

THE SCIENCE OF SACRED THEOLOGY FOR TEACHERS

Introduction to Theology

By Emmanuel Doronzo

Book One

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Preface

In his reprobation of the theological irenicism and relativism, which began to creep among Catholic writers several years ago under the fallacious name of “The New Theology,” and which seems to make progress in these days, Pope Pius XII declared: “It would be extremely imprudent to neglect or throw away or deprive of their proper value, the many so important things which have been thought, formulated and polished, with increasing accuracy, in order to express the truths of faith. It is a process that has required several centuries of labor, carried out by men of uncommon skill and holiness, under the vigilance of the sacred Magisterium and the light and guidance of the Holy Spirit. To substitute for such concepts conjectural notions and the vague fluid formulas of a new philosophy, which like flowers of the field blossom today and wilt tomorrow, would also be harmful to dogma itself. Dogma would become like a reed shaken by the wind. Contempt for the expressions and notions commonly used by scholastic theologians leads to a weakening of so-called speculative theology, which, as they claim [namely, the defenders of the new opinions], lacks true certitude, inasmuch as it is grounded on theological reasoning.”¹

The Second Vatican Council, far from opening the door to such neomodernism (as some dare to claim) directs us to the “Common Doctor” of the Church as the norm of theological research. “In order to illustrate the mysteries of salvation as thoroughly as possible,” the Council states, “students should learn to penetrate them more deeply by means of speculative procedure, under the guidance of St. Thomas.”²

And again, speaking in general about Catholic schools of

1 Encyclical *Humani generis*, AAS 42 (1950) 567.

2 Decree on Priestly Formation, no. 16 (Oct. 28, 1965).

higher learning, the Council declares that they should conduct a deeper search into contemporary problems and their harmonization with supernatural truth, “following in the footsteps of the Doctors of the Church, above all of St. Thomas Aquinas.”³

Pope Paul VI renews this same commendation even more explicitly and urgently. “Those to whom the teaching function has been entrusted,” he says, “should reverently listen to the voice of the Doctors of the Church, among whom Saint Thomas holds the principal place. For the angelic Doctor’s genius is so powerful, his love for truth so sincere, his wisdom so great in investigating and illustrating sublime truths, and gathering them into a fitting bond of unity, that his doctrine is the most efficacious instrument not only for safeguarding the foundations of the Faith, but also for reaping the fruits of sound progress in a profitable and sure manner.”⁴

Bearing in mind such urgent recommendations on the part of the Magisterium, we believe it useful to publish this short treatise, Thomistic in character, as an introduction to Sacred Theology. This we do in the hope that teachers may derive some fruit from it, and hand this fruit on to others. We beg indulgence if the matter may appear hard to unaccustomed eyes, for its very nature does not allow for easy presentation or light reading.

We agree, of course, that even theology, in organizing its various treatises and in treating of its various questions, needs some kind of *aggiornamento* or adaptation to modern mentality and temperament. But we are also convinced that theological science itself, in its nature, specific functions and proper methods as described in this work, cannot be changed, just as man himself amid the variety of seasonal conditions may well change his clothing but can never change his skin. The severe warning of Pius XII still stands against those who “dare to go so far as to question seriously whether theology and its method, as carried on in the schools with the approval of ec-

³ Declaration on Christian Education, no. 10 (Oct. 28, 1965).

* Allocution delivered at the Pontifical Gregorian University, AAS 56 (1964) 365.

clesiastical authority, should not only be improved, but completely changed.”³

³ Encyclical *Humani generis*. *AAS* 42 (1950) 564.

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I

What is Theology?

The word “theology” derives from two Greek nouns, “theôs” (God) and “logos” (word, speech, discourse). Hence theology in general is a discourse about God. In this sense the word was used originally by pagan writers, as Plato^e, Aristotle^f, and Cicero^g*

Later on the Fathers of the Church began to use it as early as the third century; thus a word foreign to Scripture was introduced into ecclesiastical literature. Eusebius of Caesarea (4-340) gave the title “Ecclesiastical Theology” to one of his works. Toward the end of the fifth century, pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite wrote a work entitled “Mystical Theology.”

In the patristic literature, however, the word “theology” has only a generic meaning, that of any discourse about God, whether given in a scientific way, or in a pastoral and instructional manner, as in the kerygmatic or homiletic forms of discourse. The medieval theologians, beginning with Abelard (4-1142), narrowed the meaning of the word, confining it to a “scientific discourse about God.” It was with this meaning that they gave their great scientific and systematic works the title of “Summae Theologiae.” In his “Summa Theologiae” St. Thomas (4-1274) distinguished further between natural theology and supernatural theology? Natural or philosophical theology, now called theodicy, considers God only under the light of reason, while supernatural theology, now

^e *Republic* II. 379.

^f *Metaphysics* III. 4; VI. 1.

^g *The Nature of the Gods* III. 21.

» P. 1, q. 1, a. 1, obj. 2.

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called simply theology, treats of God under the light of revelation. Since that time, this distinction has become classic and is in common usage among theologians.

Thus the general notion of theology in ecclesiastical literature can be described as *the entire reasoning process of our mind about revelation*, that is, about those divine truths which have been directly manifested to us by God. This is what St. Anselm of Canterbury (-4-1109) expressed synthetically in his famous aphorism: "Faith seeking understanding."¹⁰

¹⁰ *Proslogion*, prologue.

II

Possibility, Usefulness and Necessity of Theology

Given the fact of supernatural revelation, which we know from faith and which is also shown from reason in the apologetical treatise on revelation, we must admit *the possibility of theology*, that is of some reasoning process of our mind about the truths which have been revealed. This process consists in further expressing something true, objective and stable about those truths, and inferring from them logical conclusions, beyond what is simply and without reasoning understood and admitted through faith alone.

This possibility has been questioned recently and even denied by some Catholic theologians, basing their views on a kind of theological relativism and pleading for the introduction of a "new theology." Speculative theology, they claim, has a merely relative value and can only furnish mere probabilities or hypotheses, since it uses analogical concepts, which do not necessarily correspond to objective reality. Besides, any philosophical system can contribute to such probabilities and hypotheses, and indeed the philosophical systems of different ages ought to make this contribution. Thus theology should result from a legitimate and fruitful contact of eternal revealed truth with the actual culture and formation of the human intellect in the given circumstances of history.¹¹

¹¹ This opinion was patronized, among others, by N. D. Chenu, "Position de la théologie," *Revue des sciences philosophiques et théologiques* 24 (1935) 232-257; L. Charlier, *Essai sur le problème théologique*, Thuillies 1938; J. M. Le Blond, "L'analogie de la vérité," *Recherches de science religieuse* 34 (1947) 129-141; H. Bouillard,

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But the denial of the possibility of theology on the basis of such historical relativism leads necessarily to the denial of the possibility of revelation itself. For revelation too is expressed by means of analogical concepts, as when we say that God is the Father or the Son, that in God there are three persons, that God speaks to men through revelation, that grace is a participation in the divine nature, and so on. No one can deny that these concepts—father, son, person, speech, nature—have an objective and certain value when used to express revealed truths, otherwise we give up revelation itself and we face pure Modernism. Therefore, we must conclude that also the analogical concepts, by which discursive reason inquires into these revealed truths and draws further conclusions from them, have an objective and certain value.

The truth of this position receives strong confirmation from the Church's Magisterium in the encyclical *Humani generis*.¹²

The great usefulness and relative necessity of theology is shown clearly by the following three considerations.

First, theology in its generic sense of a reasoning process about revelation, meets a physical need and native disposition of our mind. For it is connatural to man to inquire and to reason about an object which he possesses in his mind, and to draw conclusions from principles that he holds. Therefore, just as philosophical science is born from principles known through the natural light of reason, so from principles known through revelation and believed by faith, it is connatural to us to fashion and develop a sort of theological science.¹³

"Notions conciliaires et analogie de la vérité," *Recherches de science religieuse* 35 (1948) 251-270; H. De Lubac, *Corpus Mysticum. L'Eucharistie et l'Eglise au moyen âge* (éd. 2, Paris 1949) 248-277; *ci.* also *Recherches de science religieuse* 35 (1948) 130-160; 36 (1949) 80-121.

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¹² See AAS 42 (1950) 565-574; quoted above, in the Preface.

¹³ Scripture itself not only transmits to us truths to be believed, in the form of an assertion, but frequently uses also the discourse of reason to illustrate them or to infer one from another. Thus Christ.

