first glance it might seem that it is of secondary importance from a theological viewpoint to attribute to the Holy Spirit all that is already given to us by Christ. But that would undoubtedly be to underestimate the inclusion of the Church in the chain of Trinitarian life; and, what is even more important from the perspective of doctrinal renewal, one thus give up basing the supernatural dynamism, within the Church, on its real foundation. It is not a mere coincidence that we find precisely this deep appreciation for the place of the Holy Spirit in the theology of the Church first in Möhler and Newman. The history of theology is proof, writes Vonier, that, whenever the Holy Spirit does not receive a major consideration in theology, the mystery of the Church also remains in the shade⁶⁰. In other words, if it is futile to deal with the Holy Spirit, without speaking at the same time of the Church, it is also unfruitful to approach the mystery of the Church without developing the role of the Holy Spirit in the Church.

It was necessary above all to show, as Feckes did after the encyclical of Leo XIII, *Divinum illud*⁶¹, that the Spirit of the Incarnate Word is at the same time the Spirit of the members; he propagates the life of the head in the members by communicating truth and holiness through the mediation of the magisterium and the priesthood of the Church. The Spirit realizes the Christ-conformity of the Church, to the point that Fr. Mersch calls Christians members of the Christ-Proceeder⁶². It goes without saying that such inclusion of Christians in the Trinitarian mystery betrays an unparalleled union between the Church and the Spirit. Feckes will even assert that considering the Spirit as the Soul of the Church is not only an appropria-

mystique rédemptrice de l'Église, NV 16 (1941) pp. 416-452. Le Christ personnalité mystique efficiente de l'Église, NV 17 (1942) pp. 59-101; 164-215. This idea, that the Church forms with Christ a mystical person, can be reduced in several respects to the idea of St. Augustine about the total Christ.

⁵⁹*Divinum illud*. ASS 29 (1897) pp. 644-658; p. 650.

⁶⁰A. VONIER: *L'Esprit et l'Épouse*. Paris 1947 p. 11.

⁶¹C. FECKES: *Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche*. Paderborn 1934, pp. 171-184.

⁶²É. MERSCH: *La théologie du Corps mystique*. Paris 1946. Vol. II, pp. 141-161. Eng. tr., pp. 415-437.

tion, but a property of the Spirit⁶³. Following Card. Manning, who once spoke of a quasi-hypostatic union between the Church and the Spirit, Fr. Vonier proposed the idea of a certain hypostatisation of the Church in the Spirit⁶⁴. To avoid any misunderstanding, this “incarnation” of the Spirit is the permanence of the bright signs which show the presence of the Spirit in the Church⁶⁵. But these glaring signs are in Vonier more than apologetic notions. Rather, they are the essential link between the structure and the life of the Church. As it is not enough to say that the Spirit realizes the Incarnation without adding the superabundance of graces that the Spirit pours on the humanity of the Savior, so it is not enough to say that the Spirit preserves and maintains the structure of the Church without mentioning the marvelous development of the supernatural life in the structure of the Church. Therefore, from a strictly theoretical viewpoint, the mystery of the Spirit must be the basis for going beyond an ecclesiology conceived too legalistically; the mystery of the Spirit operating sovereignly within the Church shows, ultimately, the unilateralism of an ecclesiology that speaks only of the hierarchy. Similarly, the prophetic and eschatological aspect of the Church cannot be explained without the immediate activity of the Spirit that Christ gives us, precisely in view of bringing the ecclesial life to its full development. So a work like that of Vonier, presenting the Church in its relation to the Spirit, had to strongly highlight this aspect of the Church, which may seem unilateral, but which is undoubtedly the deepest aspect of the mystery of the Church⁶⁶. The Abbot of Buckfast discusses the development of the gifts of the Spirit within the Church, especially from the perspective of the perfect exercise of virtues and charisms. Without trying to minimize the weight of the sins of the members of the Church, such consideration powerfully shows what is the basis of the indestructible existence of the Church: the indefectible assistance of the Spirit.

Besides, a more careful study of the activity of the Spirit would help our ecclesiology avoid the danger of being reduced to a “hierarchology”. “The current task of ecclesiology, made easier by a great number of valuable works, by the teaching of the Magisterium, and by the present spiritual and apostolic situation, is to sacrifice neither of the two poles... even if a certain tension must remain between the two poles”⁶⁷. It concerns, in

⁶³ *Ibid.*

⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 12.

⁶⁵ *Op. cit.*, p. 43.

⁶⁶ A. VONIER: *L'Esprit et l'Épouse*. Paris 1947.

⁶⁷ Y. CONGAR: *Le Saint-Esprit et le Corps apostolique réalisateurs de l'œuvre du Christ*. RSPT 36 (1953) p. 47.

particular, the explanation of the facts of the history of the Church, in which a direct influence of the Spirit is manifested, an influence independent of the hierarchy, but basically never opposed to it.

On a strictly speculative level, the reflection of a more adequate consideration of the relationship of the Spirit to the Church was manifested through the clarifications concerning the exact meaning of the expression “the Spirit is the soul of the Church”. Generally, all the authors agree in seeing the soul of the Church in the Spirit, and their developments follow the encyclical of Leo XIII mentioned above. Ch. Journet tried to introduce fine nuances into the common doctrine. According to him, the Spirit is the soul of the Church not only as efficient cause, but also by virtue of its presence of habitation, so much so that it exercises the role of form in the Church⁶⁸. This is why Journet distinguishes between the uncreated soul (Spirit) and the created soul (grace) of the Church⁶⁹. However, critics of this distinction point out that the soul of the Church is always individual and therefore cannot fulfill the function of a formal principle of a collective organism⁷⁰. To this argument one can add, according to Fr. Bluett, the following arguments: grace cannot be the soul of the Mystical Body because grace is a “thing”; nor can it explain infallibility; then grace is not the last principle in the supernatural order, but the Holy Spirit; finally, in this case, justified non-Catholics would be members of the Mystical Body⁷¹.

The encyclical, not directly contemplating this controversy, merely exposes the rich doctrine of Tradition on the Holy Spirit, soul of the Mystical Body, thus confirming recent research that has brought this precious doctrine back into theological consciousness, in the eyes of the Fathers and Scholastics⁷². However, the encyclical emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is called the soul of the Church because the Son, in accordance with the trini-

⁶⁸L'Esprit divinisateur de l'Église. NV 11 (1936) pp. 47-102.

⁶⁹L'âme créée de l'Église selon Cajétan. ET 17 (Nov. 1934 Feb. 1935) pp. 266-274 (double issue devoted to Cajétan) cf. also: Définition synthétique de l'âme créée de l'Église. RT 47 (1947) pp. 197-243. Cf. also the second volume of Journet's ecclesiological synthesis: pp. 565-579. Excursus III. “Sur la distinction de deux âmes de l'Église, l'une créée et transcendante, l'autre créée et inhérente”.

⁷⁰Cf. *op. cit.*, chap. VII, pp. 162-199. “The soul of the Church must be present not only in individuals as separate units, it must also dwell both as a quasi-substantial and as subsistent form in the organism as a whole”, p. 171.

⁷¹Mystical Body of Christ and Catholic Church Exactly Coextensive. ER 103 (1940) pp. 305-328; cf. pp. 317 ff.

⁷²“Die Lehre vom Heiligen Geist als der geheimnisvollen Seele des Corpus Christi durchzieht die ganze Väterliteratur und geht in die Scholastik über“. Käppeli, *op. cit.*, p. 103.

tarian procession of the Third Person, gives him to His Church, as the “divine principle of life and force”⁷³. This is why one can understand the encyclical’s insistence that the Spirit is the soul of the Church only insofar as it is the Spirit of Christ. The union of the members among themselves and with their Head is to be attributed to the Spirit who resides “entirely in the Head, entirely in the Body”⁷⁴. Moreover, the Sovereign Pontiff alludes to the created effects which come from this vital force, the Holy Spirit, without calling them “the created soul of the Church”⁷⁵.

Among the commentators of the encyclical, Malevez⁷⁶ is of the opinion that the question on the created and uncreated soul of the Church is now decided, but we think that it is more in keeping with the teaching of the encyclical to say that it, without intending to decide in this matter, aimed simply to highlight the unparalleled role of the Spirit in the Church⁷⁷, ecclesiological mystery *par excellence*⁷⁸.

4

After the Head and the Soul of the Mystical Body, the role of the Holy Virgin at the heart of the Church logically follows⁷⁹. In fact, the powerful development of ecclesiology and mariology went hand-in-hand since the beginning of the theological renewal in the mid-19th century. Clear-sighted minds such as Scheeben did not fail to highlight, very early on, the close relationship between the two dogmas promulgated by Pius IX, that of the Immaculate Conception and that of Pontifical infallibility. In a series of articles written during the Vatican Council⁸⁰, he pointed out not only that mariological errors inevitably lead to distorting the true notion of the Church, as happened with the Reformation, but also that a deeper understanding of the Marian mystery necessarily leads to a better knowledge of the interior aspect of the Church. The *Dogmatics* of Scheeben already con-

⁷³*Ed. cit.*, p. 66.

⁷⁴*Ed. cit.*, p. 68.

⁷⁵*Ibid.*

⁷⁶L. MALEVEZ: Quelques enseignements de l’Encyclique *Mystici Corporis Christi*. NRT 67 (1945) p. 380.

⁷⁷C. FECKES: Die Kirche als Herrenleib. Köln 1949, p. 71.

⁷⁸C. LIALINE: Une étape en ecclésiologie. Réflexions sur l’Encyclique *Mystici Corporis*. Ir 19 (1946) p. 301. See also: H. Stirnimann: Die Kirche und der Geist Christi. DT 31 (1953), pp. 3-17.

⁷⁹CH. JOURNET: La Vierge est au cœur de l’Église. NV 25 (1950), pp. 39-95.

⁸⁰Republished by J. Schmitz under the title: Maria, Schutzherrin der Kirche. Paderborn 1936.

tains the first traces of a systematic account of the relationship between the Blessed Virgin and the Church. He had the explicit intention of treating mariology intimately linked to ecclesiology⁸¹. The points of contact between these two mysteries, which he mentions, are mainly the divine motherhood and co-redemption. According to Scheeben this is where the basis for a comparison between the Church and Mary is found. It is no coincidence that Scheeben took the first step in this direction: his knowledge of the thought of the Greek Fathers opened up these new aspects of ecclesiology to him.

The authors who approached this subject after Scheeben could not fail to follow his concise, particularly dense developments. This is true not only for the German authors: J. Beumer⁸², E. Commer⁸³, and C. Feckes⁸⁴, but also for the French theologians of the Mystical Body, J. Anger⁸⁵, E. Mura⁸⁶, and Fr. Mersch⁸⁷. In short, their general tendency is to develop the universal function of Mary with respect to the Church, her prerogatives, and her perfect holiness. They regard the Mother of God especially as the most excellent member and, as such, ordained to cooperate in the work of Redemption. “Such is,” Fr. Mersch writes, “the Mariology we envisage in this work: a Mariology in which Mary’s glory consist in being united to Christ and Christianity, in being the mother of Christ”⁸⁸. From this angle, the greatnesses of Mary, mother of God and coredeptrix, “do not cause estrangement, but open up possibilities of goodness and close union for all men; they are the expression of a Catholic function and a universal service”⁸⁹.

While the thought of these authors follows the path of Mary towards the Church, several very recent mariological syntheses choose the other direc-

⁸¹M. J. SCHEEBEN: *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik*. Freiburg (Br) 1927. III, p. 629.

⁸²J. BEUMER: *Die Analogie Maria-Kirche und ihre Bedeutung für die allgemeine Gnadenvermittlung der Gottesmutter*. *Theologie und Seelsorge* 1 (1943) pp. 40-44.

⁸³E. COMMER: *Mater Dei sitne figura Ecclesiae quæritur*. *Xenia Thomistica*. Roma 1925, pp. 493-503.

⁸⁴C. FECKES: *Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche*. Paderborn 1934, p. 197.

⁸⁵J. ANGER: *La doctrine du Corps mystique de Jésus-Christ*. Paris 1946. 8th ed., pp. 323-354.

⁸⁶E. MURA: *Op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 153, note 1. There he proposes the notion of an intentional physical causality regarding the role of Mary with respect to the Church, without explaining in detail the nature of such a causality.

⁸⁷É. MERSCH: *La théologie du Corps mystique*. Vol. I, pp. 205-233. Eng. tr., pp. 169-193.

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 208. Eng. tr., p. 171.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 233. Eng. tr., p. 193.

tion: they go from the Church to Mary, the full realization of the Church. This way of conceiving the question, without being opposed to the first, completes it with very patristic nuances. Certainly, the recent research on mariology in Tradition which we examined in the previous chapter made such a mariological orientation possible. According to O. Semmelroth⁹⁰ there is a duality at the bottom of mariology: Mary is both coredemptrix and redeemed, mother and partner, a duality which cannot be ruled out without reducing mariology to ecclesiology. Thus, the mystery of the Church would explain the divine motherhood, and Mary, in all her prerogatives, would only inaugurate, anticipate, and represent the total mystery of the Church to the highest degree. It would still be difficult to settle the matter on this question definitively; in any case, it is indisputable that a good number of mariologists today⁹¹ make an explicit option in favor of the Greek tradition. The incomparable excellence of Mary and her active role in redemption is the pivot of “classical” mariology; Mary, prototype of the Church, is the main idea of the other trend. Both directions are perfectly legitimate, as the study by C. Dillenschneider⁹² shows. But both risk downplaying or exaggerating it. By exaggerating the role of Mary, a certain insufficiency on the part of Christ can be suggested; by minimizing it, the patristic tradition, where the praise of the Mystical Body goes hand-in-hand with the most exuberant panegyric on Mary’s personal greatness, will protest. While it is true that the development of particular values always involves a certain and even legitimate unilateralism, the final synthesis must eliminate this “legitimate” unilateralism as much as possible. This synthesis has yet to come, but it is already evident that the connection of the mystery of Mary with that of the Church has enriched both ecclesiology and mariology.

4.2 The structure of the Church

1

It is easy to understand that the strong emphasis on the mystical aspect of the Church has led a good number of theologians, without the desirable nuances, to contrast it with its visible aspect. This tension between the

⁹⁰O. SEMMELROTH: *Urbild der Kirche. Organische Aufbau des Mariengeheimnisses*. Würzburg 1950.

⁹¹As an example: H. M. KÖSTER: *Die Magd des Herrn. Limburg an der Lahn* 1947. — A. MÜLLER: *Um die Grundlagen der Mariologie*. DT 29 (1951) pp. 385-401.