Possibility, Usefulness, and Necessity of Theology

Secondly, theology is required by faith itself. For, as St. Augustine puts it, “Through this science . . . faith . . . is begotten, nourished, defended, and strengthened.”¹⁴

Through theology, faith is begotten in unbelievers by way of exterior persuasion, inasmuch as it presents to them the “preambles of faith,” that is, those natural truths about God which are necessarily presupposed by faith. Such are, for example, the existence of God and his providence. Through theology faith is also nourished in Christians. For it gives them a clearer and deeper understanding of the mysteries of the faith, of their mutual connection and of their harmonious agreement with the truths of natural reason. Furthermore, theology defends the Catholic faith. This it does against exterior adversaries, by repulsing their scoffing and exposing their sophistry. Even more importantly, it does so against harmful tendencies within the mind of the faithful, since without solid theological science, human nature slides down easily into superficiality, sentimentalism, and arbitrary views in the interpreting of Scripture, in preaching the word of God, and in the spiritual direction of souls.

Finally, theology strengthens faith in two ways. Subjectively it adds the light of reason, by which faith becomes also a “reasonable submission”¹⁵ of our mind to God. Objectively it contributes to the growth of faith itself, inasmuch as through the work and labor of theologians, the infallible definitions of the Magisterium normally are prepared.

Thirdly, philosophy itself is helped and to some extent perfected by theology, just as nature is perfected by grace and reason by revelation. This is especially evident in the higher branches of philosophy, namely theodicy and ethics, which

from the words of Ps. 109.1 (“The Lord said to my Lord . . .”) infers his own Divinity (Matt. 22.45), and from the text Gen. 2.24 (“On which account man will leave . . .”) he infers the indissolubility of marriage (Matt. 19.6). St. Paul, from the resurrection of Christ, who is the head of the Mystical Body, infers the resurrection of his members, that is of the faithful (1 Cor. 15.20).

¹⁴ De *Trinitate* 24.1, ML 42.1037.

is Rom. 12.1. Such is the sense given to this text by theologians and by the Vatican Council I (sess. 3, chap. 3 on faith, Denz. 3008).

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deal with God and morality. For, since theology is based directly on revelation, it shares to some degree in the same moral necessity that the human intellect has of the direct word of God, in order to acquire suitably the right knowledge of those same truths about God which can be reached through natural reason.

Pope Pius XII in his encyclical “*Humani generis*” declares: “Divine revelation must be called morally necessary for the suitable knowledge of those religious and moral truths which are not of themselves beyond the power of human reason, so that, even in the present condition of mankind they may be reached by all men promptly, firmly, and without any admixture of error.”¹⁰ In this the Holy Father is repeating the teaching of St. Thomas and of the First Vatican Council.¹⁷

¹⁰ AAS 42 (1950) 562.

¹⁷ See St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 1.

III

Theology As A Science

We said above that theology considered in its generic sense is a reasoning process of our mind about the truths of revelation. We shall now analyze the intrinsic nature of this process, that is, the specific notion of theology. This can be summarized briefly and fittingly in the following definition: *Theology is the science about God under the light of revelation.* This definition is made up of two elements which must be given a full and adequate explanation. The first element is the proper scientific nature of theology as an act or process of the human mind; the second is the proper object of theology, namely God himself under the light of revelation.

1. *Theology is a true science.*

By a true science we understand, “the certain and evident knowledge of an object through its proper causes.”

If knowledge is not certain, it is merely opinion. If it is certain but not evident, it is called faith. Thus opinion and faith are both distinguished from science properly so-called. Furthermore, to constitute a science, it is not sufficient simply to have certain and evident knowledge; it must also be knowledge of an object through its proper causes. Thus if I say, “The human soul is immortal,” I express merely a simple knowledge of the immortality of the soul. If, however, I add, “The human soul is immortal, because it is spiritual,” I have a scientific knowledge of the immortality of the soul, because I know it through its cause, that is, as an effect of its proper cause, which is spirituality, for without spirituality there can be no immortality.

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Such scientific knowledge consists really in a reasoning process, in which the cause is expressed by principles, and the effect by a conclusion. In other words, it consists in inferring a conclusion (the effect) from principles (the cause).

In summary, therefore, three elements are required for a true science, namely: first, it must be the knowledge of an object through its cause, by a discursive process moving from principles to conclusions; second, it must be certain; third, it must be evident. We now proceed to show that these three essential requirements are actually found in theology.

Theology is indeed a *discursive process*, in which the mind moves from some principles or truths, known through revelation and held by faith, to infer real conclusions, that is, new truths, not explicitly contained in the former. For example, from the revealed truth of the presence of two natures in Christ, theology infers the presence of two wills, human and divine, in the same person of Christ.

Theology is moreover *certain* knowledge because it is based upon and proceeds from the principles of faith. Therefore it shares in their absolute certitude.

Theology is also an *evident* knowledge, because it shares likewise in the intrinsic evidence of its principles. In other words, it necessarily infers its conclusions from revealed principles which are objectively evident in themselves, and will also be subjectively evident to us in the beatific vision, although they are not evident to us in our present state of simple faith. Seen from this point of view, theology exhibits a certain imperfection, for it is a *science subalternata to the* knowledge which we will have in the higher science of beatific vision, in which its principles are immediately evident.

Music offers an example which may help to understand this better. Music is a science subalternata to arithmetic, in which the laws and principles of musical rhythm become immediately evident. Thus a musician who is not at the same time a mathematician has only mediate evidence of his principles, and in his present state he must receive them from the mathematician through an act of natural faith.

2. *The object of theology is God, under the light of revelation.*

The expression “God under the light of revelation” includes the material object, the formal object, and the formal light of the science of theology. These three are technical terms in any science, and must be analyzed carefully for accuracy and precise understanding.

The *material object* of a science is the concrete being or reality which is under consideration. In the case of theology, this is God himself, understood both in his nature as the principal material object, and in his effects, namely creatures, which are the secondary material object. The reason for this extension of the material object of theology is the fact that every cause is found in its effects and extends itself to them.

The *formal object of a science* is the particular aspect under which the material object is considered. In the case of theology, the particular aspect under which God is considered is the concept of *Deity*. This means that God is studied by theology formally as God, that is according to those inner attributes which are properly and exclusively divine, such as the mystery of the Holy Trinity and of our participation in this mystery through sanctifying grace.

The other attributes of God which are common to creatures, such as being, truth, power, intelligence and will, belong only to the material object of theology. They are the formal object of philosophy itself, that is, of that branch of metaphysics which is called theodicy.

The *formal light* of a science is that property which makes the formal object itself adequate to our intellect, that is, able to be reached by our intellect. This is nothing else but the proper immateriality of the object, which makes the object intelligible, and for this reason it is called light. Hence, in the case of theology, its formal light is the supreme immateriality of Deity, made proportionate to our intellect by means of revelation, and for this reason it is called the light of revelation.

Now we are in a position to state the total object of theology. It is God and all created things in their relation to God as to their cause. However, God is considered formally as Deity, that is, in his intimate nature, under the light of revela-

tion, that is, according to his supreme immateriality and intelligibility as manifested to us by revelation.

This can be illustrated by using the example of the act of *ocular vision*. Here the material object is a *body, concrete with quantity*. The formal object is *color*, which is primarily and directly reached by the eye when it sees a quantified body. The formal light under which color is reached by the eye is the *sensible light*, understood, however, as that degree of immateriality which is found in color and which makes color visible, namely, adjusted to the power of sight.

A further example can be given from the field of philosophy. In the science of *metaphysics*, the material object is *being*. The formal object is *being as such*, that is, the pure and simple concept of being; hence metaphysics is the science of being, formally as being. The formal light is the natural *light of reason*, understood as that high degree of immateriality which is proper to being as being. It is called the light of reason because the human intellect is by itself adequate and adjusted to reach such an object.

Some theologians have proposed supernatural reality other than Deity as the formal object of theology. In particular, they have proposed Christ, understood as “the whole Christ,” both physically and mystically—in other words, Christ and the Church together. This opinion suggested by a few writers in the Middle Ages, has been taken up again in our time and advocated insistently by several writers.¹⁸

This view does not stand precise theological analysis, for the following reasons.

¹⁸ St. Thomas mentions and refutes this and other opinions advanced in the Middle Ages (*Summa Theol.* p. 1. q. 1. a. 7; *In. 1 Sent.* prolog., q. 1, a. 4). In recent years the opinion about “the whole Christ” was again proposed, especially by E. Mersch, “Le Christ mystique, centre de la théologie comme science,” *Nouvelle revue théologique* 61 (1934) 449-475; “L’objet de la théologie et le ‘Christus totus,’” *Recherches de science religieuse* 26 (1936) 129-157; A. Stolz, *Introductio in sacram theologiam* (Friburgi Br. 1941) 71; C. Colombo, “La metodologia e la sistemazione teologica,” *Problemi e orientamenti di teologia dommatica* 1 (Milano 1957) 47.

First of all, the formal object of a science must be such that it can explain all the other objects which that same science considers. In other words, it must be implicit in all the other objects, embracing them all and reducible to no one of them. These requirements fit only the concept of Deity, which is found both in God himself as his intimate nature, and in all other things as their efficient and final cause.

All other objects or concepts, as Church, Christ, the whole Christ, are not found in God himself, and cannot explain the attributes of God, for he is prior to them. The very concept of Christ, as such, is not contained in the divine attributes nor in the inner life of God. Neither does the concept of Christ explain these attributes since they are prior to it. In other words, the Incarnation is subsequent to the inner life of God. Nor does the fact that Christ includes divinity itself change the case. For one part of him, that is his humanity, has its own explanation only in the divinity, as in its cause. Nor does Christ's divinity, as identified with the person of the Word and communicated to his human nature, explain the other two persons of the Trinity, nor even the procession of the Word from the Father, for this also precedes the Incarnation.

Furthermore, since theology proceeds from the truths of faith and from revealed principles, it must necessarily have the same formal object as faith and revelation themselves. But the formal object of faith and revelation is the concept of Deity, on whose sole authority the revealed truths are believed. Therefore, the formal object of theology is also the concept of Deity, from which ultimately all theological conclusions derive.

St. Paul himself seems to suggest this when he says: "All things are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."¹⁹ Therefore we must conclude with St. Thomas: "In sacred science all things are considered under the aspect of God, either because they are God himself, or because they are referred to God as to their principle and end."²⁰

The aforementioned theologians seem to confuse science

¹⁹ 1 Cor. 3.23.

²⁰ *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1. q. 1, a. 7.

with action, theology with the practice of preaching and the activities of Christian life. In such practical activities, the center and primary object is without doubt Christ himself, because he in his humanity is for us the means and the way to God. The same apostle St. Paul recognizes this as well: "For I have not judged myself to know anything among you, except Jesus Christ and him crucified."²¹ But from this it does not follow that Christ, as such, is the primary and formal object of theological science, since the humanity of Christ and the very mystery of the Incarnation find their reason and explanation in the higher mystery of the Trinity and in the intimate nature of Deity.

The same practical purpose, as well as the man-centered ideas and tendencies of our time, have led other recent authors to place the formal object of theology in man himself. Thus they define theology as *the science of salvation*. This opinion is not really new; it simply receives new inspiration and force from the present times. St. Thomas himself points this error out and refutes it, saying: "Some doctors, focusing their attention on the things that are treated in this science rather than on the formal aspect under which they are considered, assign as its proper object the work of reparation [that is of man's salvation, rather than God himself]".²² In these brief words St. Thomas pinpoints the irrelevant character of this opinion.

As a matter of fact, everyone admits that theology is the science of revelation, that is, of the supernatural revealed truths as distinct from philosophy, which is the science of reason and natural truths. Hence theology is principally and formally the science of the primary revealed truth, which is not man, even as to his salvation, nor Christ himself as to his saving mission, but God alone in his intimate mysteries, shared by man through Christ the Savior.

Thus several modern theologians, in their hasty practical purposes and tendencies, have been slipping, first, from pure theology into nothing but Christology, and then further down

²¹ 1 Cor. 2.2.

²² *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 7.

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from Christology itself into a kind of supernatural anthropology. This in its turn is likely to be changed, through the same logical process of descent, into a sort of supernatural cosmology, dealing with the salvation or supernatural renovation of this world. When this takes place, theologians are bound to waver and wander, gradually losing sight of God, under the deceptive brilliancy of the world.

IV

Properties of Theology

Theological science is endowed with five essential properties which show its distinctive features and its higher rank in comparison with the natural philosophical sciences. These properties are: supernatural character, specific unity, speculative-practical character, superior dignity, and sapiential nature. We shall discuss and analyze each one briefly.

1. The supernatural character of theology.

Speaking of supernaturality in a broad sense, it is self-evident that theology is supernatural in character on account of its intimate connection with supernatural principles and a supernatural object, namely, faith and Deity.

But a further question is debated among theologians, whether theology is properly and strictly a supernatural science. The reason for doubt arises from the fact that theology is a discourse of natural reason, although it proceeds from the supernatural principles of faith. Hence some theologians hold that it is simply a natural science. On the other hand, theology truly proceeds from those supernatural principles and it is specified by a supernatural object, namely Deity, although it makes use of the discourse of natural reason. Hence there are theologians who hold it to be simply a supernatural science.

There is, however, a third and better opinion, which, in view of the reasons advanced by the other two, takes a middle course, as follows. Theology is both a natural and a supernatural science, under different aspects. It is *formally and essentially natural*, because it consists in a process of natural

reason and furthermore it is an acquired, not an infused, habit of the mind. (It should be noted that no supernatural habit can be acquired, but is necessarily infused into the soul by God, as for example faith, sanctifying grace, charity, hope, and so on.) But theology is also *radically and modally supernatural* because it proceeds from supernatural principles.

It does not, of course, proceed from supernatural principles in the line of efficiency and vitality, as if it were a habit produced by the habit or act of faith, but only in the objective line of intelligibility, inasmuch as those principles are the reason why we give our assent to the theological conclusions. Nor does it matter that the object of theology is essentially supernatural, that is, Deity itself. For Deity is the object of theology in a different way than it is the object of faith, namely, not simply and formally as such, without qualification. It is the object of theology as undergoing a discourse of reason, that is, as known through a discourse of natural reason, proceeding from revealed principles. Hence Deity, while it specifies theology under this aspect, does not communicate to it its own intrinsic supernatural character.

Nevertheless, because it is rooted and grounded in the supernatural principles of faith, theology is so essentially dependent upon faith that it cannot exist without it; hence it cannot exist in a pagan or in a heretic. For the same reason, despite the rational character of its procedure, theology is entirely homogeneous with faith, in its proper object, that is, in the truths logically derived from the principles of faith. This is why St. Thomas defines theology as “an impression of the divine science [in our mind]”²³ and likewise St. Anselm of Canterbury describes it as “faith seeking understanding.”²⁴

2. *The specific unity of theology.*

This means that theology, in all its various parts and treatises, is one single science. It is not, therefore, a collection of several sciences specifically distinct from each other. Nor is it a science in a generic sense, which would be divided into

²³ *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 3, ad 2.

²⁴ *Proslogon*, prologue.

several species, as is the case with philosophy.

This property of theology follows from the specific and indivisible unity of its formal object, the concept of Deity, which is constantly and equally considered in all the parts and treatises of this science. In fact such treatises may be given the following formal titles: On the One God; On the Trinity in God; On God creating and elevating; On God sanctifying through grace; On God incarnate; On the Mother of God; On the Church, the sheepfold of God; On the sacraments, sanctifying instruments of God; On God the Rewarder, or the Last Things. This is the reason why the division of theology into its various parts or treatises is not an essential division, that is, a division into specifically distinct treatises. It is only an accidental division, that is, into integrative or complementary parts which make up one total and single science. This is true not only of the treatises just mentioned, but also of other parts in which theology is usually divided, as systematic and positive parts and speculative and practical parts (see the general division below, pp. 29, 31 f.).

3. The speculative-practical character of theology.

This means that theology unifies into one single science both speculative and practical matters. In this it differs from philosophy, which is divided into two specifically different kinds of science, the speculative and the practical, for example, metaphysics and ethics.

This property of theology follows from the unity and universality of its specific object, that is, from the fact that theology deals with revealed truth, which involves both speculative concepts and human acts to be performed, and considers all of them under one specific and indivisible formal object, which is Deity itself.

Because the principal material object of theology is God, we can say that this science is more speculative than practical. In fact, theology on the one hand deals more directly with divine truths than with human acts, and on the other hand it considers these acts in their relationship to the ultimate end, which consists essentially in the beatific vision, that is, in an act of

the speculative order.²³

However, the speculative and the practical orders, taken formally and in themselves, imply two specific and irreducible differences within the genus of intelligible objects, as is clear in philosophy. Hence it is more accurate to say that theology is at once speculative and practical, not formally and specifically, but only eminently. This means that it unifies both formalities in the eminence of a higher object, namely the Deity itself, in which this distinction and opposition between the speculative and the practical orders vanishes. For such is the case with faith itself, and with the infinite knowledge of God himself whose perfection is shared by theology.²⁰

It goes without saying that this property of theology is extremely significant for catechists and teachers of religion. The more they do their teaching under the theological light rather than through a philosophical pattern, the easier it will be for them to bring the students to reduce the truths they learn to practice in the activities of their life. The dichotomy between doctrine and life, always a real possibility in the all-too-human mode of philosophy, disappears the more the teacher draws upon theological wisdom.

4. The superior dignity of theology.

By this we mean that theology is placed on a higher level than any of the other human sciences, including philosophy with its lofty natural wisdom called metaphysics.²⁷ This property follows from three considerations.

²³ *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 4.

²⁰ It is evident that one and the same faith deals with both orders, namely truths to be understood and things to be done. See *Summa Theologiae*, p. 2-2, q. 9, a. 3. In another place, St. Thomas states: "God knows both himself and the things that he does by one and the same kind of knowledge" (ibid., p. 1, q. 1, a. 4; see also q. 14, a. 16).