⁹²C. DILLENCHNEIDER: *Le mystère de la Corédemption mariale. Théories nouvelles. Exposé. Appréciation critique. Synthèse constructive*. Paris 1951.

two aspects worked in two directions. On the one hand, the preponderant role attributed to grace in the essence of the Church posed the problem of knowing how grace existing outside the Church relates to the visible Church. On the other hand, putting forward the ideal of the Church, viz., its absolutely perfect celestial aspect, raised the question on the relationship of the earthly Church to the celestial Church. Regarding this point, we will see how it was not very advantageous that the new orientation of ecclesiology was sometimes considered opposed to traditional post-Tridentine ecclesiology, rather than being seen as its development. In fact, regarding the Church's relation to the non-Catholic world, it has become commonplace to contrast the visible Church with the Mystical Body. The reason is that the notion of the Mystical Body, for most recent writers, only means the internal mystical aspect of the Church. A passage from Fr. Bouyer characterizes this attitude very well, by speaking of speculations "without scriptural nor patristic foundation, where the Mystical Body, instead of designating, as the *soma Christou* in Saint Paul, the visible Church itself, extended and explained by the invisible reality which is inseparable from it, becomes an I-do-not-know-what other reality, first distinguished from the visible Church, then separated from it and in the process of being opposed to it"⁹³. At the end of the first chapter of our work, we quoted abundantly the authors who made these gross errors concerning the Mystical Body, but the tendency has manifested itself in the form of an imprecision, even among theologians whose orthodoxy is indisputable. Fr. Mura's groping on this point is very significant. According to him, the Mystical Body "somewhat" goes beyond the limits of the visible Church⁹⁴. In addition, he makes an unfortunate distinction between the soul of the Church and the soul of the Mystical Body⁹⁵. The main idea of Fr. Congar's book *Chrétiens désunis* consists precisely in a dialectic, in a sometimes very sharp distinction between the "structure" and the "life" of the Church. Fr. Mersch in turn affirms that the Mystical Body and the Church, as closely related as they are, are not absolutely identified on this earth⁹⁶, and criticizes the Vatican Schema for an overly narrow identification of the Church and the Mystical Body. Vonier, in turn, is also of the opinion that the Mystical Body is more extensive than the Church⁹⁷, and he professes it in his study devoted to the concrete manifes-

⁹³L. BOUYER: Catholicisme et œcuménisme. VInt 13 (1945. 1) p. 23.

⁹⁴*Op. cit.*, I, p. 210.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*

⁹⁶La Théologie du Corps mystique. Paris 1946. II, p. 196. Eng. tr., p. 502.

⁹⁷L'Esprit et l'Épouse. Paris 1947, p. 53.

tation of the visibility of the Church⁹⁸. It is not difficult to see that for all these theologians, the idea of the Mystical Body presented the solution to the indisputable fact of the presence of grace outside the Church. A passage from Jürgensmeier perfectly sums up this tendency to distinguish between the visible Church and a universal, invisible Mystical Body⁹⁹:

The Mystical Body is not limited in its understanding to the visible Church, but extends virtually as far as the saving will of God, that is to say, to all men. Furthermore, the Body of Christ should not be limited to the visible membership of the Church, so the members of his body are all those who are with Christ in a vital, internal connection. This Mystical Body of Christ, the universal Church, extends beyond the borders of the visible Church and of belonging to this Church. It includes the incalculable multitude of all peoples, times, and religions... in that they are members of the one Mystical Body of Christ, the new humanity in Christ.

We could still easily multiply the quotations, but all this already seems to amply justify the concise judgment of R. Grosche on the situation before the encyclical: Even today the two concepts of the Church still more or less lack an organic connection between them¹⁰⁰.

The imprecision of the attitude referred to above consists in the fact that any separation between the visible and invisible Church, between structure and life, inevitably leads to the depreciation of the sacramental structure of the Mystical Body. The papal documents, to mention only *Mortalium Animas*¹⁰¹ and *Mystici Corporis*, aim to defend this sacramental structure of Christianity, more precisely of the Church. The definition of the Mystical Body given by the encyclical leaves no doubt as to the perfect correspondence between the two aspects of the Church. “If we would define and describe this true Church of Jesus Christ — which is the One, Holy, Catholic, Apostolic and Roman Church — we shall find nothing more noble, more sublime, or more divine than the expression ‘the Mystical Body of Christ’ ”¹⁰².

⁹⁸Le peuple de Dieu. Paris 1938, *passim*.

⁹⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 57.

¹⁰⁰R. GROSCHE: Pilgernde Kirche. Freiburg (Br) 1938, p. 41.

¹⁰¹Latin text and French tr., in Ir-Collection 1928. IV, n. 1.

¹⁰²*Ed. cit.*, p. 32. Obviously, a separation between the Church and the Mystical Body, however slight, seemed to offer certain facilities for solving the problem of the relationship of non-Catholics to the Church and of the salvation of infidels. We will see these solutions when we will deal with the question of membership in the Church.

On the other hand, one must not forget that the encyclical explicitly admits the mysterious saving action of God in all times and in all places. This is why the position which, before the publication of the encyclical, already assigned the same boundaries to the Mystical Body and to the Roman Church, without giving further details¹⁰³, did not essentially help in finding the solution to the problem. We think the question needs to be worded differently; instead of trying to mark the limits of the Church, one should rather insist on the universal mediation of the visible Catholic, Roman Church for the salvation of all men. We will see later that such a mediation is very differentiated.

The other direction in which the dialectic between the two aspects of the Church has played out consists in the tendency of making the celestial ideal of the Church prevail too much over its earthly reality. It would not be difficult to find traces of it in most authors, but it would not be found in anyone in a form as developed as in Dom Vonier. In his lectures given at the academic week at Salzburg¹⁰⁴, the Abbot of Buckfast sketched an image of the Church that disregards the difference between the Church here below and the heavenly Church. In Vonier's eyes there is only an accidental difference between the present eon and the future eon, since the Church already possesses, in grace, eternal life¹⁰⁵. To get an authentic idea of the Church, continues the author, we must leave aside, as much as possible, the difference between the celestial and the terrestrial Church. Consequently, the Church is considered as an essential part of the glorification of Christ, so much so that the concept of the Church is identified with the concept of the glorified Christ. The passion and death of Christ, says the author, have no direct relation to the Church because "Christ alone has passed through the gates of Hell: the Church is and was always in the light, because she is the spouse of the Glorified"¹⁰⁶. Hence, the foundation of the Church is limited, according to Vonier, to the day of Pentecost, thanks to the visible descent of the Holy Spirit¹⁰⁷.

It goes without saying that such a narrowing of the viewpoint gives rise to many ambiguities and cannot help inviting criticism. Considering the celestial Church alone expresses only one side of the truth. The difference, however accidental it may be from the ontological viewpoint of grace, is

¹⁰³J. BLUETT: Mystical Body of Christ and Catholic Church Exactly Coextensive. ER 103 (1940) pp. 305-328.

¹⁰⁴A. VONIER: Das Mysterium der Kirche. Salzburg 1934.

¹⁰⁵*Op. cit.*, p. 56.

¹⁰⁶*Op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁰⁷*Cf. op. cit.*, p. 10. After the encyclical, it is very difficult to uphold this thesis.

essential regarding the manifestation of the grace in the earthly and celestial Church. The real presence of eternal life does not diminish the importance of the fact that this life is subject to earthly conditions. In other words, as Grosche¹⁰⁸ points out, the theology of the glory never makes the theology of the cross useless.

The study by K. Adam¹⁰⁹ goes in this direction, trying to clarify why a good number of Christians are indifferent, to a greater or lesser extent, toward the Church. He finds the cause of it in a theology of glory which ignores the principle of the Incarnation, the fact of the “exinanition” of Christ. The faithful then believe they are authorized to condemn, as opposed to its real being, everything in the Church that shocks them. It is therefore up to ecclesiology to show that the supernatural essence of the Church manifests itself in the condition of a servant. Of course the grace of Christ, the main element of the New Covenant, and the signs under which it is expressed only constitute one reality, but we must not forget that the sign “always risks concealing what it signifies, instead of revealing it to men who do not appreciate its hidden meaning and encounter in it only a stumbling block instead of finding salvation and resurrection”¹¹⁰.

The various areas of this “exinanition” of the Church are, according to the author: the eternal truth expressed in dogmatic formulas, the justification of man operated under material signs, and the successive phases of its history in which the Mystical Body undergoes the most diverse influences. The theology of the cross is based, ultimately, on our condition as a creature, because “infinity can never appear in the domain of the finite, the supernatural in nature, the eternal in the temporal, if not in a limited form, under a shortened line, as a refracted light ray”¹¹¹.

Mgr. Journet also noted¹¹² that the synonyms of the name of the Church have at the same time two meanings, historical and analogical, which are partially superimposed and are never completely separated from each other. Instead of limiting itself to a more or less unilateral consideration of one or the other aspect of the Church, he insists on the dynamic ordering of the earthly Church towards its celestial ideal. “We must attribute to the name of the Church and to each of its synonyms, as St. Augustine and all the Fathers spontaneously did, a dynamic virtue, a meaning of tension which made them like so many arrows thrown over the distinction of time and

¹⁰⁸Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 41-76, where Grosche criticizes Vonier’s ideas.

¹⁰⁹Le mystère de l’Église: Du scandale à la foi triomphante. EU, pp. 33-52.

¹¹⁰*Art. cit.*, p. 41.

¹¹¹*Art. cit.*, p. 50.

¹¹²CH. JOURNET: Les synonymes du nom de l’Église. NV 15 (1940) pp. 463-498.

eternity... Many of the difficulties raised in our time on the subject of the Church would fall if these few remarks were taken into account...”¹¹³.

We could also name several ecclesiologists who strongly insisted on the need to maintain a balance between the different tensions that reside in the concept and in the reality of the Church. C. Feckes summarized them in a very accomplished chapter by showing that the very complex nature of the Church itself is at the bottom of these, sometimes so opposed, tensions¹¹⁴. The nature of the Church, he writes, according to the laws of the Incarnation, includes in itself the eternal and temporal, immensity and place, impassibility and pain in an indissoluble union. It is easy to guess that without the careful use of the *analogia entis*, one will not succeed in maintaining, in a truly organic unity, the infinite and the finite, the divine and the human, the eternal and the temporal, and all that is involved in the mystery of the Church. In addition, regarding the proportion of these two aspects, one should not forget the wise remark of Fr. Przywara, made at the end of a critical study on the current trends in ecclesiology: the *analogia entis* always means identity and an even greater diversity¹¹⁵. Consequently, our ecclesiology, as long as it remains *ecclesiologia viatorum*, will never refuse to ensure a clearly understood primacy for the earthly aspect, for the hierarchical structure of the Church.

2

With a more dogmatic consideration of the mystery of the Church, the external aspect of the Church received a new light. The effect manifested itself above all in the fact that the notes of the Church were presented more thoroughly. In the introduction, we have already indicated how coherent this change is with the long development of post-Tridentine ecclesiology. This made it inevitable to rethink the argumentative force of the notes, their mutual relationship, and their connection with the essence of the Church—in short, the theory of notes in general. It has become evident that most of the theological material contained in the notes requires a rather dogmatic consideration. This is how one began speaking not only about the Church’s notes, but also about their properties. Among the authors who have tried to sketch the broad outlines of the dogmatic significance of the notes, one must first of all mention Fr. Mersch¹¹⁶. According to him, the notes of

¹¹³*Art. cit.*, pp. 486-487.

¹¹⁴C. FECKES: *Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche*. Paderborn 1943, pp. 191-222.

¹¹⁵Eine Bilanz... ZAM 15 (1940) pp. 213-214.

¹¹⁶*La Théologie du Corps mystique*. II, pp. 203-211. Eng. tr., pp. 486-494.

the Church continue those of Christ himself and are a way of showing the presence of Christ in the Church by informing us about the work of grace in souls. The notes seen from within also give an account of “the necessity of the Church for the inner life of Catholics and the essentially ecclesiastical nature of this inner life”¹¹⁷. Therefore, insofar as the notes show a supernatural reality, strictly one and unique, it follows, according to Journet, that the four notes are conceptually distinct only¹¹⁸. But this close relationship between the notes and the life of grace did not prevent Fr. Mersch from very characteristically drawing out the new tendencies, the kinship of the notes of the Church with the “notes” of the human race. The Church, a new humanity, assumes, according to him, in its supernatural sphere, the fundamental unity of the human race, its universality spread in multifaceted forms, its sanctity manifested in natural law¹¹⁹. This bringing together of the two orders, natural and supernatural, is one of the characteristics of the current movement of theology in general, but for a long time it has also played an important role in some debated questions in ecclesiology. As we will see, the proposed solution to the problem of the salvation of infidels is based on a strong focus on the natural unity of mankind. It should also be added that the recent orientations have highlighted the dynamic aspect of the notes, as we see in Feckes, which rightly emphasizes that the notes of the Church are not only properties for her, but also duties¹²⁰. Besides this interior and dynamic aspect of the notes in general, we must also add the interesting views of Clérissac¹²¹ on the grounding of the notes in the personality of the Church. According to him, the notes show the operation of the Trinitarian persons within the Church, and he calls this reflection of the influence of the Trinity the personality of the Church.

If the four Notes of the Church suggest its personality, it is because they are only fully alive and only have all their force and meaning when they are understood in a personal sense. Give a consciousness and a memory to the Church and you will straightway hear this consciousness cry out its unity, you will see it elaborate and demand its holiness. The memory of Her apostolic origins prevents Her from forfeiting them; and since the deposit received from the apostles is definitive and cannot yield to any

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 210. Eng. tr., p. 492.

¹¹⁸ *L’Église du Verbe Incarné*, II, p. 1255.

¹¹⁹ *Op. cit.*, p. 211. Eng. tr., p. 493.

¹²⁰ *Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche*, p. 162.

¹²¹ *Op. cit.*, pp. 25 ff. Eng. tr., pp. 13 ff.

new economy, it is therefore also universal. The Church proclaims Herself Catholic and knows Herself to be indefectible.¹²².

This great change relative to the apologetic attitude is especially felt with regard to the note of catholicity. The new orientation is manifested by an insistence on the virtual catholicity of the Church, while numeric catholicity passes into the background. From a certain viewpoint one could say that catholicity is the master idea guiding ecclesiological renewal, insofar as it seeks to subsume all aspects of our knowledge of the Church.

The starting point of our investigation consisted precisely in showing the various attempts to integrate problems as vast and delicate as the experience of the Church. The attitude of our ecclesiologists towards separate Christianities and their ecclesiology is also guided by a broad understanding. Missiology in turn also calls for a great adaptation to the diverse and legitimate requirements of non-Christian cultures. Historical and theoretical studies of recent ecclesiology also seek a more complete synthesis. Quite simply, the idea of catholicity has proven to be in the whole field of theology the ultimate goal, towards which all efforts converge. *Catholicisme* by Fr. de Lubac, one of the masterpieces of recent ecclesiology, is major proof of this. This work succeeded in highlighting that the universal, and thus catholic, solidarity determined the thought of the Fathers on all the essential points of Christian teaching, such as the original sin, redemption, and eternal beatitude. Similarly, the tendency towards Catholic fullness shows, in the eyes of the Fathers, the meaning of history¹²³. So, having in view the theological requirements of our time and the energetic witness of Tradition, the note of catholicity had inevitably undergone a profound re-evaluation.

Since A. de Poulpiquet took a resolute position in favor of the enlargement of quantitative catholicity (spatial and numeric) towards qualitative catholicity¹²⁴, a good number of authors have taken on the task of developing its content. It is interesting to note that qualitative catholicity will be linked, by most of the authors in question, to the mystery of the Incarnation. K. Adam relates Catholic fullness to the fullness of the humanity of Christ¹²⁵. Fr. Mersch, in turn, considers the Incarnation as the foundation of the paradox which manifests itself in the unity of the multiple elements

¹²²H. CLÉRISSAC: *Le mystère de l'Église*. Paris 1925. 3^e éd. de 1917, p. 55. Eng. tr., pp. 29-30.

¹²³H. DE LUBAC: *Catholicisme. Les aspects sociaux du dogme*. Paris 1947. 4th ed. Eng. tr., *Catholicism: Christ and the Common Destiny of Man*. San Francisco 1988.

¹²⁴A. DE POULPIQUET: *La notion de catholicité*. Paris 1910.

¹²⁵K. ADAM: *Le vrai visage du catholicisme*. Paris 1931, pp. 205 ff.

of Catholic diversity¹²⁶. For Fr. Congar, the same mystery serves to show the double aspect of qualitative catholicity: the ontological and the dynamic aspect¹²⁷. According to Fr. de Lubac, the mystery of the Incarnation is the foundation of Christian respect for all the values of non-Christian religions and of human nature in general¹²⁸.

Regarding the more detailed developments of this note, K. Adam highlights the fullness which emerges in the integral affirmation of the revealed datum and in the respect by which the Church wishes to satisfy the whole of human nature: soul and body. In fact the Church recognizes the rights of reason by cultivating the sciences and philosophy, and, through its sacramental system, matter takes on an essential role in the work of sanctification. “Catholicism is according to its whole being the full and strong affirmation of the whole man, in the complete sum of all his life relations. Catholicism is the positive religion *par excellence*, essentially affirmation without subtraction, and in the full sense essentially thesis.”¹²⁹. The concrete realization of the full meaning of Catholicism thus becomes an immense duty, because it supposes a continual adaptation, a rejection of any particularism and especially an attitude of love which helps to avoid the pitfalls of naivety, syncretism, and liberalism¹³⁰. This is how Catholicism will become, in all its manifestations, the religion *par excellence*, the form that humanity must put on in order finally to be itself¹³¹.

The new presentation of the note of catholicity is therefore distinguished by its attachment to the mystery of the Incarnation, by an affirmation of human values, and finally by the requirements it poses to the members of the Church regarding the continual efforts of adaptation and development¹³². In the face of these results, it cannot be denied that the current *De Ecclesia* manuals must broaden their horizons, still too limited to quantitative catholicity¹³³. A no less resolute defender of our post-Tridentine ecclesio-

¹²⁶La Théologie du Corps mystique. II, pp. 232-236. Eng. tr., pp. 512-517.

¹²⁷Chrétiens désunis. Eng. tr., Divided Christendom. Cf. chap. III on the catholicity of the Church.

¹²⁸*Op. cit.*, pp. 241-244.

¹²⁹K. ADAM: *Op. cit.*, p. 23. Eng. tr., p. 12.

¹³⁰H. DE LUBAC: Catholicisme, p. 259. Eng. tr., pp. 299-302.

¹³¹*Ibid.*, p. 256. Eng. tr., p. 298.

¹³²Let us also cite a few authors who reveal the same orientation: O. Karrer: *Das Religiöse in der Menschheit und das Christentum*. Freiburg (Br) 1934, pp. 219-237. G. Philips: *La Sainte Église catholique*. Tournai-Paris 1947, pp. 61-76. J. Leclercq: *La vie du Christ dans son Église*. Paris 1947, pp. 90-107.

¹³³This also applies to several of our theological dictionaries: H. Moureau: *Catholicité*. DTC 2. col. 1999-2012. Y. de la Brière: *Église*. DAFC 1. col. 1268-1301.

logical treatises, Mgr. Fenton, had to admit this change—let us rather say, this inevitable enrichment—by noting the new orientations in this matter: “The positions of Thils, de Poulpiquet, and Congar constitute a very serious challenge to the generally accepted teaching about the Church’s catholicity. If their contentions are justified, then the explanations given in most of our theological manuals must be sharply revised. Certainly our theologians have no right to ignore their observations”¹³⁴.

Regarding the note of unity, we have already pointed out how the apologetic needs have led to the elimination of many elements which rightly belong to the unity of the Church, as its property. In most of the *De Ecclesia* treatises, only the external aspect of the unity of the Church was considered, such as unity of government, unity of faith, and unity of communion and worship. Only a small number of authors has attempted to pave new paths in the apologetic presentation of this note. We note, for example, Card. Billot, who strongly emphasized the unity *per se extans* of the Church, therefore independent of civil governments. It was natural that the general presentation of the note of unity should become more and more centered around the unity of government, i.e., the Roman primacy.

So it was entirely according to the logic of things that the new tendencies tried above all to restore honor to the interior, mystical unity of the Church. Above all, we must mention Möhler, whose influence in this matter is even reflected in the Vatican *Schema*. In addition, the ecumenical movement evoked a new attitude on the Catholic side, insisting on the mystical and already existing unity of Christianity, despite the visible rifts among the churches. In the same way, the theology of the Mystical Body has largely contributed to revealing the mystery of the Church in the close union of the members to their head. The decisive step to deepen the presentation of this property of the Church was taken by Fr. de Poulpiquet, who assigns to the Trinitarian persons the prototype of this unity. The unity of the Church is a mysterious participation in it, effecting both the intimate conjunction of souls and the preservation of their individuality¹³⁵. These ideas were developed by Journet, who highlighted the twofold tension in this participation of the Trinitarian unity under a sacramental form: the extrinsic unity as a sign of the *res sacramenti* must always be internalized; then this participation in the Trinitarian unity must always increase according to the laws of eschatological development¹³⁶. Unity conceived in this way has many points

¹³⁴J. FENTON: The catholicity of the Church. ER 117 (1947) p. 294.

¹³⁵A. DE POULPIQUET: L’Église catholique. Paris 1923, pp. 272 ff.

¹³⁶L’Église du Verbe Incarné. II, pp. 1205 ff.

in common with the virtue of charity, Fr. Mersch observes, and as such it can effectively fulfill the role of a counterweight to the dangers of juridical centralization¹³⁷.

The theology of controversies approached the holiness of the Church from two main viewpoints: first it was necessary to claim, against the innovators, the validity of the worship of the saints, then one had to insist on the holiness of the Church, despite the sins of its members. As we noted in the introduction, the holiness of the doctrine and that of the means are no longer treated in the apologetic demonstration by several recent authors, thus admitting the need to separate the apologetic and dogmatic aspects in this matter. In the current exposition of the *De Ecclesia* manuals, holiness has necessarily been presented rather as a sign for non-believers more than as a dogmatic property of the Church. According to Dom Vonier, Catholic apologists have endeavored to demonstrate “the good impression” that the Church makes on the world¹³⁸. According to him, the origin of this unilateral attitude would be a false distinction between the divine and human elements in the Church. It is fatal, he says, to attribute a moral value to this distinction such that the human element represents sin and evil in the Church. On the contrary, it must be maintained that, alongside the supernatural powers of the Church, its engagement in temporal affairs can also bear witness to its holiness, because the Church cannot fail in its mission to submit the whole universe to Christ through the work of sanctification¹³⁹.

To justify this position, one must see, with Vonier, in the holiness of the Church, all the supernatural gifts granted to it and to its members. The apologetic consideration, on the contrary, can only have in view the vivid manifestations of this holiness which can constitute an argument for those who do not yet admit Christ’s supernatural foundation of it. In the eyes of the faith, Vonier continues, the holiness of the Church is still in full force, and the visible mission of the Holy Spirit has continued since the first Pentecost¹⁴⁰. In other words, the glorious aspect of the Church, its holiness, is already present here below and must dominate our idea of the Church. According to him, the holiness of the Church is a question of proportion between its holy substance and its accidental sins. The sins of the members carry no weight with the power to remit sins, so much so that the people repenting and submitting to the power of the remission of sins are already

¹³⁷La Théologie du Corps mystique. II, pp. 212-228. Eng. tr., pp. 494-509.

¹³⁸Das Mysterium der Kirche. Salzburg. 1934; cf. pp. 51-52.

¹³⁹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 44.

¹⁴⁰Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 53.

within the sphere of the glorified Christ¹⁴¹. The sin of schism, heresy, and apostasy must be considered in relation to the vitality of the Church, which always knows how to detach dissident members from itself¹⁴².

One could object that Vonier's developments might make one forget the importance of the concrete holiness of the members and the sad reality of the sins in the Church. Besides, his intention to correct the defects of an apologetic consideration sometimes makes him fall into the contrary excess. He has been criticized for considering only one aspect of the multiple relationships between the celestial and terrestrial Church, if one accepts his thesis that the difference between Christians already in heaven and those here below, in a state of grace, is not essential but only accidental in the eyes of St. Paul¹⁴³. However, we believe that these remarks, without removing Vonier's merits, help us better to appreciate his main idea that the indestructible existence of the celestial germ in the Church must ultimately govern our thinking about the Church, and that all other aspects and problems of the holiness of the Church must be viewed in this light.

Unlike Vonier, Fr. Mersch's starting point in this matter is the daily and common holiness of the Church. This prosaic holiness, as he defines it, is a great miracle, because it expresses the universal message of the Incarnation about the sanctification of men even in their most banal existence. Such holiness is, essentially, a holiness of redemption in and against the world of sin. This is why the holiness of the Church must always go hand-in-hand with the most sincere humility¹⁴⁴, and must manifest itself through a continual struggle towards its celestial ideal¹⁴⁵. This struggle for the full realization of the holiness of the Church introduces us to an aspiration of primary importance in current ecclesiology: the development of the theological idea of reform in the Church. There have been reform movements in action in the Church for several decades¹⁴⁶, which evoked this aspect of the note of holiness, which will happily complete Vonier's fundamental but rather static viewpoint. Although the Holy Spirit, as Vonier powerfully emphasized, never ceases to make the holiness of the Church appear, it is no less true that the proportion between habitual sinners and fervent souls

¹⁴¹Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 39.

¹⁴²*Ibid.*

¹⁴³Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 50.

¹⁴⁴La Théologie du Corps mystique. II, pp. 228-232. Eng. tr., pp. 509-517.

¹⁴⁵Cf. CH. JOURNET: Remarques sur la sainteté de l'Église militante. NV 9 (1934) pp. 299-323.

¹⁴⁶J. LORTZ: Die Reformation als religiöses Anliegen heute. Trier 1948.

can vary according to the times, countries, and social environments¹⁴⁷. The reason for this is that the relationship between the structure and the life of the Church has a double tension: that between the exterior and interior elements and that between the temporal and eternal elements¹⁴⁸. Thus, holiness, on the side of the members of the Church, always seems to be a duty of reforming oneself constantly in order to approach the full form of the holiness of the Church.

Because of the narrowing of the content of the note of apostolicity, reduced more and more to the fact of the Roman primacy, it was felt necessary to join this note more closely to the mystery of the Church. Following Fr. Mersch¹⁴⁹, several theologians propose the apostolicity of the Church as the infallible point of contact with the Holy Spirit, an interior, an always active force that gives the Church a supernatural constancy. Today, we see the idea of the contact with the Spirit, vivifying the work of Christ, the Church, in the apostolicity of the Church. Over time, it is the apostolic force that achieves the continual growth of the Church in its missionary conquests and is the same force which is present in the homogeneous development of Christian dogma. Considered within the framework of the four causes, apostolicity is rooted in the efficient cause and fulfills the role of instrument to prolong, in a simultaneously uninterrupted and theandric way, the divine life and, more precisely, the general and hierarchical participation in the priesthood of the Savior. There is therefore a close relationship between the note of apostolicity and the priesthood of Christians, which is really the purpose of the Church's existence¹⁵⁰.

3

As we said, the Church exists in a theandric way, as a sacramental sign. As a result of post-Tridentine needs, the exterior side of this mystery, the hierarchy, or quite simply the quintessential structure of the Church, has only been considered from the apologetic and canonical viewpoints, where the relation of the hierarchy to the spiritual nucleus of the Church has remained quite in the background. This general view is perfectly reflected in the article by B. Dolhagaray¹⁵¹, dominated by apologetic and historical

¹⁴⁷Cf. CH. JOURNET: Du problème de la sainteté de l'Église au problème de la nature de l'Église. NV 9 (1934) pp. 26-32.

¹⁴⁸Y. CONGAR: Vraie et fausse réforme dans l'Église. Paris 1950, pp. 133-199. Eng. tr., pp. 117-168.

¹⁴⁹*Op. cit.*, pp. 237-240. Eng. tr., pp. 517-519.

¹⁵⁰CH. JOURNET: L'Église du Verbe Incarné. I, pp. 642-647. Eng. tr., p. 16, pp. 526 ff.

¹⁵¹*Hiérarchie*. DTC 6/2, col. 2362-2382.

problems, without mentioning the *De Ecclesia* manuals, whose position is quite well-known.

However, there is a revival in this area, too. Regarding the general idea of hierarchy, Dom Gréa¹⁵² highlighted that the notion of hierarchy is rooted in the mystery of the Trinity itself and signifies in a broad sense the place of contact in the communications of divine life. “Thus what constitutes the mystery of the Church is really an extension and a communication of the divine society and of the relationships which are in it”¹⁵³. This view also constitutes the starting point for the developments of Clérissac and the great synthesis of Journet¹⁵⁴. Regarding the dual function of the hierarchy, the great initiator is undoubtedly M. J. Scheeben. For him the activity of the hierarchy is organic in the biological sense of the word. Its actions have no other aim than the maintenance and development of supernatural life; consequently, the hierarchy and the people of God have a duty to procure it with the help of the sacramental actions, each in its own way. The hierarchy in turn fulfills a maternal function in the Church; it is the organ and channel of divine life. This maternity, imitation, and extension of the fertility of Mary constitutes the central point of the Mystical Body of Christ; through it, the Church develops and remains in union with its divine Head. This maternity imprints their supernatural character on all social activities of the Church, sanctifying the members in all areas of their existence.

Priestly motherhood, continues Scheeben, gives its true greatness to the power to teach and govern. These powers in turn defend the integrity of divine life and prevent the faithful from losing sight of the true use of the sources of supernatural life. When Scheeben points out that without having a sublime idea of the Church one will always have difficulties about the infallibility of the pope, he is thinking precisely of this close link between the two powers. Without having it in view, one will never understand the true meaning or the need for infallible authority in the Church, and even less that the fullness of this power must reside in one person¹⁵⁵.

While Scheeben explained the functions of the Church in their relation to the divine life, sticking to a strictly sacramental viewpoint, the thought of Fr. Mersch¹⁵⁶ obviously betrays the inspiration of Möhler. He considers the exercise of authority and obedience in their interiorized, mystical existence.

¹⁵²A. GRÉA: *De l'Église et de sa divine constitution*. Paris 1907. 2nd ed.