²⁷ Cf. *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 5; p. 2-2, q. 4, a. 8; M. Philippon, "La théologie, science suprême de la vie humaine," *Revue thomiste* (1935) 387-421; B. Baudoux, "Philosophia ancilla theologiae," *Antonianum* 12 (1937) 293-326.

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First, it is a corollary of the three properties which we have touched upon so far—its supernatural character, its specific unity, and the fact that it is both speculative and practical. No other science has such characteristics.

Secondly, from the eminence of its formal object, the Deity itself, which is the very intimate essence of the Supreme Being, transcending all the concepts of human reason. The objects of all the other sciences fall within the ambit of human reason: they consist either in some definite created being, or at best, as in metaphysics alone, in the abstract concept of being as such. Metaphysics, indeed, reaches God himself, but only as being and according to his external attributes which are common also to creatures.

Thirdly, from its certitude, which is absolute. The reason for this is the fact that theology is grounded in the absolute certitude of its revealed principles, and through these in the certitude of God's own knowledge, who is Truth itself.

This last consideration regards theological science taken objectively and in itself, but it does not necessarily apply to theology as it stands in the human subject who theologizes. As we noted above (p. 8), theology is only a subalternate science, based upon faith and drawing its principles from faith. Hence, so long as the subject who theologizes is still here on earth far from the beatific vision, his theology will lack immediate evidence of its principles. In this relative and subjective sense, theology has an imperfection in comparison with the other sciences, especially metaphysics. Moreover, since certitude is founded in evidence, such lack of immediate evidence will produce also a certain imperfection in the very certitude of theology—again not considered objectively (for as we noted above, its certitude is objectively absolute), but on the part of the subject. For he can undergo doubt or hesitation in his theologizing, as well as in his faith, on which theology depends,

5. The sapiential character of theology.

Theology is not only a true science (see above, pp. 7-8), but also wisdom, that is, science brought to its highest level—the summit of science. Moreover, as St. Thomas says, theology

is “the greatest human wisdom on earth, not only in one or the other order, but absolutely.”²⁸

While science in general is knowledge of an object through its causes, wisdom is knowledge of that same object through its ultimate or proper causes.²⁸ In this broad sense every philosophical science, and for that matter also mathematics and natural philosophy, is a wisdom. A science can be wisdom either relatively, that is, in a particular order, or simply and absolutely, that is, in every order. In the first sense, mathematics is wisdom in the order of reality as quantified, and natural philosophy in the order of reality as subject to changes. In the second sense metaphysics is wisdom in the universal order of being as such, and hence the supreme wisdom among natural philosophical sciences.

Theology is not only true wisdom, like mathematics and natural philosophy, nor only wisdom simply and absolutely, like metaphysics; it is also the supreme human wisdom, that is, knowledge through the ultimate or proper causes in every order and at every level, since it stands above the level of natural reason. This follows from the universality and superiority of its formal object, which is Deity, that is God not simply as being or even as the Supreme Being, but God formally as God, the highest Cause of the universe, considered according to the deepest concept of his intimate essence.

²⁸ *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 6.

²⁹ See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* I. 1, 2 and 12; II. 7. By knowledge through ultimate or proper causes we understand the knowledge of the essence of some object, which is obtained through an argument “propter quid” (which is always “a priori”). For example when we say: “God is eternal because he is immutable,” immutability is the proper and immediate cause of his eternity, and hence its ultimate cause, the root and intelligible ground of his eternity. On the other hand, an argument called “quia,” does not lead to knowledge of this type of immediate cause. If it is an argument “a posteriori,” as in experimental science, it leads only to the knowledge of the existence of the object, and if it is an argument “a priori,” it leads only to the knowledge of a remote cause of the object, not its immediate cause. For example when we say: “God is eternal because he is all-perfect,” the immediate cause of God’s eternity is not his all-perfection, but that particular perfection which we call his immutability.

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Schematic division of theological and philosophical sciences:

Theology: the science of Deity under supernatural light.

Theology of God himself: under an infinite light: infinite wisdom.

Theology of the Blessed: under the light of beatific vision: supreme created wisdom.

Theology of the wayfarer: under the light of revelation or faith: supreme wisdom on earth.

Philosophy: the science of being under the natural light of reason.

1Metaphysics in the broad sense: the science of being, as being.

Metaphysics in the strict sense: the science of being, as real (which reaches its apex in theodicy, the science of the uncreated being): absolute and supreme wisdom among the natural sciences.

Logic: the science of being, as existing only in the mind (being of reason).

Mathematics: the science of being as quantified.

Arithmetic: the science of discrete (or numerical) quantity.

Geometry: the science of continuous (or extended) quantity.

Physics or natural philosophy: the science of being, as changeable (subject to change).

Psychology: the science of living changeable being (within which ethics may be located).

Cosmology: the science of non-living changeable being.

V

Functions of Theology

The functions of theology, that is, the duties it discharges and the purposes it achieves, must be determined according to its double aspect, as a science and as wisdom.

1. *The functions of theology as a science.*

The proper function of theology, formally as a science, is to deduce conclusions from the principles of faith with certitude, by means of syllogisms properly so-called. Through such syllogisms new and formal truths are inferred which were contained only virtually in the principle, while improper or expository syllogisms consist only in mere explanations of the principles.

This work of inference by the use of proper syllogism is the fundamental function of theology. Without it, it would not be a true science, nor consequently a wisdom, which is the summit of science itself—just as there is no roof without the construction of the lower portions of a house.

It follows that the mere consideration, study, explanation, or defense of the principles of faith is not properly theology, but a mere informal thought or reasoning about revelation. To be theology, it must be a scientific reasoning about revelation.

2. *The functions of theology as wisdom.*

The general function of wisdom is “judging and ordering.”³⁰

³⁰ *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1. a. 6; p. 1 - 2, q. 57, a. 2, corp, and ad 1.

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Theology performs this double function in several ways, both with regard to its own principles, by explaining and defending them, and with regard to the philosophical and natural sciences below it, by surveying them and their principles, and by using them in its own service.

As regards its own principles, theology judges and orders in five ways.

First, it proves their *extrinsic credibility* through evident criteria, consisting in miracles and prophecies. For instance, it shows the credibility of the Divinity of Christ from the miracles performed by him as the Lord and Master of things. This is the apologetical function of theology.

Secondly, theology argues about the principles themselves, not indeed to prove them directly (for no science proves its own principles; it presupposes them as true), but only indirectly, by reducing a denial of them to absurdity, or by what is called the argument “ad hominem,” which consists in inferring one truth, denied by the adversary, from another truth, which he admits. For example, against the Jews, theological wisdom argues from the authority of the Old Testament, and against heretics from the authority of the New Testament, or from both Testaments. Likewise, from the admission of the resurrection of Christ, theological wisdom concludes to our own resurrection. St. Paul himself uses this argument in 1 Cor. 15, 17.

Thirdly, theology explains its own principles, in three ways. It determines their direct and immediate meaning more clearly; for instance, by expressing them with more suitable and precise formulas. It expounds their immediate virtual content through merely expository syllogisms. Especially it illustrates one truth through comparison with another; for example, the mystery of the elevation and fall of man in Adam with the mystery of our reparation in Christ, the mystery of the Eucharist with the mystery of the Incarnation, the mystery of the Church with the mystery of Christ. This last method, usually called “*analogy of faith*” (mutual agreement between the different truths of faith), is the most excellent function of

theology as wisdom.³¹

Fourthly, theological wisdom *strengthens reason*. It does this in two ways. First, by proposing merely probable arguments, or *reasons of fittingness*, as an extrinsic persuasion of the incomprehensible mysteries; such are, among others, the various reasons that are usually brought forward to clarify the supreme mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation.³² The other way is by showing the various *similitudes* with the mysteries that are found especially in material and sensible things; for human reason usually draws its concepts from sensible things and rises from visible likenesses to the understanding of invisible realities.

Fifthly, theology in its sapiential function *defends its own principles*, refuting the objections of the adversaries of faith by means of the natural principles of metaphysics or the art of logic. For these are the common heritage of human reason, and if they are used rightly, they can show that whatever is objected against faith is false and impossible, or at least does not follow necessarily. Indeed, since faith rests upon infallible divine truth, nothing opposing it can ever be demonstrated.³³

As regards the natural sciences, it is evident that theology cannot prove their principles, since it proceeds under a different kind of light, the light of revelation. In this particular point, therefore, theology yields to metaphysics, which as the supreme natural wisdom, demonstrates, judges, and synthesizes within its proper field the principles of all the other natural sciences. Nevertheless, theology, as a wisdom superior to metaphysics itself, performs its proper function of “judging

³¹ Cf. Ch. Journet, *Introduction à la théologie* (Paris 1947) 100-102; B. M. Xiberta, “La ‘analogia fidei’ como procedimiento de técnica teológica,” *XI Semana española de teología* (Madrid 1952) 321-336.

³² The value of the argument from fittingness is emphasized by St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 32, a. 1, ad 2; R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Deo Trino et Creatore* (Taurini 1943) 67; Ch. Journet, *Introduction à la théologie* (Paris 1947) 103-113; M. Flick, “Il valore dell’argomento di convenienza,” *Problemi scelti di teologia contemporanea* (Roma 1954) 57-62.

³³ *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 8.

and ordering” with respect to all the other sciences, including metaphysics itself.³⁴

It accomplishes this sapiential function in the following three ways:

First, it passes judgment on them, insofar as it condemns as false whatever is found in them that is contrary to its own theological principles or conclusions; for truth cannot be opposed to truth.

Secondly, it makes use of these inferior sciences, as it were like handmaids. It borrows their principles for its own reasoning processes, as is clear especially in the case of the principles of metaphysics (for example, the principles of contradiction and causality), without which no theological reasoning is possible. It makes use also of the demonstrations and conclusions of these lower philosophical and natural sciences, as is obvious especially regarding ethics and theodicy, which are incorporated respectively into moral theology and speculative theology.

Thirdly, theology, while judging and using these sciences, elevates and perfects them, just as faith perfects reason. As the First Vatican Council states, “faith frees and guards reason from error and furnishes it with a more ample knowledge;”³⁵ which is true also of theology, the daughter of faith. This is conspicuously evident in the questions on God’s existence, providence and universal causality: on essence and existence as constituent principles of created being; on creation; on the immortality of the human soul. It becomes also generally clear if we make a careful comparative study of the theodicy and ethics of Aristotle, the greatest among pagan philosophers, and Christian theodicy and ethics, especially as expounded by St. Thomas, the greatest among theologians and Christian philosophers.

³⁴ *Summa Theologiae*, p. 1, q. 1, a. 6.

³⁵ Session 3, chapter 4.

VI

Methods of Theology

The word "method" derives from the two Greek words, "meta," meaning after; and "odds," meaning way. Thus a method, literally, is a "way of going after something." It comes to mean, therefore, a certain definite manner of proceeding, and in scientific matters, a definite and systematic manner of inquiry.

In theological science, method can be divided as follows, reflecting a logical process as well as the historical forms it has taken through the ages.

Expository (or kerygmatic, homiletic, catechetical) : used by the Apostles and the Fathers.

Argumentative

Polemical (or apologetical) : used especially by the second century Fathers, called the Apologists.

Doctrinal: developed especially since the Middle Ages.

Positive (or historical in a broader sense) : developed particularly since the 16th century.

Systematic (or theoretical, scholastic): the classic form of theology since the Middle Ages.

Inductive: that is, proceeding from the particular to the universal.

Deductive: proceeding from the universal to the particular.

From what has been said above, in the explanation of the various functions of theology, it is evident that theology,

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formally as a science, allows but one method, that is, the *systematic and deductive*. This follows from the fact that the only specific function of theology as a science is to infer conclusions from its principles.

If theology is considered *formally as wisdom*, however, that is, as extended to further functions, then it necessarily takes up other methods in its rational process, especially with regard to the explanation and defense of its own principles. Thus, according to the various functions, it becomes inductive, or positive, or polemical. It takes up the *inductive* method, when it uses probable arguments and similitudes of created beings to lead us, by the way of extrinsic persuasion, to a better understanding of the lofty mysteries of faith. It uses a *positive* method, when it explains its own principles, by determining their true meaning and formulating their expression in a scientific manner, by making their virtual content explicit through expository syllogisms, and by comparing the various mysteries of faith with each other in order to illustrate and clarify them. Finally, it uses a *polemical* method when it shows the extrinsic credibility of its principles, that is, the mysteries of faith, when it defends them against adversaries by arguing “ad hominem” and refuting their objections: and when it judges the falsehood contained in the principles and conclusions of the natural sciences, if they are opposed to its own principles and conclusions.

A note on the so-called positive theology.

Positive theology (from the Latin “ponere,” meaning to place in position or set up) has a comparatively recent origin. Its importance and need have grown rapidly, and its nature and its object have been discussed widely in recent years. The explanation of its nature, which follows, is generally admitted. Our purpose is to show its distinctive characteristics, and to make clear how it differs from systematic theology. Its historical origin will be shown below (p. 40).

As regards its immediate *object* positive theology is not concerned with conclusions, but only with the revealed principles in themselves. Hence it goes directly to the channels of revelation—Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium—, in order

to grasp and determine the precise meaning of the revealed truths. As such it can be called a “science of documents,” and hence it is commonly divided into three parts, reflecting the three channels or the three kinds of documents, biblical, patristic, and symbolic theology.

Regarding its *method*, positive theology excludes the argumentative—dialectical form, namely, the scientific form in its stricter sense. This means that it does not use philosophy, nor proper or illative syllogisms, nor the classic order and division of questions, as is the case in systematic theology. Instead, it adopts an expository and historical form, in the broader sense of “historical.” In other words, it uses a scientific non-dialectical form, and hence an exegetical, critical, literary, philological, and strictly historical form. However positive theology does not proceed in a purely historical manner, for a theologian is not a historian, whether he is dealing with systematic or positive theology. A pure historian is concerned only with the rational exegesis of what the document immediately before him appears to record and to report. The positive theologian, on the contrary, proceeds in a manner that is truly theological, that is, in close dependence upon revelation and upon the Magisterium, so as to be able to grasp the proper and intimate meaning of a revealed truth, in the frame and in the spirit of all the others. It is clear, therefore, that positive theology is completely distinct from the purely historical and critical auxiliary disciplines of theological science, such as exegesis, patrology, Church history, and the history of dogmas.

Thus rightly understood, positive theology is truly a part of the science of sacred theology, under its sapiential aspect. It is not, of course, a theological science specifically distinct from systematic theology; for, as we have shown above, theology as a whole is one single specific science. Nor is it properly an integrating part of theology, as if it would combine with systematic theology as an equal and separate part of one total theological science (in the way speculative and moral theology make up one systematic theology). It is, therefore, a complementary or extensive part (a “potential part,” in technical terms), inasmuch as it brings a necessary element to the perfection of theological science, and expounds the inner power of this science, under its aspect of wisdom. For, in whatever

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way positive theology is understood or further determined, it is after all to be reduced to a more accurate explanation and a fuller understanding of the principles of theological science. This function belongs to theology itself under its formal aspect of wisdom.

This positive function is not to be exercised separately from the other systematic function, but it must be intimately joined to it in the treatment of the individual theological questions themselves. Separation of these two functions would be harmful to both of them. For, on the one hand, systematic theology, unduly separated from the vital font of its revealed principles, would be in danger of quickly drying up and perishing, or of wandering vainly through subtle and empty questions and dialectical exercises. On the other hand, positive theology itself, violently torn from the solid support of rational principles and from its proper purpose of nourishing the very processes of theological reasoning, would lapse into a mere historical discipline, foreign to the nature of theology, or it would settle down, idle and sterile, within the enclosure of a mere simple faith; for, as St. Thomas warns, “if a teacher settles a question by sheer authority, his pupil will be convinced that it is so, but he will acquire no science or understanding, and he will go away empty.”³⁰

μ *Quodl.* 4, a. 18.

VII

Division of Theology

The logical division of theology, as that of any science, is to be drawn from its object, as well as from its properties and its method, which are themselves rooted in and derived from the object. Since the formal object of theology, namely Deity in itself, is one and indivisible, no division can be drawn from it, otherwise theology would not be one single specific science, but several sciences, like philosophy.

Hence there remain only three possible ways of dividing theology.

The first and principal division can be taken from *the material object*, that is, God, as the primary object, and created things, as the secondary object. Thus theology is divided, as into integrating parts, into various particular treatises, for example, on the One God, on the Trinity, on God creating and elevating, on the Incarnate Word, etc.

The second division can be drawn *from a property of this science*. Thus theology is divided into speculative and practical (dogmatic and moral theology), as its integrating parts. For, as has been explained above (p. 16 f.), speculative and practical are two formally distinct objects, although unified in the eminence of theology and its object.

The third division is taken *from the variety of method* used in the scientific investigation. Thus theology is divided into systematic and positive theology, as its complementary parts.

St. Thomas in his *Summa Theologiae* adopts only the first division, that is, according to the material object. However, he logically and subtly incorporates into it also the second division of dogmatic and moral theology.

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*Outline of St. Thomas' division.*³⁷

On God, as in himself, or, as it were, formally (in modern terms: *On God Triune*): 1st part, qq. 2-43.

On God, as the cause of things.

As the *efficient cause* (*On God Creating and Elevating*): 1st part, qq. 44-119.

As the *final cause* (of the rational creature); that is, on the *rational movement of man toward God*: 2nd and 3rd parts, plus Supplement.