¹⁵³*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 28.

¹⁵⁴*L'Église du Verbe Incarné*. I, pp. 24 ff. Eng. tr., pp. 16 ff.

¹⁵⁵*Les Mystères du Christianisme*, p. 558. Eng. tr., *The Mysteries of Christianity*, p. 554.

¹⁵⁶*Théologie du Corps mystique*. II, pp. 241-273. Eng. tr., pp. 520-545.

From this viewpoint, “the union between the authority of Christ in pastors and the life of Christ in souls is perfect. It springs up from the spontaneity of a Christian life”¹⁵⁷. This is how the authority of pastors is no longer a heavy burden for souls joined to Christ. On the contrary: for souls in whom the life of grace reaches its more or less perfect fulfillment, obedience becomes a spontaneous expression of their supernatural life. In other words, the perfection of Christian life includes the feeling of being a member of a large organism in which the individual member must be convinced that only by submitting to the whole organism will he serve his own interests. The Church cannot express itself in ancient and pagan concepts. It is neither a monarchy nor a democracy. Its formula is to be a “Christology”¹⁵⁸. The law of love ultimately governs the life of the Church. One then understands that Fr. Mersch cannot ignore the duties that result from this, for the hierarchy and the governed. But once these duties have been fulfilled, the “inferiors” “may rejoice in their certainty that by obeying they will never be doing the will of other men. If this marvelous freedom, love, and divinization are seldom realized in daily life, is the fault to be ascribed to Christianity or to Christians?”¹⁵⁹. However excellent it may be, this presentation of the mystical unity of authority and obedience does not remove the mystery of the cross, of suffering in Christian obedience¹⁶⁰.

It was quite natural that such an insistence on the dogmatic, even mystical, aspect of the idea of hierarchy had suggested to several authors a certain subordination of jurisdictional power to priestly power. In Fr. Congar this comes from the well-known principle of the new trends in ecclesiology: the primacy of life with regard to the structure of the Church¹⁶¹. In H. Keller this subordination even enters into the definition of the Church. He defines the Church through its cultual aspect, in particular by the sacraments of baptism and holy orders¹⁶². Although their thought had nothing in common with the opposition between the Church of law and that of love, nevertheless J. Brinktrine¹⁶³ is of the opinion that such a position ignores the formal

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 256. Eng. tr., p. 531.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267. Eng. tr., pp. 540-541.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 270. Eng. tr., p. 543 — It should be noted that this tendency to sublimate obedience into a mystical spontaneity contains only part of the truth. Most of the faithful never rise to this degree of mystical interiority.

¹⁶⁰ A. DE BOVIS: De l'obéissance à l'Église. NET 70 (1948) pp. 20-47.

¹⁶¹ Y. CONGAR: Ordre et juridiction dans l'Église. Ir 10 (1933) pp. 22-31; 97-110; 243-252; 401-408.

¹⁶² H. KELLER: Kirche als Kultgemeinschaft. BM 16 (1934) pp. 25-38; 17 (1935) pp. 183-195; 277-286; 347-361.

¹⁶³ J. BRINKTRINE: Was ist die Kirche? TG 28 (1936) pp. 190-196. — Von der Struktur

element of a complete definition of the Church: the primacy of jurisdiction. According to him baptism refers essentially to the hierarchy of the order which, in turn, is intimately linked to the jurisdictional structure of the Church. Regardless of these arguments, it seems wrong to try to assert, at any cost, the prevalence of any one hierarchical power over another, because one could easily lose sight of their mutual interdependence.

In any case, the highlighting of the greatness of the hierarchy from a dogmatic viewpoint has never meant, for the new trends, a transformation of ecclesiology into a “hierarchyology” in the more or less mechanical sense of the word, where no place would be left to the charismatic work of the Spirit. Here, too, the new trends are distinguished by their desire to present the full reality. It is not a question of renewing heresies formerly condemned but quite simply of restoring the honor, in the theological plane, of the charismatic work of the Spirit, which is always active in the Church¹⁶⁴. There is not an opposition between the work of the Spirit through the hierarchy and the charismatic gifts, but a correspondence and distinction which requires the presentation of multiple nuances. Only with the help of a careful analysis of this problem will Catholic theology be able to integrate certain tendencies which are emerging within Protestantism and Orthodoxy and which are marked by a pronounced inclination towards the prophetic realm in theology. In this sense the deep study of Fr. Congar strives to contribute to ecclesiology. He shows there that the indissoluble unity of the Spirit and the Apostolic Body in the realization of the work of Christ does not exclude the well-established fact that the Spirit nevertheless retains a kind of freedom or autonomy, which alone can explain one of the features of the history of the Church. This sovereign action of the Spirit, which often gives an unprecedented mission to non-hierarchical members of the Church, as can be seen in the lives of the saints, without working against the hierarchy, always remains a major factor in the life of the Church, and ecclesiologists can never rethink it enough¹⁶⁵.

The clarification of the dogmatic aspect of the idea of hierarchy did necessarily lead to new attempts to supplement notions that have often become too legalistic in the current presentation, such as that of the episcopate. Already the Vatican Council had included definitions in its program concerning the role of bishops in the Church. Prevented by unfortunate circumstances, the Council had to be content with the definition of the infallibility of the

und dem Wesen der Kirche. TG 26 (1934) pp. 21-29.

¹⁶⁴Cf. H. DUESBERG: Hiérarchie et prophétisme. NRT 84 (1952) pp. 372-389.

¹⁶⁵Y. CONGAR: Le Saint-Esprit et le Corps apostolique, réalisateurs de l'œuvre du Christ. RSPT 36 (1952) pp. 613-625; 37 (1953) pp. 24-48.

pope, and that is why the time after the Council can be seen as the occasion for the definitive understanding of all that the Roman primacy means. The recent history of the Church shows that this work, without introducing a kind of totalitarianism, has prepared a solid foundation for the theological elaboration of the idea of the episcopate, whose first milestones have been laid in recent years. The path was pioneered, as we have seen, by the liturgical movement, which proposed a very remarkable and supernatural image of the role of bishops. Very recently, historical studies have also started to contribute to a better understanding of the mystery of the episcopate¹⁶⁶. Contrary to the presentations of our theological manuals and dictionaries¹⁶⁷, concentrating on apologetic and legal questions, we are now trying to highlight better what belongs to episcopal consecration¹⁶⁸ and which must manifest itself in a vital and concrete way in the sanctification of the faithful¹⁶⁹. Emphasizing the importance of the episcopate will help us not only to understand the idea of the diocese better, but also that of the parishes. The theology of the diocese and of the parish that is taking shape¹⁷⁰ will surely be based on the major role of the bishop, and thus parish communities will have a more lively relationship with the center and source of their supernatural activity, the bishop of the diocese¹⁷¹.

¹⁶⁶For example: W. PITSCH: *Das Bischofsideal des hl. Bernhard von Clairvaux*. Bottrop-en-W. Postberg 1942. — E. STOMMEL: *Die bischöfliche Kathedra im christlichen Altertum*. MTZ 2 (1952) pp. 17-32. — H. JEDIN: *Das Bischofsideal der katholischen Reformation*. — A good number of excellent exegetical, historical, and pastoral studies on the episcopate can be found in EPISCOPUS. *Studien über das Bischofsamt*. Seiner Eminenz Michael Kardinal von Faulhaber zum 80. Geburtstag dargebracht von der theol. Fakultät der Universität München. Regensburg 1949. Let us mention the more relevant: F. STUMMER: *Gedanken über die Stellung des Hohenpriesters in der alttestamentlichen Gemeinde*, (pp. 19-48). M. SCHMAUS: *Der Episkopat als Ordnungsgewalt in der Kirche nach der Lehre des heiligen Bonaventura*, (pp. 305-336). E. KIENITZ: *Bischöfliche Jurisdiktion als päpstlicher Auftrag*, (pp. 296-304). J. PASCHER: *Die Hierarchie im Sakramentalen Symbolik*, (pp. 278-295).

¹⁶⁷E. VALTON: *Évêques. Questions théologiques et canoniques*. DTC 5/2, col. 1701-1725. — F. PRAT: *Évêques. Origine de l'épiscopat*. DTC 5/2, col. 1656-1701.

¹⁶⁸J. LECUYER: *La grâce de la consécration épiscopale*. RSPT 36 (1952) pp. 389-417. — By the same author: *Pentecôte et Épiscopat*. VSpir 86 (1952) pp. 451-466.

¹⁶⁹A. G. MARTIMORT: *De l'évêque*. Paris 1946.

¹⁷⁰J. COLSON: *Qu'est-ce qu'un Diocèse?* NRT 85 (1953) pp. 471-497. — *Die Pfarre. Gestalt und Sendung*. Wien 1953. (Minutes of the 1953 Session of the Pastoral Institute of Vienna).

¹⁷¹G. DIEKMANN: *What is a Bishop?* *Worship* 26 (1952) pp. 238-247.

After having examined the functions and the powers of the Church, let us see in what new light the non-hierarchical members of the Church are considered.

Our first chapter showed us how the more intimate and conscious attachment of the laity to the life of the Church was made necessary by force of the Church's present needs. We have already indicated that the laity's awareness of their duty to the Church could not do without a more dogmatic highlighting of their lay state. Because of this, the royal priesthood of the faithful has become an ecclesiological theme. We know that the idea of the royal priesthood after the Reformation was less appreciated among Catholics, in order to remove any possibility of confusion with the hierarchical priesthood. The consequence was that the current notion of the royal priesthood is more or less separated from the function of the laity in the Mass and that their daily sacrifices often remained without any conscious link to the sacramental life¹⁷².

To remedy this, for several decades the reality of the royal priesthood was insisted upon with a new force. The theologians' attention was focused primarily on the cultural aspect of the priestly function of the laity. This state of affairs is reflected in Niebecker's work, which summarized the points made two decades ago. Let us take up its conclusions: Firstly, the royal priesthood is a true priesthood conferred by baptism which goes far beyond the priesthood of the Old Testament. Distinct from the hierarchical priesthood and subordinate to it, it enables the Christian to present pleasing sacrifices to God and to participate actively in the action of the sacrifice of the Mass.

It is easy to guess what the pitfalls are that this trend has encountered on its way. Obviously, the insistence on the reality of the royal priesthood should not assume such a character which, if only by inappropriate allusions, would undermine the distinction established by faith between the royal priesthood and the hierarchical priesthood.

The question of the participation of the faithful at Mass, because of their royal priesthood, has aroused the temptation to place, more or less implicitly, the two kinds of priesthood on the same level. Once the reality of their active participation in the Mass was admitted and accentuated, it yet remained to specify in what this active participation consists. Niebecker admits, for his part, that the answer, which is very difficult to specify, depends essentially on the theory that one adopts regarding the Mass. According to him, theories

¹⁷²Cf. R. GROSCHÉ: *Pilgernde Kirche*. Freiburg (Br) 1938, p. 203.

based on the idea of oblation are more favorable in this regard than the others¹⁷³.

The encyclical *Mediator Dei*¹⁷⁴ has restored order to the tangle of insinuations and dangerous inaccuracies. After having highlighted the difference between the two kinds of priesthood, the encyclical clarified the meaning of the active participation of the faithful in the Mass.

The word “offer”, insofar as it means “The unbloody immolation at the words of consecration, when Christ is made present upon the altar in the state of a victim”, is performed by the priest and by him alone. But as the word “offer” expresses the fact that the priest presents the divine victim to God the Father, it also includes the participation of the faithful: firstly “because [...] they offer the sacrifice by the hands of the priest” and then because they “unite their hearts in praise, impetration, expiation and thanksgiving with prayers or intention of the priest, even of the High Priest himself, so that [...] they may be presented to God the Father”¹⁷⁵.

The conscious practice of this participation of the faithful in the Mass has a very valuable ecclesiological meaning, according to the same Encyclical: it demonstrates “outwardly that the very nature of the sacrifice, as offered by the Mediator between God and men, must be regarded as the act of the whole Mystical Body of Christ”¹⁷⁶.

Even if it is true that, by clarifying the nature of the participation of the laity in the Mass, what is most essential has been said, the question of the place of the laity in the Church still contains aspects whose ecclesiological significance is of primary importance. In truth, the complete development of the role of the laity in the Church is precisely, in its various aspects, at the center of the recent orientations in ecclesiology. The work *Jalons pour une théologie du laïcat* by Fr. Congar unveiled the major implications and traced the path to follow¹⁷⁷.

If one considers the lay condition beyond the notions of canon law, one discovers that the laity links *in concreto* the work of salvation in all its details to the events and objects of earthly reality. Therefore, the fundamental and primordial work of the Church-institution, the hierarchy, must be com-

¹⁷³*Das allgemeine Priestertum der Gläubigen*. Paderborn 1936, pp. 143-145. In this work we will find the essential results of the new research on the royal priesthood and the contribution of this idea to a better understanding of the Church up until then. This allows us to omit mentioning a long series of less important studies.

¹⁷⁴*Ed. cit.*, cf. col. 219 ff.

¹⁷⁵*Ed. cit.*, col. 221 (§92, §94).

¹⁷⁶*Ed. cit.*, col. 225 (§100).

¹⁷⁷Paris 1939. (*Unam Sanctam* 23).

pleted by the action of the laity in order to achieve the concrete realization of the sanctification of society and history. On the ecclesiological plane, all this obviously presupposes going beyond the narrow limits of an ecclesiology which, because of historical reasons, has been developed primarily as a “hierarchy”. Furthermore, giving again its due to the apostolic role of the laity in the world alone will prevent the realization of the Kingdom of God on earth from taking the form of a hierocratic Christianity. This activity of the laity takes place on the level of different functions of the royal priesthood. The multiple realizations of it should be governed by the principle of catholicity taken in a broad sense: the true life of the Church must flourish in the most universal way. This is how the functions of the hierarchy will receive their *pleroma* through the apostolic activity of the laity. In all of this, the laity have the mission to mediate between the Church and the world, thus realizing that part of the work of God which must be fulfilled by the men of God. The grace once given in Christ must penetrate the experience and action of men; there, the laity has to fulfill its irreplaceable mission.

We are therefore faced with a problem so frequently encountered during our investigations: the integration of the lived, concrete, vital aspect of the life of the Church in ecclesiology. Without the realization of all the possibilities of the action of the laity in the Church, one of the most important supports would be lacking in ecclesiological renewal. In other words, the pressing duty to reevaluate the laity in the Church comes from the imperative need to give an adequate answer to the questions that modern humanism poses. In fact, as we have seen, the starting point for a distinct conception of the mystery of the Church, as a separate treatise, is to be found in the movement launched in the Middle Ages in search of earthly values, a movement which emerged in that era over disputes on the true relationship between Church and State. After long centuries of reflection and discussion, the same problem of the natural and supernatural appears again in much broader and differentiated dimensions. The symptoms seem to indicate that Christian thought is more prepared than ever to provide the principles of a solution, but their implementation will be the duty of the laity, and only a complete ecclesiology, balanced and respectful of all aspects of ecclesial and human realities, can teach them how to be both in the World and not of the World.