On such *movement in itself* (the entire Moral Theology): 2nd part, subdivided into 1st-2nd, qq. 1-114 (General Moral Theology) and 2nd-2nd, qq. 1-189 (Special Moral Theology).

On the *path* of this movement (that is, about Christ, the Incarnate Word, and his extension through the sacraments): 3rd part, qq. 1-90, and Supplement, qq. 1-68.

On the *term* of this movement (that is, the Last Things): Supplement, qq. 69-99.

This division, very simple and very logical indeed, can be completed as below, according to the way theology is now treated and extended, by the addition of positive and fundamental theology, as well as by a different distribution and designation of the various treatises.³⁸

Theology.

Positive, about the principles of theology or revealed truths, considered with a historical or non-dialectical method.

³⁷ Cf. G. Lafont, *Structures et méthode dans la Somme Théologique de Saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Paris 1960; *Initiation théologique* (par un groupe de théologiens) 1 (Paris 1952) 377-393, where the entire division of the *Summa Theologiae* is shown down to the particular questions.

³⁸ Cf. G. Rabeau, *Introduction à l'étude de la théologie* (Paris 1926), 3me partie; Ch. Journet, *Introduction à la théologie* (Paris 1947) 143-153, 200-203; B. Xiberta, *Introductio in Sacram Theologiam* (Matriti 1949) 192-197, 344-349.

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Biblical. It considers these principles in the deposit of Scripture (It is to be distinguished from mere exegesis and from biblical history.)

Patristic. It considers the same principles in the deposit of Tradition (It is to be distinguished from history of dogmas.)

Symbolic (so called from the Symbols of faith proposed by the Magisterium). It considers those principles in the pronouncements of the Magisterium, organ of revelation (It is to be distinguished from Church history and history of dogmas.)

Systematic, about both the principles of theology and the conclusions thereof, considered with an *argumentative and dialectical method*, and gathered into a scientific unity which can be called a system. This principal part of theology is divided according to the *object*, as follows:

Fundamental (or general), on revelation generically considered:

On revelation itself (Apologetics).

On the channels of revelation (or, more extensively, *On the Theological Loci*).

Formal (or special). On the individual revealed truths.

Speculative (or dogmatic). On speculative truths.

On God.

According to his essence (On the One God).

According to his persons(On Trinity).

On man, and the other creatures (On God Creating and Elevating).

On God-Man, Christ, and the other mysteries immediately depending on him (On the Incarnate Word, the Blessed Virgin, Grace of Christ, Church of Christ, Sacraments of Christ, the Last Things through Christ).

Practical. On practical truths, or things to be

done according to revelation.

Moral. On practical truths and principles, inasmuch as they regulate human acts in themselves, that is in their interior aspect, as the subject of morality and sanctity. To this part of theology are reduced *Pastoral theology and Ascetic-Mystical theology*.

Canonical. On practical truths and principles, inasmuch as they regulate human acts in their exterior and social aspect, or as they become the object of ecclesiastical law. To this part of theology can be reduced *Liturgy*, as the object of ecclesiastical law in matters of cult, although, under a higher and more theological aspect, it belongs also to the aforesaid patristic and symbolic positive theology.

VIII

History of Theology³⁸

The science of sacred theology, taken in the stricter sense of a scientific and systematic process of reasoning about revelation, emerged into full view during the Middle Ages, more exactly in the 12th century; it began to flourish at that time in the Catholic schools of Western Christendom. But, taken in a broader sense of any process of reasoning about revealed truths, theology had its beginning in the early patristic age, and has continued developing and making progress up to the modern time. Hence the history of theology can be divided into three periods: ancient, from the 2nd to the 11th centuries; medieval, from the 12th to the 16th centuries, more exactly up to the Council of Trent; and modern, from the 16th to the 20th centuries. The very recent years of the 20th century are excluded, as not yet belonging to history.

Comparing these three periods from the viewpoint of both the object considered and the method applied, they manifest altogether a striking diversity and a successive progress of the sacred science. In the first period, the object under consideration consists rather in the principles of theology, or the revealed truths taken in themselves, and the method used is mainly expository. In the second period the object of study becomes

³⁸ Cf. M. Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der katholischen Theologie*. Freiburg i. Br. 1933; L. Allevi, *Disegno di storia della teologia cattolica*, Torino 1939; M.-J. Congar, "Théologie," *Dictionnaire de théologie catholique* 10-1 (Paris 1946) 346-447; *A History of Theology*, New York 1968; J.-J. De Santo-Tomas, "De la théologie patristique à la théologie scolastique," *Revue thomiste* 58 (1958) 709-773; *Bilan de la théologie du XX^e siècle*, 2 tomes, Tournai-Paris 1970-1971.

rather the conclusions inferred from those principles and the method is eminently systematic. In the third period, an increasing attempt is made at giving a proportionate treatment to both objects, that is, principles and conclusions, joining to the medieval systematic method a positive scientific one, and leaving aside the expository method of early times of the Church as not properly scientific.

1. *The ancient period, from the 2nd to the 11th centuries.*

This period includes the strictly *patristic age*, from the 2nd to the 8th century, up to and including St. John Damascene, and the *late-patristic extension*, from the 9th to the 11th century, up to and including St. Anselm of Canterbury. It shows a discursive consideration of the *principles of theology* or revealed truths, as derived directly from revelation and as seen in their mutual relationships, as well as in their immediate virtualities or conclusions. However, theology in these times does not extend such conclusions any further with the aid of profound philosophical notions and principles. Consequently, the *method is rather expository*, confining itself mainly to the explanation of the text of revelation. However, the very apologetical purpose, which quite early succeeded to the mere instructional and catechetical one, that is the necessity of protecting the revealed truths against the attacks of pagan philosophers (2nd century) and from the infiltration of heresies (3rd to 5th centuries), as well as the contact itself with pagan philosophy (gnostic and especially neo-platonic), occasioned among the early Fathers the first elaboration of a Christian philosophy, the first mingling of philosophy with revelation, and, as it were, the rise of a rudimental theological science.

The founders of this science were, almost at the same time but independently, *Origen* (about 185-254) in the East, and *Tertullian* (about 160-222) in the West, inasmuch as they gave the start to a twofold manner of reasoning, of quite different mentality and inclination, namely the eastern and the western theology.

Eastern theology began to take shape in the third century by reason of the contact of the Fathers with gnostic and neo-platonic philosophy in the *Alexandrian School*, and later in the fourth and fifth centuries rapidly developed in the same

region during the conflict against the two great heresies of Arianism and Nestorianism. In that same school flourished at the beginning of the third century *Origen* (+ about 254), who in his main work *On Principles* displays a sort of theological summa, placing the neo-platonic philosophy itself at the service of revelation. Likewise the other *Antiochian School*, which began to develop at the same time, although opposed to the Alexandrian as to its mode of interpreting Scripture, proceeded in the same manner and with the same speed in the theological investigation of revealed truths, as is shown in the various works on Trinity, Divinity of the Word and Incarnation, produced in the twin schools. In the later part of the patristic age, two doctors must be noted for their stricter theological character. The first *pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagita* (an unknown writer about the end of the fifth century), in his works (*On the Divine Names, On Mystical Theology, On the Heavenly Hierarchy, On the Ecclesiastical Hierarchy*) adopted and theologically elaborated the neo-platonic philosophy. The other *St. John Damascene* (+749; the last of the Eastern Fathers), in his work *Dialectics* offers a sort of philosophical introduction, following in the footsteps of Aristotle and Porphyry; in the work *On Heresies* he attempts a theological introduction; and in his major synthesis *On the Orthodox Faith* he approaches and explains theological matter itself, on God, creation, Incarnation, sacraments. Both pseudo-Dionysius and St. John Damascene had decisive influence on the medieval theology of the West.

Western theology began to develop toward the end of the second century in the apologetical, dogmatic and polemical works of *Tertullian* (+ about 222; *Apologetics, On the Prescription of Heretics, Against Marcion, On Baptism, On the Soul*). It progressed at a slower pace, due in part to the lack, or lesser repercussion, of the aforesaid heresies in the West. It has also a different character than the eastern theology, namely a practical, juridical, dialectic, and psychological character, according to the Roman mentality and culture. This diversity is manifest in the treatment and interpretation of the mysteries of faith, especially Trinity and Incarnation. This theology reached its peak in *St. Augustine* (354-430), who unified into a higher synthesis the theological developments of both the Western and the Eastern Fathers, so that

he can be called the forefather of theology, from whom the medieval theologians themselves drew the substance of their speculation. His principal theological works are *On the Trinity*, *City of God*, and *On the True Religion* (apologetical work); however, in all the other works, both moral and polemical (*Enchiridion*, *On Christian Doctrine*, and various writings against Manichaeism, Donatism and Pelagianism), elements of theological science and of the highest speculation are found widely spread and unexpectedly offered.