4.3 The universal mediation of the Church

1

The formation of a new idea of the Church, oriented by a remarkable effort towards the full realization of Catholicism, was to offer, obviously, a very thorough solution regarding the salvation of those who are outside of the Church, i.e., the nature of their relationship with the unique instrument of salvation, the Roman Catholic Church. As it is well known, for a long time, advantageous but often superficial solutions have dominated the theological literature in this matter, such as the distinction between the soul and the body of the Church, and more recently an imprecise idea of the Mystical Body that seemed to be a solution for some unsophisticated authors. The distinction between the soul and the body of the Church is due to Bellarmine¹⁷⁸, but in the course of time it assumed a meaning which was certainly not that of Bellarmine. We can find the milestones of this unfortunate development in Polman, Plessis d'Argentré, and Tournely, who proposed a notion of the soul of the Church which was no longer in contact with the body of the Church. Thus, the ground was prepared for the idea of an invisible Church, independent of the visible Roman Catholic Church and constituted by those who are in a state of grace. Others believed that the idea of the Mystical Body seemed to clarify the situation of non-Catholic Christians, or simply that of non-Catholic denominations¹⁷⁹.

However, it should be noted that these weak positions were only peripheral in Catholic theology. One of the signs of ecclesiological renewal, alongside the emphasis on the interior aspect of the Church, is that the traditional axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* has been more deeply accentuated. Respect for this axiom has prompted many authors to seek the solution in a dynamic idea of the kingdom of God¹⁸⁰. At first glance this solution seems very fruitful; assuming the identity between the kingdom of God and the

¹⁷⁸Cf. J. FENTON: The Meaning of the Church's Necessity for Salvation. ER 124 (1951) pp. 124-143; 203-221; 290-302; see especially pp. 203 ff.

¹⁷⁹This less correct use of the idea of the Mystical Body is found in O. KARRER: Das Religiöse in der Menschheit und das Christentum, Frankfurt 1934, pp. 240 ff. — D. BARRY: A plea for a more comprehensive definition of the Church. The New York Review. 2 (1906-7) pp. 691-697. — The words of M. Nédoncelle are very characteristic: "...a separated member remains united to the Mystical Body by the reciprocal affinities which subsist between them. So, when Anglicanism is far from the Mystical Body, the Mystical Body is not separated from it". L'anglicanisme et le corps mystique. RAp 34 (1938) p. 670.

¹⁸⁰J. FENTON: The meaning of the Church's necessity for salvation. ER 124 (1951) pp. 290-302. — T. STROTMANN: Les membres de l'Église. Ir 25 (1952) pp. 249-262.

Church, we see that any individual belongs either to the kingdom of the devil or to the kingdom of God. Only one thorny question remains insoluble on this level: the situation of Catholics in a state of mortal sin, who, while becoming subjects of the devil, do not cease to be members of the Church. The most satisfactory and generally accepted solution today has gone beyond the immediate sense of the axiom *extra ecclesiam*, a meaning concerning rather the limits of the Church, and has emphasized its underlying meaning: the universal mediation of the Church in the salvation of all men. The *De Ecclesia Schema* of the Vatican Council most energetically formulated this sense of the axiom: “Ad salutem obtinendam... Ecclesia Christi tantæ est necessitatis, quantæ consortium et conjunctio cum Christo capite et mystico ejus corpore... Idcirco docemus Ecclesiam esse omnino necessariam et quidem necessitate non solum præcepti... verum etiam medii quia, in instituto salutaris providentiæ ordine, communicatio Sancti Spiritus, participatio veritatis et vitæ non obtinetur nisi in Ecclesia et per Ecclesiam, cujus caput est Christus”¹⁸¹. Consequently, these words are quoted in the manuals as the expression of the thought of the Magisterium, and the energetic reaffirmation of the old axiom by Pius XI and Pius XII must be interpreted in this light. It should be noted that the encyclical *Mystici corporis* in turn confines itself to the affirmation of two theses: on the one hand it highlights the universal mediation of the Church by absolutely identifying the Mystical Body with the Church¹⁸², and on the other hand it refers to the fact that all possibility of salvation is not denied to those who are outside the Church. The position taken by the encyclical was evidently conditioned by the doctrine of non-Roman Catholicism, according to which not a particular church but all Christians, regardless of their faith, equally constitute the true “Church of Christ”, a church which, despite the differences of faith, already exists; schisms and heresies, instead of tearing it apart, have only enriched it. Fr. Rahner rightly observes that this doctrine, without being able to penetrate the technical literature of theology (*theologische Fachliteratur*), was presupposed and more or less accepted even by Catholics devoted to the cause of union. The encyclical, while affirming two cardinal truths of the traditional doctrine, does not go into more detail¹⁸³.

This way of interpreting these papal texts still receives a more solid foundation if we review the many statements of the recent popes on the

¹⁸¹Coll. Lac. VII, p. 569.

¹⁸²Cf. *ed. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁸³K. RAHNER: Die Zugehörigkeit zur Kirche nach der Lehre der Enzyklika Pius XII: *Mystici Corporis Christi*. ZKT 69 (1947) p. 150.

idea of universal mediation of the Church¹⁸⁴. We will see that the popes have welcomed everything that speculative theology has been able to develop in this regard¹⁸⁵. So if it is true, on the one hand, that the grace of God can operate mysteriously even outside the visible limits of the Church and if we remember, on the other hand, the insistence of Pius XII on the fact that the Church transmits the entire wealth of redemption, to mention only one example of the teaching of the magisterium on this point¹⁸⁶, it only remains to conclude: the Church must necessarily play an essential role in the salvation of anyone.

Consequently, we are led to propose the possibility of different degrees of membership in the Church. In fact, this idea was for a long time not foreign to a good number of theologians of prime importance. Franzelin, for example, professed partial membership (*ex parte*) in the Church of non-Catholics who would be in good faith¹⁸⁷. According to d'Herbigny, membership in the Church admits different degrees¹⁸⁸, while Bainvel speaks of inchoate members of the Church¹⁸⁹. For de Guibert¹⁹⁰ and Billot¹⁹¹, membership to the Church *in voto* evidently reflects its partial realization. E. Mura distinguishes between normal and abnormal membership in the Church¹⁹², and Fr. Congar contrasts spiritual incorporation *voto* in the Church with entire and practical incorporation *re* in the ecclesiastical Catholic body¹⁹³.

According to Journet, membership in the Church is analogical and is expressed in different degrees¹⁹⁴. Commentators of the encyclical also write in this sense, although their thought is not always rigorously formulated. This is especially true for the position of Lialine, which distinguishes between the members of Christ and those of the Mystical Body¹⁹⁵, and for the solution proposed by A. Liégé, who speaks of a visible and invisible membership of the Church¹⁹⁶. The terminology of V. Morel is more adequate, although it

¹⁸⁴Cf. F. X. LAWLOR: The mediation of the Church in some pontifical documents. TS 12 (1951) pp. 481-504.

¹⁸⁵J. H. NICOLAS: La médiation de l'Église. RT 44 (1946) pp. 411-433.

¹⁸⁶PIUS XII: Allocution, 2 June 1944. AAS 36 (1944) p. 170.

¹⁸⁷*Op. cit.*, p. 415.

¹⁸⁸Theologica de Ecclesia. Paris 1928. 3rd ed. Vol. II, pp. 272 ff.

¹⁸⁹De Ecclesia Christi. Paris 1925, p. 112.

¹⁹⁰De Christi Ecclesia. Rome 1928, p. 146.

¹⁹¹De Ecclesia Christi. Romæ 1927. 5th ed. Vol. I, p. 332.

¹⁹²*Op. cit.*, I, p. 364.

¹⁹³Chrétiens désunis, p. 209. Eng. tr., p. 235.

¹⁹⁴L'Église du Verbe Incarné. II, p. 1058. The word Fr. Rahner used (cf. *Art. cit.* above), *Mehrschichtigkeit*, translates the same idea.

¹⁹⁵C. LIALINE: Une étape en ecclésiologie. Ir 20 (1947) p. 44.

¹⁹⁶A. LIÉGÉ: L'appartenance à l'Église et l'Encyclique *Mystici Corporis Christi*. RSPT

cannot be explicitly based on the encyclical; he distinguishes the members in the eminent sense and in the simple sense of the Mystical Body¹⁹⁷.

It is important to note that the encyclical itself contains a very significant word which can justify such an approach to the problem of the relation of non-Catholics to the Church, as A. Chavasse has shown¹⁹⁸. The encyclical uses the word *reapse*, which qualifies the total membership of the Catholics in the Church, to distinguish the perfect realization of a thing from partial realizations. It was therefore imperative to try to show that the three factors of total membership in the Church—profession of the apostolic faith, communion in the sacraments, and submission to the hierarchy—can communicate grace, even if they are present only imperfectly. An original study by Fr. Gribomont tried to deal with this delicate problem in detail¹⁹⁹. His main idea is the deep analogy between the structure of the Church and that of the sacraments. As for the sacraments, we know that the sacramental signs and grace do not always correspond perfectly. The objective efficacy (character) of the sacraments can remain without going hand-in-hand with sanctifying grace; an obstacle can often delay the effect of the sacrament, and in return theologians admit that the *votum sacramenti* may be sufficient in certain cases. Regarding membership in the Church, Fr. Gribomont continues, the conditions it requires—profession of faith, baptism, and ecclesiastical communion—constitute an organic unity; each one refers to the others. Consequently, the negation schismatics and heretics made is not only partial, but at the same time it also implies a contradiction; they must admit, to safeguard what they profess, the idea of the true Church of Christ, the unity of the Church, *conditio sine qua non* for belonging to Christ²⁰⁰. The author's developments obviously aim to demonstrate that not only can individual non-Catholic Christians acquire the grace of Christ, but that even separate Christianities have a certain sacred character²⁰¹, “a visible but imperfect link with the Church”²⁰².

Unlike Fr. Congar²⁰³, the author maintains that the question of good faith does not arise in connection with the community, because as such it has no responsible conscience, “a secret conscience”, but must be judged by

32 (1948) p. 351.

¹⁹⁷V. MOREL: Le Corps mystique du Christ et l'Église catholique romaine. NET 70 (1948) pp. 703-726.

¹⁹⁸A. CHAVASSE: Ordonnés au Corps Mystique. NET 70 (1948) pp. 690-702.

¹⁹⁹Du Sacrement de l'Église et de ses réalisations imparfaites. Ir 22 (1949) pp. 345-367.

²⁰⁰Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 365.

²⁰¹Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 364.

²⁰²*Art. cit.*, p. 357.

²⁰³Cf. *Chrétien désunis*, p. 301. Eng. tr., p. 242.

its actions in themselves. However, these acts contradict each other because their negations suppose implicit affirmations²⁰⁴; according to him, history can only rarely demonstrate the bad faith of the schismatic or heretical act of the community. His conclusion speaks of “the idea of a sacrament realized analogically, imperfectly”²⁰⁵. The notion of a valid but illicit sacrament would further support this thesis, in the opinion of the author.

Surely Fr. Gribomont is looking for the solution along a good path. Furthermore, in wishing to exclude any leveling of the Catholic Church with the separate Christianities, he essentially subordinates them to it and simultaneously shows that separate Christianities have some sacredness despite their denials. However, regarding this alleged good faith of schisms and heresies as such, the author’s assertion is not supported by arguments. Additionally, Fr. Gribomont ignores the fact that if the conscious negation of a single dogma completely destroys the infused virtue of faith on the individual and subjective level, on the objective level it leaves the whole fact of the schism and heresy, even if the official act of schism and heresy involves basic contradictions. Some indispensable clarifications should further circumscribe the nature of the “analogical realizations” of the sacrament of the Church. It would be desirable to clarify what analogy it is. Furthermore, more emphasis should be placed on the fact that this analogous realization is only a very imperfect channel of grace. Otherwise, one arrives at suggestions so ambiguous that this idea of the analogical realization of the Sacrament of the Church would lead, according to the author, to alterations which were deemed impossible at the time of the irrevocable decision of Leo XIII concerning the validity of Anglican ordinations²⁰⁶.

2

If the problem of the relationship of non-Catholics with the Church has proved to be a particularly delicate question, the difficulty is even greater with the problem of the salvation of infidels. At the root of the tendencies which dominated the solutions one can note several patterns. Among them, the most important are the need for a new apologetic, a currently more conciliatory psychological attitude, and the re-honoring of the dogmatic aspect of the mystery of the Church. The first of these reasons, the new apologetic need, had its source in the widening of the global horizon not only in a geographical sense, but especially in a historical, archaeological, and ethno-

²⁰⁴Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 360.

²⁰⁵Cf. *art. cit.*, p. 365.

²⁰⁶Cf. *art. cit.*, pp. 365-367.

graphic sense. Facing the immense populations which remained outside the influence of the Christian missions, it became more and more difficult, at least from the psychological viewpoint, to maintain the scholastic thesis according to which an interior illumination would always be at the disposal of the pagans for arriving at the explicit knowledge of the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Trinity. The science of comparative religions has also highlighted, in non-Christian religions, many elements which demanded a new interpretation. In addition, an attitude of Christian benevolence had to be opposed to the attacks of deism based on an immanentist humanism.

Thus, long before recent theoretical research, a new psychological attitude emerged in the literature on this subject. One applied the traditional principles with notable benevolence and an understanding full of indulgence²⁰⁷. The conferences of Lacordaire, Ravignan, Monsabré, the mystical treatises of Faber, and the pastoral letters of Bougaud abound with expressions full of confidence about the salvation of millions of infidels²⁰⁸. The awareness of the universal attraction of grace has brought about the feeling of a fraternal sympathy that has become the characteristic attitude of our generations towards the infidels. An attitude which not only goes beyond mere tolerance, but has managed to reconcile the integral attachment to Christianity with the respect for the freedom of souls. She keeps repeating that “many are part of the true Church long before their real belonging to the Church and to Christ becomes a visible aggregation in the Catholic communion”²⁰⁹.

However, the theoretical developments did not fail to leave much to be desired. Above all, regarding the axiom *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*, Catholic apologists have proposed less correct interpretations, applying it exclusively to all the saved, that is to say “to the soul of the Church”. The theory according to which each infidel would receive at the moment of death an illumination which would allow him to freely decide his eternal fate was also proposed again; but lacking a biblical foundation, it did not have much success. Likewise, the thesis of Card. Billot that places most infidels in limbo, as non-adults with respect to salvation, not only did not receive a favorable reception²¹⁰, but was considered on the non-Catholic side

²⁰⁷Cf. L. CAPÉLAN: *Le problème du salut des infidèles*. I. Essai historique; II. Essai théologique. Toulouse 1934. 2nd ed.

²⁰⁸*Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 506.

²⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p. 544.

²¹⁰L. BILLOT: *La Providence de Dieu et le nombre infini d'hommes en dehors de la vie normale du salut*. (A series of articles in the journal *Études*, 1919-1922).

as a desperate attempt by Catholic theology to overcome the “untenable” positions of scholastic theology²¹¹.

The authentic solution about the salvation of the infidels was to be based, as in the case of non-Catholics, on the idea of the Church as a sacrament. The first step towards this solution consisted in establishing the notion of a secret, invisible membership in the visible Church, the only means of salvation. Although this notion is found in several theologians of the 19th century, the substantial booklet of Fr. Bainvel²¹² is the most representative of this new position that has kept being accentuated since about thirty years ago. In Capéran’s words: “The traditional sense of the maxim ‘outside the Church no salvation’ has been restored to honor, without any Jansenist exclusiveness resulting from it”²¹³. Fr. Bainvel, after having pointed out the embarrassment of Catholic apologists on this subject, rejects the distinction between soul and body of the Church, as being open to ambiguity. He likewise rejects the distinction between the membership by means and by precept in the body of the Church, a distinction which cannot invoke tradition in his favor. According to him, we must harmonize the apparent antinomy of two contradictions: membership in the body of the Church and possibility of salvation for infidels. Bainvel offers as a solution the distinction between ordinary and extraordinary Providence, belonging in fact and in desire, *re et voto*, and the notion of implicit desire, without forgetting to conclude his article with a remarkable warning: Do not “renounce the capital notion of the essential visibility of the Mystical Body”²¹⁴.

So the decisive change appears to consist in a new notion: that of a real, though invisible membership in the visible Church. On the one hand, the doctrine of supernatural salvation offered to all men has been clarified—i.e., the universality of the call to salvation, the gift of grace to infidels, and the need for an act of faith, and especially the qualities of this act of faith. On the other hand, one stood firm in the absolutely necessary mediation of the visible Church. Consequently, one had to affirm that when, due to “an invincible ignorance, incorporation into the Catholic society does not in fact take place, even an implicit desire to be part of it is essentially sufficient to imply the effective incorporation”²¹⁵.

But, considering that the first element of the visibility of the Church, as an effective sacrament of salvation, is the profession of faith, several

²¹¹G. LA PIANA: *Art. cit.*, (see above, Introduction, note 4) pp. 256-267.

²¹²Hors de l’Église pas de salut. Dogme et Théologie. ET 49 (1913) pp. 289-313.

²¹³*Op. cit.*, I, p. 544.

²¹⁴*Art. cit.*, p. 313.

²¹⁵L. CAPÉRAN: *Op. cit.*, II, p. 105.

theologians have endeavored to show that the saving, elementary faith of the pagan is not strictly invisible in most cases. According to them, the implicit desire for salvation is expressed either by actions, by external signs, or it consists at least in the intimate relation to the solidarity of the human race in the work of salvation. Reference has been made to research on religious ethnology which has borne witness, in full agreement with the dogma of primitive revelation, to the fundamental unity of the religious and moral conscience of humanity²¹⁶. Paleontology and the history of religions have also noted the numerous manifestations of the naturally Christian soul. Moreover, even more favorable to this thesis, the most uncouth pagan milieu revealed traces of an ancient tradition according to which the Divinity came into contact and remains in relationship with men.

Fr. Sertillanges, relying on these contributions, then tried to establish a link between these sketches of non-Christian religions and the visible Catholic Church. Above all, he stresses that all these values do not belong to non-Christian religions, but to humanity, which always receives its religious instincts from God. Consequently, these partial values have a direct relation with the Catholic Church in which God wills the service of the man towards Him: “Our Catholic Church envelops, according to its body, as extrinsic dependence on its body, all the religious forms which are antagonistic to it, but partially and by the means I have just said, servants”²¹⁷.

The connection of the *anima naturaliter christiana* of the pagans with the Church was emphasized even more speculatively through the basic unity of the human race in view of the redemption. Fr. de Lubac’s research brought important testimony from the Fathers²¹⁸, while the valuable work of Fr. Rahner developed the philosophical and theological foundations²¹⁹. According to Fr. de Lubac, the Fathers always had the unity constituted by the human race, regarding salvation, in sight. The importance they give to the following themes is proof of this: the rise of humanity to the supernatural order in our first parents, original sin and its consequences; the human nature of Christ, as the representative of all humanity; the universal effectiveness of redemption; the entry of the Gentiles into the Church, etc. In short, Fr. de Lubac says, summarizing, the infidels can be saved because they are an integral part of the humanity that will be saved.

Fr. Rahner wonders, for his part, in what sense one can attribute a “visibility” to the implicit desire for salvation. According to him, the unity

²¹⁶L. CAPÉLAN: *Op. cit.*, I, p. 553.

²¹⁷L’Église. Paris. 5th ed. Vol. II, pp. 119-120.

²¹⁸H. DE LUBAC: *Catholicisme*, pp. 192 ff.

²¹⁹K. RAHNER: *Die Zugehörigkeit...*, cited above, p. 211, note 183.

of the human race has an organic character; it is something more than the simple, numeric juxtaposition of individuals. It rather constitutes the concrete framework of human acts in space and time. In other words, the personality and the freedom of man, source of the moral choice, always have a direct relation not only with the individual existence of the subject, spiritual and material at the same time, but also with the organic communal existence of the human race; it follows that, clothed in a certain visibility, these natural moral acts which decide on the future life, will be directed towards a supernatural goal, because the Incarnation assigns a supernatural destination to the whole human race of which the subjects of these moral acts are one organic part.

The human race, called and led towards redemption, consecrated in a certain way by the Incarnation, heads towards its blooming, the Church, and virtually constitutes “the people of God”. This is how the good faith and good will of millions of infidels attains, through the reality of “the people of God” (the human race destined for supernatural life and virtually consecrated by the Incarnation) the visible Church, to which, by necessity of means, it is imperative to belong²²⁰.

We see that these solutions presuppose the theandric, sacramental, ecclesial structure of every grace²²¹. They see in the Church, above all, the “effective sign of the supernatural unity of the world with God”²²². However, it should be noted that this membership obviously cannot have the same meaning as that of Catholics in the Church. Of the three elements of membership in the Church—faith, sacraments, and ecclesiastical communion—the infidels can have only one: faith taken in a broad sense: faith in the remunerative God. Schismatics and heretics also have, although in varying degrees, a second material element: the sacraments; they lack the formal element: ecclesiastical communion. This is why neither schismatics nor heretics nor non-Christians can constitute the Church, Mystical Body, Sacramental Body of Christ, because they lack the formal element of this “Church-sacrament”, ecclesiastical communion.

This is how the different degrees of membership in the Church, sacrament of salvation, prove the rightness of the words of St. Augustine: *nomen mutatum est, non religio*. The same divine plan of salvation, the same Church, and the same faith always saved men everywhere; and always with a view to the Incarnated Mediator and its extension, the Church, was grace

²²⁰ *Art. cit.*, pp. 183-188.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 175.

²²² *Ibid.*, p. 180.

given to men of good will, and grace was always granted in the measure of their conformity to Christ. But this full measure of Christ can only be achieved by full membership in the Church. This leads us to the missionary content of the axiom *extra ecclesiam*, and this will justify our last remark precisely: One had the opportunity to see how much the aspirations of a vital nature pushed the researchers towards the most favorable solution for schismatics, heretics, and infidels. These vital aspirations no longer serve their cause, if under the pretext of compassion and sympathy they contribute, if only to a minimal extent, to weaken the importance of the one Church-sacrament: the Roman Catholic Church, Mystical Body of Christ.

4.4 The definition of the Church

In the presence of the strong emphasis on the interior aspect of the Church, Bellarmine's definition of the Church, which for centuries dominated theological thought on the Church, began to prove insufficient to express the true essence of the Church. It has become increasingly evident that a definition of the Church must suggest more than the notion that "the Church is only one, not two, and that the body of men of the same Christian profession and of the same Sacraments gathered in communion is one and true, under the rule of legitimate pastors and especially of the one Vicar of Christ on Earth, the Roman Pontiff"²²³. But the substitution of this definition with a more adequate one did not take place until after a long maturation of theological reflection. Passaglia took the first decisive step in this regard, by linking the mystical side of the Church to its formal cause. While a good number of theologians have been content to follow Passaglia, the secular German theologian Pilgram, as we have seen, has pioneered new paths. After rejecting several legal and apologetic definitions as insufficient, he boldly proposed that the true definition of the Church embraces all the richness of the idea of the Church in a single concept, in that of *Gemeinschaft*, which according to him contains the organic synthesis between the person and the community²²⁴.

Since the Vatican Council, some wanted the idea of the Mystical Body to prevail, while theologians opposed to the *Schema* thus feared of sliding into a kind of mysticism, where the exterior aspect of the Church would no longer maintain its proper value. They would have rather liked to see

²²³De Ecclesia, III, 2.

²²⁴See above, p. 57.

in the *Schema* the idea of People of God or Kingdom of God, rather than that of Mystical Body, as the definition of the Church. The critical remarks of a good number of the Fathers²²⁵ allows one to believe that the expression “Mystical Body” represented for them the invisible side of the Church without being sufficiently linked to the hierarchy. In fact, the first chapter of the *Schema* does not specify enough the meaning of the word “body”, and the definition was not clarified in a way sufficient to remove any misunderstanding.

At the turn of the century, the American theologian D. Barry found it necessary to widen the limits of the Bellarminian definition as much as possible to dispel the accusation of rigidity brought against Catholicism at a time of religious tolerance. According to him, all men in a state of grace belong to the Church, no matter if they are Catholic or not. This is why holiness must be the essential point in a definition of the Church²²⁶. After this unfortunate attempt to go beyond the unilateralism of the Bellarminian definition, let us look more closely at Commer’s very characteristic reflections in this matter. His starting point is again a correction of Bellarmine’s definition, and his conclusion leads to the impossibility of defining the Church. His surprising words deserve to be quoted in full, despite their length²²⁷:

If we could perfectly penetrate the mysterious essence of the Church, we would be able to define strictly scientifically what the Church is. We should then grasp it in a formal concept which exactly espouses all its properties. But in the history of theology we find no similar definition which suffices, according to the requirements of logic, to define its essence and which, therefore, contains no metaphor; but all the attempts so far are more or less only descriptions, which may have practical value for apologetics or canon law, but will never amount to a strict definition of its essence. This is not only true of the definition given by Bellarmine, but also of more recent attempts, which, by introducing the concept of sacramentality, allow us to deepen our knowledge of the Church, but nonetheless remain simple analogical descriptions and, as such, leave the mystery entirely untouched.

The reader’s immediate impression will probably be that this position well deserves Koster’s harsh criticism: “It is unthinkable that one was aware of

²²⁵Mansi, Vol. 51, col. 751-763.

²²⁶Cf. *art. cit.* above, p. 249.

²²⁷E. COMMER: *Das Leben der Kirche*. DT 6 (1919) p. 173.

this fact, when the dangerous sentence above was written”²²⁸.

But if we analyze the reasons which made Commer write these words, his position will appear in an entirely different light. First of all, it should be noted that Commer, while considering the Bellarminian definition insufficient, accepts the opinion of the great Doctor, according to which the Church is definable in the same way as the Republic of Venice. But once the mystical essence of the Church is admitted, it remains only to renounce, with Commer, defining the Church, because that would reduce the mystery of the Church to the level of a natural sociological entity, which is obviously unacceptable. The other reason for Commer’s position must be sought in the influence of Pilgram. As we have just seen, Pilgram finds a *complete* definition of the Church in the notion of *Gemeinschaft*. But this again means, for Commer, that the idea of the Church, including its mystery, can be expressed by the mere forces of reason, which is obviously impossible. So the definitions proposed so far, he writes, “are more or less only descriptions that can have a practical value but which will never amount to a strict definition of its essence”²²⁹. Furthermore, the two aspects of the Church, visible and invisible, make it impossible for a single notion to embrace and express the whole content of the idea of the Church. And ecclesiologists such as Feckes and Congar have come to accept Commer’s last remark. We must therefore not think that Commer adopted a kind of theological anti-intellectualism and that he misunderstood the value of definitions of mysteries, such as that of the Incarnation, the sacraments, etc. In this sense K. Adam rejects Koster’s criticism by warning that one must be content with a description of the essence of the Church²³⁰.

According to Feckes, the mystery of the Church can only be expressed with the help of two propositions based on the two aspects of the Church, respectively. The first definition must come from outside towards the mystery of the Church and must present the Church as “an institution of salvation founded by Jesus Christ to procure adoptive filiation for those who form, through the mediation of the hierarchy, the Mystical Body of Christ”. The other definition goes from the inside to the outside by calling the Church the Mystical Body of Christ, to which the Man-God gave existence by his sacrifice as high priest and which he vivifies and maintains forever by the ministry of the hierarchy²³¹. This position of Feckes was adopted by Fr. Congar. For

²²⁸ *Op. cit.*, p. 103.

²²⁹ E. COMMER: *Die Kirche in ihrem Wesen und Leben*. Wien 1904, p. 59.

²³⁰ K. ADAM: *Ekklesiologie im Werden. Kritische Bemerkungen zu M. D. Koster Kritik an den ekklesiologischen Versuchen der Gegenwart*. TQ 122 (1941) p. 150.

²³¹ C. FECKES: *Das Mysterium der heiligen Kirche*, pp. 154-155.

him: “in the Church we find ourselves in the presence of two irreducible and apparently antagonistic aspects: the institutional aspect (*Heilanstalt*) and the Mystical Body aspect... One remains in the presence of a relative duality which does not allow for a quite simple and unified definition”²³².

The possibilities of going in wrong direction while aiming at a definition of the Church were further increased by the well-known deviations based on a misinterpretation of the Mystical Body in St. Paul. But even aside from this, it has not always been sufficiently recognized that the “Mystical Body of Christ” is above all a metaphor and as such, according to J. Vetter²³³, is never a definition, but a description by an image. For it to become a definition in the strict sense, the formal value of the two terms, “body” and “mystical”, must be determined by an explanation or by the context.

In light of this remark, the definition the encyclical gives must be interpreted: “Now to define and describe this true church of Jesus Christ, which is holy, catholic, apostolic, and Roman, one cannot find anything more beautiful, nothing more excellent, nothing finally more divine, than the expression which designates it as the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ”. And if we carefully read the explanations the encyclical gives for this expression, we admit that the definition proposed by the encyclical, in fact, is neither a single term, nor a metaphor, but a proposition composed of several parts, explained at length. The encyclical uses the word “body” in the sense of corporeality, society²³⁴, to assert the external aspect of the Church completely; absolute dependence on Christ is indicated by the term “Christ”, Head of the Church²³⁵, and its supernatural essence by the word “mystical”²³⁶. The metaphor “Mystical Body of Christ”, which the encyclical explained and clarified, thus becomes an analytical definition that means: the society founded by Christ and endowed by Him with a supernatural being.

4.5 The scope of ecclesiology in theology

The new trend of ecclesiology was to lead, in parallel with researches on the mystical nature of the Church, to new projects and solutions regarding the treatise on the Church.

²³²RSPT 26 (1937) p. 681.

²³³J. VETTER: *Op. cit.*, p. 69. “*Corpus Christi* ist eigentlich nicht Wesenserklärung der Kirche sondern nur ihre Wesensumschreibung durch ein Bild”. *Ibid.*

²³⁴Cf. *ed. cit.*, pp. 33-41.