The Patristic age in the West comes to a close with *St. Isidore of Seville* (+636), who in his various works (*Sentences*, *Etymologies*, *Differences*, *On the Order of Creatures*, *On Catholic Faith*), diligently gathered and expounded in an orderly manner the theological doctrine of the preceding Fathers, especially of *St. Augustine*.

In the following late-patristic age (9th to 11th centuries) theological science suffered a relative decline, together with the general culture. The reasons for this were the schism steadily progressing in the East, which brought with it theological sterility, and the harshness of social conditions in the West, due to the barbarian invasions and to the slow ripening of a new civilization. Among outstanding but not original writers, as *Alcuin*, *Paschasius Radbertus*, and *Ratramnus*, under a theological and scientific viewpoint particular mention is to be made of *John Scotus Eriugena* (9th century; from Scotland or Ireland; master in the palace of *Charles the Bald*, king of France). He translated into Latin the works of pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite, and in his treatise *On the Division of Nature*, he gathered the entire theological knowledge on God and creatures, bringing forth an audacious synthesis, based on platonic philosophy, which, although mingled with several errors and ambiguities, was the first attempt at introducing scientific speculation into theology. At the very end of this age, *St. Anselm of Canterbury* (1034-1109; Italian by birth, abbot of the Bee monastery in France, archbishop of Canterbury in England) wrote his conspicuous works *Monologion* (on the essence of God and on Trinity), *Proslogion* (on the existence and attributes of God; here he utters the famous aphorism: "Faith seeking understanding" and proposes the well known *a priori* argument for the existence of God), and

Cur Deus Homo (on the Incarnation), in which he opens a new method of theological speculation, introducing dialectical reasoning and thus paving the way to scholastic theology.

2. *The medieval period, from the 12th to the 16 centuries, up to the Council of Trent.*

This period includes the strictly scholastic age (12th -13th centuries) and the late-scholastic extension (14th-16th centuries). The primary object of theology is no longer the principles of this science in themselves and in their immediate implications, but the *theological conclusions*, derived from such principles and established with the aid of philosophical notions and principles. Consequently, the method itself is no longer expository but *systematic*, proceeding with a scientific ordering of all those things which the philosophical reasoning process finds about revelation.

In the strictly scholastic age (12th and 13th centuries),⁴⁰ systematic theology began to develop in France in the two-fold school of Saint Victor and of Abelard, both originating from the older school of Laon (1120-1135) and both later mingled in the Lombardian school, as in a synthesis of doctrines and tendencies. The principal theologian of the first school is *Hugh of Saint Victor* (1100-1141), a man of mystic character, whose principal theological work is *On the Sacraments of Christian Faith*; probably he is also the author of another outstanding work of the same school by the title *Summa of Sentences*. The other school was founded by *Peter Abelard* (1079-1142), man of liberal tendencies, whose principal theological work is *Introduction to Theology* (All other theological doctrines of Abelard are expounded by his disciple Herman in the *Epitome of Christian Theology*.) Notwithstanding several false or ambiguous doctrines, which met with ecclesiastical condemnation (cf. Denzinger, nos. 721-739), the great merit of Abelard was the fact that he first in-

⁴⁰ Cf. M. Grabmann, *Die Geschichte der scholastischen Methode*, 2 vols., Freiburg i. Br. 1909-1911; M.-D. Chenu, *La Théologie comme science au XIIIe siècle*, éd. 3, Paris 1957; H. Cloes. "La systématisation théologique pendant la première moitié du XIIIe siècle." *Ephemerides theologicae Lovanienses* 34 (1958) 277-329.

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roduced the philosophy of Aristotle into theology (commenting some of the Philosopher's works in his *Dialectics*) and moreover he fashioned the method of scholastic disputation in his work *Sic et Non* (*Yes and No*). About the middle of the same century *Peter Lombard* (+1160; called "The Master of Sentences," or simply "The Master"; originally from Lombardy in Italy; professor and later archbishop in Paris), unified all the theological developments of the preceding schools in his famous work *Four Books of Sentences* (about the year 1150), which became the classical work in the schools up to the sixteenth century, when it was supplanted by the Theological Summa of St. Thomas.

In the course of the 13th century systematic theology reached its peak and showed the perfect expression of its form in the various *Commentaries on the Sentences* of Peter Lombard and in the *Theological Summas*. The principal authors of such works are: *Alexander of Hales* (1180-1245), Franciscan, "Irrefragable Doctor," *Glossa on the Four Books of Sentences*. *St. Bonaventure* (1221-1274), Franciscan, "Seraphic Doctor," *Commentaries on the Four Books of Sentences*. *St. Albert the Great* (1206-1280), Dominican, "Universal Doctor," promoter of aristotelian philosophy, teacher of St. Thomas, *Commentaries on the Four Books of Sentences*. *St. Thomas Aquinas* (1225-1274), Dominican, "Angelic Doctor" for the purity and loftiness of his doctrine, and "Common Doctor" for the Church, as declared by Pius XI, the supreme and probably charismatic mind in the world of theology, *Commentaries on the Four Books of Sentences* (1254-1256), *Summa contra Gentiles* (1258-1260), *Summa Theologiae* (1267-1273).

The late-scholastic age (14th to 16th centuries, up to the Council of Trent) gave rise to two major schools, called thomistic and scotistic from the name of their patrons, which divided the theological battlefield up to the present day. Notwithstanding the undisputed brilliancy and genius of several theologians, these schools show evident signs of downfall and senility in classical theology, namely, the servile way of swearing on the authority of the Master ("iurare in verba Magistri"), a lesser purity of form and concepts, undue multiplication of particular and useless questions, exaggerated subtlety in distinctions and abuse of dialectic sophistry.

In the *Thomistic School*, prevalently Dominican, which hinges on the doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas and boasts of its fidelity to this Master, the principal or better known theologians are: *John Capreolus* (Jean Chevrier; +1444), called "Prince of thomists" because of his faithful explanation of the text of St. Thomas and his effective defense of Aquinas, *Defense of the Theology of St. Thomas Aquinas. Ferrariensis* (Francis Sylvester, of Ferrara; +1528), *Commentary on the Summa Contra Gentiles* (reproduced in the Leonine edition of the works of St. Thomas). *Cajetanus* (Thomas de Vio, of Gatea; +1534), called "Leader of thomists," probably the supreme genius produced by this school, the first to comment directly on the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas, *Commentaries on the Summa Theologiae* (reproduced by Leo XIII in the aforementioned edition of the works of St. Thomas). *Francis of Vitoria* (+1546), founder of the flourishing Dominican school at Salamanca and the first to introduce the *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas into schools, *Refectiones theologicae*. *Melchior Cano* (+1560), Vitoria's disciple and successor at Salamanca, tridentine theologian, author of the famous treatise *On Theological Loci* which paved the way to modern fundamental and positive theologies.

The *Scotistic School*, integrally Franciscan, hinges directly on the doctrines of *John Duns Scotus* (1266-1308), Franciscan, "Subtle Doctor," author of a twofold *Commentary on the Four Books of Sentences* (called of Oxford and of Paris), from whom it inherited a peculiar kind of Aristotelianism combined with Augustinianism, and a marked theological voluntarism, frequently opposed to the doctrines of St. Thomas. The principal theologians in this school are: *Peter Auriol* (+ about 1322), "Eloquent Doctor," disciple of Scotus and defender of his doctrines. *Francis of Meyronnes* (+1325), "Acute Doctor of Abstractions." *John of Bassolis* (+1347), disciple of Scotus. *Peter of Aquila* (+1348), called "Little Scotus," author of a faithful *Compendium* of Scotus' doctrines. *Francis Lychetis* (*1516), author of a *Commentary* on Scotus' works.

3. *The modern period, from the 16th to the 20th centuries.*

This period shows a revival and a renewal of theology, due to the particular impulse given by the Council of Trent to the

ecclesiastical disciplines. In this period an increasing attempt is made at giving proportionate treatment to *both objects of theology*, namely principles and conclusions, as well as completing the medieval systematic method with the addition of the scientific *positive method*. Hence the rise of the so-called positive theology and of the classical distinction of theology into positive and systematic (cf. above, pp. 25-31).

This *positive theology* began to develop under the adverse pressure of Humanism and Protestantism, which appealed only to the deposit of revelation and simply discarded systematic theology. Hence the Catholic theologians were forced to revert directly to the same deposit. Already Melchior Cano (+1560) in his work *On Theological Loci* had laid the general foundation of this positive theology; but its immediate founders and propagators were in the 17th century *Dionysius Petau* (+1652; *Theological Dogmas*), *John Morin* (1659; *Commentary on the Discipline in Administration of the Sacrament of Penance; On sacred Ordinations of the Church*); and *Louis Thomassin* (+1695; *Theological Dogmas*). Thereafter this theology entered more and more into the tracts of dogmatic theologians and into the explanation of the individual questions, thus integrating systematic theology into a harmonious doctrinal balance. To this development the recent Magisterium itself has given an efficacious impulse.⁴¹

Futhermore, in this period theological science as a whole, including its systematic part, underwent several changes which can be termed a rupture, both with regard to the theological schools, to the scientific disciplines themselves, and to the manner of presenting the doctrine.