²³⁵*Ed. cit.*, pp. 43-70.

²³⁶*Ed. cit.*, pp. 71-75.

The first clues in this area also date back to the 19th century. Under the influence of the *Symbolic* of Möhler, theologians began to insert the idea of the Church into theological methodology as fundamental for understanding the entire dogmatic system²³⁷. But for a long time still, ecclesiologists, even the most knowledgeable, did not carefully distinguish between the apologetic and dogmatic viewpoints about the Church. We have already indicated the blending of these two viewpoints in Passaglia and Franzelin. Bellamy holds it as the essential fault of ecclesiology of the 19th century²³⁸. A. Delorme also notes that “often the apologetic treatises of the Church, by mixing these two viewpoints, have lost the force of their argument”²³⁹.

Besides this mixture of apologetic and dogmatic viewpoints, the division of the doctrine on the Church into two treatises, apologetic and dogmatic, delayed the elaboration of an integral, dogmatic treatise on the Church. According to Bellamy, the best solution in this regard is that of the Card. Billot, which considers the foundation and the notes of the Church from the apologetic viewpoint²⁴⁰, while the doctrine on the members and powers of the Church constitutes the dogmatic part²⁴¹. J. Bainvel also maintains that the Church as the material object of a treatise is perfectly divided between apologetic and dogmatic viewpoints²⁴². Most recently T. Zapelena adopted the same plan. The dogmatic part with him only includes the hierarchy²⁴³ and some brief developments on Christ the Head, the soul of the Church, and its members²⁴⁴.

Even the theologians who ensured a place to the treatise on the Church among the mysteries of redemption²⁴⁵, for the most part, repeated the doctrine taken from apologetics regarding the hierarchy. The *Dogmatik* of Th. Simar²⁴⁶, for example, remains silent about the mystical essence of the Church. Despite the large number of pages devoted to this treatise, its development did little to contribute to a more dogmatic understanding of

²³⁷Cf. J. RANFT: *op. cit.*, pp. 116-127.

²³⁸La théologie catholique au XIX^e century. Paris 1904, cf. p. 227.

²³⁹L'organisation d'un traité théologique de l'Église. RAp 60 (1935) p. 296.

²⁴⁰*Op. cit.*, pp. 56-272.

²⁴¹*Op. cit.*, pp. 274 ff.

²⁴²Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 3.

²⁴³De Ecclesia Christi. Pars apologetica. Rome 1946. 4th ed. Pars dogmatica (ad usum auditorum) Rome 1940.

²⁴⁴Cf. Pars dogmatica, pp. 120-167. The very recent edition of the second volume largely fills these lacunae. (De Ecclesia Christi. Pars altera apologetico-dogmatica. Ed. altera emendata. Romæ 1954).

²⁴⁵Cf. J. RANFT: *op. cit.*, pp. 127-139.

²⁴⁶Dogmatik. I-II, Freiburg (Br) 1899. 4th ed.

the Church²⁴⁷. J. Ranft, who outlined the path ecclesiology followed since the Fathers to the present day, thinks he has found its true organic place in the general dogmatic system. His work is divided into two parts, the first of which is a historical research and the second of which summarizes the theological arguments which indicate the place of the treatise on the Church. His arguments, drawn from consideration of the essence of the Church, are: the relationship of Christ to the Church, as the founder of the latter; the relationship between Christ and the Church is that of the head and the body; the Church is the bride of Christ; the unity of Christ and the Church is mystical; the Church is the bearer of the fruits of Redemption; the sacraments are rooted in the mystery of the Church. In a word, the integrity of the dogmatic system requires that ecclesiology be inserted between Christology and the treatise on the sacraments²⁴⁸.

Although Ranft's developments no longer give rise to doubts about the organic place of the Church in the dogmatic system, the elaboration of the treatise is still the object of different attempts. The Vatican *Schema* devotes only its first chapter to the dogmatic idea of the Church. Scheeben was prevented by his death from writing this part of his *Dogmatics*; the continuator of his work, L. Atzberger, limited himself to dealing with the external aspect of the Church²⁴⁹. Bellamy indicates as main points of the dogmatic treatise: the doctrine on the members of the Church and the powers of the latter; he ignores points such as the nature of the Church, its relationship with Christ and the Holy Spirit, etc.²⁵⁰.

In Dieckmann we first find a more detailed account of a dogmatic treatise of the Church²⁵¹. He points out that the dogmatic viewpoint reveals the Church to us in its true light²⁵². The three parts of the treatise are as follows: the relationship of the Church to Christ, to the Trinity, and finally its nature and properties. The first part includes the triple function of the Church by which it continues the mission of Christ; we also find here the analysis of the relationship between Christ and the Church. The second part is devoted almost entirely to the Holy Spirit, soul and sanctifier of

²⁴⁷Cf. Vol. II, pp. 667-981.

²⁴⁸Cf. *op. cit.*, pp. 192-242.

²⁴⁹Cf. *op. cit.* — The 7th volume is devoted to the continuation of the work of Christ: the Church and the sacraments. The Church is envisaged according to its purpose, in its essential notes, and in its hierarchy, including the doctrine of primacy, pp. 279-458.

²⁵⁰Cf. *op. cit.*, chap. X. "Le traité De Ecclesia et la démonstration catholique", pp. 226-242.

²⁵¹H. DIECKMANN: De Ecclesia. Tractatus historico-dogmatici I-II. Freiburg (Br) 1925; cf. Vol. II, "Conspectus dogmaticus", pp. 206-258.

²⁵²Cf. Vol. II, p. 206.

the Church. In the third part, the nature and properties of the Church are examined according to the four causes. Dieckmann's method is that of Passaglia and Franzelin, i.e., that of positivo-scholastic theology²⁵³.

Unlike Dieckmann, A. Delorme proposed a strictly speculative method which takes as its starting point the capital grace of Christ in order to deduce the doctrine on the Church from it. He divides the treatise of the Church into four parts; the Church is considered there successively in Christ, in itself, in its functions, and in its accomplishments. The first part, the Church in Christ, includes the doctrine of capital grace, the foundation of the Church, and the sacrifice and kingship of Christ. The definition, properties, and priesthood of the Church constitute the second part, while the third is devoted to the sacraments in general and to the powers of the Church. The Suffering Church and the Triumphant Church are the themes of the last part²⁵⁴.

Mgr. Journet follows the way of the four causes, already proposed by A. Gardeil²⁵⁵ and adopted by A. de Poulpiquet²⁵⁶. His treatise includes four books, each devoted to one of the causes. The first²⁵⁷ deals with the immediate efficient cause of the Church, viz., the hierarchy and the note of apostolicity. The second volume²⁵⁸ addresses the formal cause or soul of the Church, with the note of unity. The other volumes, still to be published, will relate to the material cause or the members with the note of catholicity; the final cause or the interior order of the Church, with the note of holiness. The project would also contain a brief mention of the preparation and consummation of the Church²⁵⁹.

This synthesis with an extraordinary wealth of documentation succeeded to a certain extent in keeping faithful to the traditional scholastic method by integrating the concerns of modern ecclesiology into it. However, it should be noted that the two volumes already published do not sufficiently make use of the biblical and patristic theology on the Church. In particular,

²⁵³“...sive ex documentis Ecclesiae, sive ex effatis Patrum et Doctorum Ecclesiae et theologorum, sicut mos est theologiae dogmaticae demonstrare suas theses, quam methodum uti patet stricte servabimus” *Ibid.*, p. 207.

²⁵⁴*Art. cit.*

²⁵⁵A. GARDEIL: *Tractatus apologeticus de Ecclesia, visibili societate, secundum quattuor causas*. 1885-86 (manuscript).

²⁵⁶A. DE POULPIQUET: *L'Église catholique*. Paris 1923, pp. 145-192.

²⁵⁷*L'Église du Verbe Incarné*. I. La hiérarchie apostolique. Paris 1941. Eng. tr., *The Church of the Word Incarnate*, London 1955.

²⁵⁸*L'Église du Verbe Incarné*. II. Sa structure interne et son unité catholique. Paris 1951.

²⁵⁹Vol. I, p. XI. Eng. tr., p. XXV.

the method of the four causes does not seem entirely suitable for integrating biblical teaching into the treatise of the Church. We can therefore only share with a certain reserve the opinion of Fr. Nicolas: "...the plan chosen by the author will allow him to bring out in full light what modern ecclesiology has indicated so strongly, namely that the Church is a living whole"²⁶⁰.

E. Przywara's plan shows a very different orientation²⁶¹. According to him, a dogmatic treatise on the Church should include the following themes: a theology of the Church, the Church as the body of the Trinity, a Christology of the Church, the Mystical Body of Christ, an ecclesiology of the Church, the visible Church and its functions, and finally a "Christianology" of the Church, namely the members thereof, with an emphasis on the place of the laity in the Church (*laïcologie*).

Besides these attempts to define a dogmatic treatise on the Church, several ecclesiologists thought that this mystery embraces so much of theology that it must constitute its formal object. J. Anger has been the first that tried to write a theology based on the Mystical Body²⁶². According to him, "the Mystical Body is the center, the source of light for all theology"²⁶³. Without this doctrine, the analyses remain fragmentary, because the truly synthetic idea is lacking. "It is not enough," he continues, "that the anatomy gives us the perfect knowledge of the different organs and members of the body; it is also necessary to study their function and their role in the whole organism. Nothing could be more comprehensive, more apt to unify and enlighten everything, than the doctrine of the Mystical Body"²⁶⁴.

E. Mura²⁶⁵ aims to save the formal object of theology: *Deus sub ratione deitatis*, but at the same time he affirms the primacy of the idea of the Mystical Body among the material objects which the sacred science treats²⁶⁶. On the contrary, Fr. Mersch proposes a solution that attempts to resolve, on the theoretical plane, the difficulties arising in connection with the idea of the Mystical Body as a formal object of theology. He explained his thought several times, and there is a certain evolution in it. First, he simply saw in the Mystical Body what would give unity to the revealed truth: the central idea of theology must account for both God and his works, expressing the

²⁶⁰ *Théologie de l'Église*. RT 46 (1946). Cf. p. 390.

²⁶¹ *Das Dogma von der Kirche. Ein Aufbau*. TQ 125 (1944) pp. 81-83.

²⁶² *La doctrine du Corps mystique de Jésus Christ d'après les principes de la théologie de saint Thomas*. Paris, 1929.

²⁶³ *Op. cit.*, p. 14.

²⁶⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 476.

²⁶⁵ *Le Corps mystique du Christ*. Paris 1937. 2nd ed.

²⁶⁶ Cf. *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 27.

contact between divinity and humanity. “So we could go through all the dogmas; we would see that all of them tell us how our union with God is made in Christ, i.e., how men, being united among themselves in Christ, are thereby united to the Son and to God”²⁶⁷. Later he thought of finding the solution in the person of Christ, who would constitute the ultimate object as God, while he is “the integral and material object as God and man, head and body; the two objects unite in one and make the science which studies them a sole science because Christ is one”²⁶⁸. The introduction of the *Théologie du Corps mystique* betrays a kind of hesitation; alongside the distinction between the formal and material object, it seems to argue that the whole Christ is the first intelligible object of sacred science²⁶⁹.

Of course, this new solution is in conflict with the mystery of the Trinity. According to Anger, “the doctrine of the Mystical Body helps us to better understand the other revealed truths and to better grasp their mutual relationships. Nothing like this can be said about the Trinity. We only observe the presence and the action of the three divine persons in the members of the Mystical Body; but this consideration does not shed any new light on the mystery itself which remains in its absolute transcendence”²⁷⁰. Mura also admits: “If the very dogma of the Trinity does not enter directly into the theology of the Mystical Body, it is envisaged there, indirectly, as the term and the object of the entire life of the whole Christ”²⁷¹.

We will now deal with the real motive which pushed these theologians to defend this new thesis about the formal object of theology. For Anger, through the idea of the Mystical Body that theology is filled with life, that the interpenetration of dogma and morality operates perfectly²⁷². Mura in turn emphasizes the importance of the biblical teaching in order to give life to a sometimes dry and abstract theology “through the anointing of the divine Spirit which permeates the pages of the Divine Book”²⁷³. He sketches a truly living ideal for theology which should lead, thanks to the idea of the Mystical Body, “to a kind of supernatural metaphysics and psychology of the total Christ, or if you prefer, a complete theology—both scholastic and positive, dogmatic and moral or practical—of the Mystical Body of Christ”²⁷⁴. All

²⁶⁷Le Christ mystique, centre de la théologie comme science. NET 61 (1934) p. 467.

²⁶⁸L’objet de la théologie et le Christus Totus. RSR 26 (1936) p. 151.

²⁶⁹*Op. cit.*, p. 59 and p. 63.

²⁷⁰*Op. cit.*, p. 112.

²⁷¹*Op. cit.*, I, p. 27.

²⁷²Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 477.

²⁷³*Op. cit.*, I, p. 28.

²⁷⁴*Op. cit.*, I, p. 35.

the more so since theology today must serve the apostolate and the spiritual life more than ever.

Fr. Mersch is the most representative here as well. According to him, the *primum intelligibile* of theology is a living person and not a formula. The person is revealed only with the help of immediate and intimate contact. Consequently, “the role of theology is not to give the last explanation, but to lead to him who gives it”²⁷⁵. The fundamental intuition of Fr. Mersch comes down to an identity between the center of religious life and thought, and this also determines his method, which Fr. Dejaifve calls the “method of immanence”, so different from traditional scholasticism²⁷⁶.

A few critical remarks are necessary at this point. The idea of the total Christ or of the Mystical Body is absolutely subordinated to the mystery of the Trinity; therefore, it cannot fulfill the role of the formal object of theology. However, it is the most synthetic among the material objects of Revelation, and therefore a theology of the Mystical Body, in the form of a monograph, will render very precious services, especially regarding the concrete, vital aspect of Revelation. In particular, as for the method of immanence of Fr. Mersch, it seems to us that, as desirable as a union between theology and mysticism may be, it involves significant dangers as well. Without willing to diminish the importance of the integration of the vital, concrete aspect of the data revealed in the theological system, we think that such a method risks not always being able to preserve the strictly scientific character of theology.

But these necessary adjustments do not intend to diminish the important role of the idea of the Mystical Body in all fields of theology. We are thinking of the various dogmatic treatises, especially regarding grace and mariology. Regarding the *De gratia* treatise, the words of Fr. Rondet deserve to be quoted:²⁷⁷

Can we indeed, living in the 20th century, not give a considerable place to the theology of the Mystical Body in the theology of grace? Does not grace, whatever the possibility of another order of Providence, come to us from Jesus Christ, head of a living body of which we are members? Finally, if we remember that the Mystical Body of Christ is the Church founded by him, ecclesiology and sacramental theology become thus part of our

²⁷⁵ *Art. cit.* NET 61 (1934) p. 473.

²⁷⁶ G. DEJAIFVE: La théologie du Corps mystique du P. Mersch. NRT 67 (1945) p. 408.

²⁷⁷ H. RONDET: *Gratia Christi*. Essai d'histoire du dogme et de théologie dogmatique. Paris 1948, p. 17.

perspectives...

With great finesse, R. Laurentin noted the services that a renewed ecclesiology can give to mariology. According to him, a convergence between the idea of Mary and that of the Church would bring mariology out of its isolation and would keep within its just limits “the tendency to assimilate Mary and Christ excessively”²⁷⁸.

The revival of ascetic and mystical theology also owes much to the reestablishment of the idea of the Mystical Body. Jürgensmeier²⁷⁹ and Fr. Mersch²⁸⁰ see it as the guiding idea. In Jürgensmeier’s work the general and special asceticism is preceded by an exposition of the biblical and dogmatic doctrine of the Mystical Body. According to Jürgensmeier, if this idea is the center of biblical revelation²⁸¹, it cannot remain secondary in ascetic theology either. With the help of this idea, the spiritual life could receive its organic character and its liberation from an almost exclusively psychological framework.

Fr. Mersch and J. Anger also considered moral theology from the viewpoint of the Mystical Body. The work of the first, without being a complete synthesis of moral theology based on the idea of the Mystical Body, gives precious insights²⁸². Anger’s summary presentation is limited to general ideas. However, let us quote a characteristic passage: “To tell the truth, all of Christian morality is transfigured by the doctrine of the Mystical Body; it becomes divinely attractive at the same time as its very just and very holy requirements are better revealed”²⁸³. C. Noppel²⁸⁴ gives us a pastoral theology based on the idea of building the Mystical Body, quoting the words of Pius XI: “the pastoral theology of the past is no longer sufficient.”²⁸⁵.

We have just seen the main doctrinal points which characterize the current trend in ecclesiology. The search for the mystical and theandric nature

²⁷⁸R. LAURENTIN: Marie et l’Église. VSpir. 86 (1952) p. 305.

²⁷⁹F. JÜRGENSMEIER: Der mystische Leib Christi als Grundprinzip der Aszetik. Paderborn 1933.

²⁸⁰É. MERSCH: Aszetik und mystischer Christus. ZAM 9 (1934) pp. 97-106.

²⁸¹*Op. cit.*, p. 114.

²⁸²É. MERSCH: Morale et Corps mystique. Brussels 1949. 3rd ed. I-II. See especially pp. 7-25 of Vol. II: “La Morale et le Christ total”.

²⁸³See *op. cit.*, pp. 380-414; the author addresses individual and social morals, the problem of suffering, mystical graces, and spiritual direction. *Op. cit.*, p. 380.

²⁸⁴Ædificatio Corporis Christi. Aufriss der Pastoral. Freiburg (Br) 1937. The author first speaks of the pastoral direction of the community, the shepherds, and the laity; the parish is presented there under the aspect of the Mystical Body (pp. 1-134). The second part is devoted to the spiritual direction of individuals (pp. 137-198).

²⁸⁵Cf. AAS 26 (1933) pp. 628-633.

of the Church, the highlighting of its mystical personality, the effort to consider its notes and powers more dogmatically, the sketches of a new treatise and its scope on all the domains of the revealed datum are signs of indisputable progress.

We cannot agree with the grievances of Fr. Koster, who saw only a “pre-theological” stage²⁸⁶ in the contributions of recent ecclesiology. According to him, current ecclesiology has completely been dominated by the unilateralism of modern thought, instead of sticking to the statements of the magisterium and the traditional methods of scholastic theology. This criticism, it is not difficult to guess, has its source in a certain conception of theological work in general which is exhausted in syllogistic deductions and which does not take into consideration the vital aspect of the revealed datum. He also seems to overlook the importance of the ordinary magisterium for theological work. We have often highlighted unilateralism and deviations, the dangers of new trends in ecclesiology, but we cannot affirm with Fr. Koster that the living magisterium does not constitute the major criterion for current ecclesiology, but that this role has to be taken by the inclinations of our time. Likewise, it is quite imprecise to say that the proper duty of ecclesiology refers only to the visible aspect of the Church²⁸⁷. When he tackles the problem of the experience of the Church and denounces the sometimes excessive emphasis placed on it, he does not seem intent to look for a way to insert it into sacred science²⁸⁸.

Besides, after the encyclical, it is no longer possible to maintain, with Koster, that the idea of the Mystical Body brings ecclesiology closer to Donatism²⁸⁹, that the Vatican *Schema* does not reflect the thought of the magisterium. It is true, on the one hand, that regarding the idea of the Mystical Body a certain groping is found even among the best authors, but, on the other hand, there is no shortage of works which endeavor to explain the main viewpoint of ecclesiology, theandrist. This is where the encyclical is of the greatest importance: it puts the sacramental structure of the Church in the forefront, and from this angle one can say “that in the schools of theology it will henceforth control the *De Ecclesia* treatise”²⁹⁰.

²⁸⁶Cf. *op. cit.*, p. VI.

²⁸⁷Cf. p. 125.

²⁸⁸Cf. p. 138.

²⁸⁹Cf. p. 130.

²⁹⁰L. MALEVEZ: *Art. cit.*, p. 386.

Conclusion

To conclude, we would like to synthesize the main results of our research in a few points. We have seen how vast is the literature available to anyone who approaches the study of the mystery of the Church as a theologian. After having analyzed this literature, we cannot avoid feeling different impressions: firstly, it is true that it owes a large part of its value to the fact that it has developed in a new way several doctrinal points, but it still contains for us other lessons. It will teach us to avoid certain deviations from now on and perhaps allow us to identify the paths which tomorrow's ecclesiology will have to take.

Among the doctrinal points, let us mention the most important: the distinction, henceforth indisputable, between a study of the Church for a purely apologetic purpose and a resolutely dogmatic ecclesiology. In conjunction with this first result, we see dogmatic ecclesiology significantly expanding its horizons. Not content with not yielding anything from its object to apologetics, dogmatic ecclesiology has on the contrary annexed numerous considerations about the vital and concrete aspect of the Church.

The dogmatic treatise must be thought of as an extension of Christology and be linked particularly to the aspect of Christ by which He is Head of the Church. Studies on the great Scholastics have shown that their thinking contains fundamental data on this point that we no longer have the right to neglect. The grace which flows from the Head throughout the whole body of the Church constitutes its mystical reality; this fundamental point emerges above all from the recent works that have examined the ecclesiology of St. Paul in depth. And since the Incarnate Word is the source of this grace, the mystical reality of the Church founded on it also exists in a statute of incarnation, i.e., indissolubly united to a visible structure. The Church, a theandric reality, is animated by the Spirit of Christ, who is its soul. Because the Spirit animates the whole life of the Church within, wherever this life is true, it will be in conformity with the laws of the Incarnation, and it is here that the importance of the hierarchy appears. Only this visible hierarchy

can give the faithful the fullness of supernatural life and holiness.

Conversely, the more this life is experienced in the souls of Christians, the more it results in a spontaneous submission to the hierarchy. We can no longer ignore the fact that this life is both an objective and subjective reality, a given from Above, a lived experience; this makes us fairly appreciate the contribution of the precursors of current trends in ecclesiology: Möhler and Newman. Furthermore, we can no longer overlook the multiple manifestations of the faithful becoming aware of the mystery of the Church, in function of their royal priesthood and their dignity as lay people. In addition, once this experience of the Church has been described in detail, the essentials are done for making any criticism by non-Catholics of our ecclesiology obsolete.

This life, infallibly realized by the Holy Spirit, provides the Church with its properties, which shows us that it is one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic and which leads it into the path of a continual fulfillment. The dynamism of the Church will thus reach all areas of created beings to redeem and consecrate them. This dynamism is both centrifugal and centripetal. On the one hand, it places society, history, and all human values within the radius of the action of grace, and, on the other hand, it is the center of attraction for natural and supernatural values existing outside the Church. Thus, we will better understand the requests of the missionary movement, the need for an irenic method, the development of sociological, anthropological themes, etc.

Finally, we must not forget that the way of this supernatural conquest always remains the way of the cross, that the state of the Church is the state of *kenosis*, that it is through her sufferings that she gives birth to her new children, that her true wealth is her firm hope in the return of the Lord. This is how the consideration of the celestial aspect of the Church can crown the developments of the ecclesiologist who will be able to use amply the richness of the thought of St. Augustine.

Such a set of doctrinal points highlighted by current trends clearly shows how these trends have contributed to a better understanding of the Church and to the elaboration of its dogmatic treatise. It is a compelling argument in their favor.

An elaboration of the dogmatic treatise of the Church must learn, from the school of these new tendencies, to avoid certain deviations. By a deep awareness of the meaning of the Incarnation, one will avoid a vague and suspicious mysticism of the visible, legal aspect of the Church; a boundless optimism underestimating the earthly phase of the life of the Church, its *kenosis*. Furthermore, once it has been recognized that the development of the life of the Church through the ages shows the full meaning of the

Incarnation, we will succeed in removing the danger of appreciating the various theological epochs according to criteria that are too dependent on the aspirations of our time. On the other hand, we will realize that in order to safeguard the unity of this development, this blossoming of the richness of the Incarnation presupposes principles and truths equally valid for all eras. This is how historical relativism will be avoided. Then, the reestablishment of these principles will no longer allow for an uncritical enthusiasm to search certain often essential supernatural values outside the Church, the sole deposit of the riches of the Incarnation. Finally, in research one will be careful not to advocate a more or less explicit independence from the magisterium, since it continues the mediation of the Incarnate Word.

Analysis of current trends will also help to identify, to a certain extent, the directions in which future ecclesiology will have to embark. It is absolutely essential to develop an ecclesiological methodology, viz., to establish a sound, non-rigid system of the multiple aspects of the Church. The reason for this is that, among the objects of theological reflection, the Church has the most numerous and diverse aspects. Simultaneously terrestrial and celestial, temporal and eternal, present and eschatological, human and divine, active and contemplative, collective and individual, personal and supra-personal, united in love and governed by laws, visible and invisible; it requires, to be fairly evaluated, a system that balances all these aspects.

Sufficiently thorough research should further elaborate the entire biblical teaching on the Church. This work would give a solid basis for an explanation of the vital aspect of the Church and would bring out its eschatological meaning more clearly by supplementing the apologetic attitude prevalent in current works on this subject. Research on the ecclesiology of the Fathers should devote more attention to what they thought of the hierarchy, the role of the bishops, and the visible aspect of the Church in general. This would allow the dogmatic presentation of the hierarchy to be returned to honor without being limited to the apologetic and legal developments.

Finally, we will now think of the Church not only statically but also dynamically. This dynamic aspect of the Church is indeed called for to create the synthesis of ecclesiology; it will teach that the various faces of the Church form just one organism and that its various aspects are dependent on each other, and it will show that the final goal is the celestial Church, without minimizing the major importance of the terrestrial Church which prepares and makes it possible. Additionally, this dynamic aspect of the Church can attenuate the sometimes too far-reaching contrasts between the apologetic and dogmatic conceptions of the Church, by warning the supporters of both not to exalt too much the visible aspect of the Church and not to forget too

much its earthly condition.

This is how ecclesiology will never lose sight of the fact that all its effort must serve only one goal: to protect and develop supernatural love in and through the Church. In the words of Saint Augustine: “Amemus Dominum Deum nostrum, amemus Ecclesiam ejus; illum sicut patrem, istam sicut matrem; illum sicut dominum, hanc sicut ancillam ejus, quia filii ancillæ ipsius sumus. Matrimonium hoc magna caritate compaginatur... Tenete ergo carissimi, tenete omnes unanimiter Deum patrem et MATREM ECCLESIAM!”¹.

¹Enarr. in Ps. LXXXVIII, Sermo 2, n. 14. – ML 37, col. 1140-41.

Abbreviations

AAS	Acta Apostolicæ Sedis	Roma
ASS	Acta Sanctæ Sedis	Roma
AHDLMA	Archives d'histoire doctrinale et lit- téraire du Moyen-Age	Paris
BM	Benediktinische Monatschrift	Beuron
Ca	Catholica	Paderborn
Coll. Mechl.	Collectanea Mechliniensia	Malines
CT	Ciencia Tomista	Salamanca
DAFC	Dictionnaire apologétique de la foi catholique	Paris
DB	J. Denzinger - C. Bannwart: Enchiridion Symbolorum	Freiburg (Br.)
Doc. Cath.	La Documentation Catholique	Paris
DR	The Dublin Review	London
DT	Divus Thomas	Freiburg (S.)
DTC	Dictionnaire de théologie catholique	Paris
EE	Estudios Ecclesiásticos	Madrid
ED	Euntes Docete	Roma
EO	Échos d'Orient	Paris
ER	The American Ecclesiastical Review	Washington
Et	Études	Paris
ETL	Ephemerides Theologicæ Lo- vanienses	Louvain
Gr	Gregorianum	Roma
HPBl	Historisch-politische Blätter für das katholische Deutschland	München
Hl	Hochland	München
HTR	The Harvard Theological Review	Cambridge (Mass.)
Ir	Irénikon	Chevetogne
JL	Jahrbuch für Liturgiewissenschaft	Münster (W.)

JR	The Journal of Religion	Chicago
KG	Der Katholische Gedanke	München
LZ	Liturgische Zeitschrift	Regensburg
Mansi	Sacrorum Conciliorum Nova et Amplissima Collectio. 1901 ff.	Paris
Mo	The Month	London
MTZ	Münchener Theologische Zeitschrift	München
NRT	Nouvelle Revue Théologique	Tournai
NV	Nova et Vetera	Freiburg (S.)
OCP	Orientalia Christiana Periodica	Roma
RAM	Revue d'ascétique et de mystique	Toulouse
RAp	Revue Apologétique	Paris
RB	Revue Biblique	Paris
RevSR	Revue des Sciences Religieuses	Strasbourg
RHPR	Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses	Strasbourg
RSPT	Revue des Sciences Philosophiques et Théologiques	Paris
RechSR	Recherches de Science Religieuse	Paris
RT	Revue Thomiste	Paris
Sch	Scholastik	Freiburg (Br.)
StZ	Stimmen der Zeit	München
TB	Theologische Blätter	Jena
TG	Theologie und Glaube	Paderborn
Th	The Thomist	Washington
ThWNt	Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament	Stuttgart
TQ	Theologische Quartalschrift	Tübingen
TS	Theological Studies	Woodstock (Md)
VInt	La Vie Intellectuelle	Paris
VSpir	La Vie Spirituelle	Paris
WW	Wissenschaft und Weisheit	Freiburg (Br.)
ZAM	Zeitschrift für Aszese und Mystik	Innsbruck
ZKT	Zeitschrift für katholische Theologie	Innsbruck

We also abbreviate the titles of two frequently cited works:

- EU *L'Église est Une. Hommage à Moehler*, publié par P. Chaillet ; 1939. Paris
- Pr. V. *Procès Verbaux du premier Congrès de théologie orthodoxe à Athènes, 26 nov.-6 déc. 1936*, publiés par H.S. Alivisatos; 1939. Athènes

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