As regards the *theological schools*, a third one was now born by the name of *Suaresian School* (so called from its principal doctor, Suarez), which represents a rupture or breaking off from the Thomistic School itself, with a tinge of theological eclecticism. In fact, while generally opposed to the scotistic

⁴¹ Cf. Pius X, Encyclical "Pascendi," ASS 40 (1907) 640 f.; Pius XI, Epist. "Officiorum" 1922, and Constit. "Deus scientiarum Dominus" 1931, AAS 14 (1922) 455 f.; 23 (1931) 253; Pius XII, Encyclical "Humani generis" AAS 42 (1950) 568 f.

doctrines, it withdraws also from pure thomism in some important questions, as on divine foreknowledge, predestination and grace. These were the occasion of long, bitter and fruitless controversies (called "De Auxiliis," that is, on grace as supernatural help). As regards the *scientific disciplines*, which formerly were treated as a single organized unit, theology was broken down into various separated parts, bearing the features of many distinct sciences (polemic, historical, dogmatic, moral, ascetical, mystic), so that several doctors became specialists rather than simply theologians. This contributed indeed to the breadth of erudition, but was detrimental to depth of knowledge and hence to the progress of solid and true theological science. As regards the *manner of presenting the doctrine*, independent theological courses took the place at first of the customary commentaries on the works of the masters (Peter Lombard, St. Thomas, Scotus); later came the production of separated tracts (On the One God, On Trinity, On Incarnation, etc.); and these in their turn were finally shortened and gathered into the form of manuals for the schools.

In the *Thomistic School* the more prominent theologians are: *Dominic Baficz* (x1604), disciple of Melchior Cano at Salamanca, bitter adversary of Molina during the controversy on grace mentioned above. *John of St. Thomas* (+1644), author of both a *Philosophical* and a *Theological Course*, clear and faithful interpreter of St. Thomas and rightly numbered among the greatest thomists (alongside Capreolus, Ferrarientis and Cajetanus). *J.-B. Gonet* (+1681), author of the *Shield of Thomistic Theology*. *R. Billuart* (+1757), author of the well-known *Summa of Saint Thomas Adapted to the Modern Customs of Academies*, which has served as a model and basis for many recent theological tracts and manuals. Several other great theologians, outside the Dominican order, belong to the same school, particularly the *Salmanticenses* (Carmelite professors at Salamanca), authors of the extensive and profound *Theological Course* (edited from 1630 to 1701), and the *Salisburgenses* (Benedictine professors at Salzburg), authors of *Thomistic Scholastic Theology of Salzburg* (about the end of the 17th century). Among recent writers or neo-thomists, both in and out the Dominican order, the better known are Zigliara, Satolli, Pègues, Janssens, Lépicier, Mattiussi, Hugon, Garrigou-Lagrange, and, at least partially, Billot.

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In the *Scotistic School* there flourished, particularly in the dogmatic field as distinct from the moral: *Michael Medina* (+1578), author of the work *On the continence of sacred men*. *Anthony Hickey* (+1641), author of a *Commentary* on the work of Scotus. *Bartholomew Mastrius* (♦1678), defender of Scotus in his *Theological Disputations*. *Claude Frassen* (+1711) author of the work *Scotus Academic*, outstanding in erudition and clarity. *Jerome of Montefortino* (+1728), who in his *Theological Summa of J. D. Scotus* expounds and arranges the entire doctrine of Scotus according to the plan of St. Thomas' *Summa Theologiae*, into parts, questions and articles.

In the *Suaresian School* (named after Suarez, not as the first in time but as the principal doctor) the more prominent or better known theologians are: *Francis Toledo* (+1596), who published a clear *Interpretation of the Theological Summa of Saint Thomas* and introduced thomism into the Roman College of the Society of Jesus. *Louis Molina* (i 1600), famous for his work *Concordia*, which stirred up the controversy on grace. *Gabriel Vasquez* (+1604), author of an original and critical *Commentary on the Summa Theologiae of St. Thomas*. *Francis Suarez* (+1617), called "Eminent Doctor" by the Roman Pontiffs, the greatest theologian of the Society of Jesus, a most prolific writer but of eclectic tendencies, who produced an ample commentary on almost the entire *Summa Theologiae* of St. Thomas. *St. Robert Bellarmine* (+1621), Doctor of the Church, in dogmatic matters not particularly original but greatest in his *Controversies of the Christian Faith Against the Heretics of This Time*. *Leonard Lessius* (+1623), author of the works *On Efficacious Grace* and *On Divine Perfections and Manners*. *John De Lugo* (+1660), a more argumentative than solid author of the works *On Divine Faith*, *On the Incarnation*, *On the Eucharist*, *On Penance*. Among more recent theologians, all of the Society of Jesus, the better known are Perrone, Palmieri, Franzelin, C. Mazzella, Ch. Pesch, Billot, Galtier, D'Alès.

About the present state and condition of theology, particularly after the Second World War, there is nothing to be said here, as it does not yet belong to history. This applies to the eruption of a "new theology," based on irenicism and relativism (already singled out and rejected by Pius XII in the en-

cyclical “*Humani generis*,” 1950), to the kind of neo-modernism, which is creeping into some theological circles after Vatican Council II, and to the new forms, for which the authentic theology itself seems to be searching with adventurous steps and uncertain future.⁴²

⁴² Cf. the general bibliography, section B, given at the beginning of the treatise.

Glossary of Technical Words

Occurring In This Treatise

Analogy, derived from the Greek word “analogos,” means similarity. Both in philosophy and theology, it is used to signify similarity between two concepts, contrary to univocity which means identity of two concepts. Thus if I say: Christ is the Son of God, Francis is the son of Michael, and Peter is the son of Joseph, the concept of sonship is similar (or analogous), but not just the same (or univocal) in Christ and in Francis or Peter, while it is just the same in Francis and Peter in relation to their fathers. All concepts common to God and creatures (as being, good, intelligent, father, son, etc.) are necessarily analogous; if they were univocal, creatures would be specifically the same as God, just as two men are specifically the same.

An analogous concept can be either *proper* or merely *metaphorical*. It is proper, if the thing expressed by it is found in both subjects of which it is predicated, as sonship is found in Christ and in Francis in the above example, or as being, goodness, intelligence, etc., are found both in God and in man. It is merely metaphorical if the thing expressed by it is found only in one subject and nevertheless it is attributed to the other subject on account of some similarity with it; for instance, if I say: Christ is a lion (the lion of Juda, according to Scripture) or Francis is a fox, the concept of lion or fox is found only in the two brutes and it is metaphorically attributed to Christ or Francis by reason of similarity, that is because Christ is strong, as a lion is strong, and Francis is sly, as a fox is sly.

“Analogy of faith” is an expression used by theologians and the Magisterium to signify the mutual agreement which exists

necessarily between the various truths of our faith, so that one cannot contradict the others. Hence it becomes also the basis of an important theological argument, which deduces or illustrates one truth from another. For instance, from the truth of the perpetual virginity of Mary we deduce that the words “brother” or “sister” of Christ in the Gospel cannot be taken in the strict sense, but only in the sense of a relative of Christ.

Apologetics is derived from the Greek word “apologia,” meaning defense (from “apo,” after, and “logos,” speech). In recent years it has become the name of that branch of theology which deals with the defense of faith or of revelation in general. If it deals only with the defense of a particular revealed truth, as the Trinity or Incarnation, it is called more properly apology. Even the English word “apology” or “to apologize” has the basic sense of defending or excusing oneself. The derived theological expressions “apologetic function, or method, or Father (more simply apologist)” have the same sense of defense of the revealed truths.

A priori,” “*A posteriori*” are classical expressions used to qualify the syllogistic or demonstrative form of our rational process. “*A priori*” means a deductive process by which we deduce an effect from its cause. For instance: Christ is God (cause), therefore he is all-powerful (effect). “*A posteriori*” means the contrary inductive process by which we deduce the cause from its effect; for instance: Christ is all powerful, therefore he is God; or, Christ was born, therefore he is a man; or, the world is finite and mutable, therefore there exists an infinite and immutable Being who made it.

The “*a priori*” argument is called “*propter quid*” (“on account of which”), if it assigns the proper and ultimate cause; for example: God is immutable, therefore he is eternal (immutability is the proper and ultimate cause of eternity). It is called an argument “*quia*” (“consequent to which”), if it assigns only a proximate or general cause of the effect; for example: God is all-perfect, or infinite, therefore he is eternal (the proper cause of eternity is not infinite perfection, but immutability, which is included in the infinite perfection).

Cause — Causality. Generically, cause is that on which the

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very nature of something depends. There are four *causes*, two intrinsic, called *formal cause* and *material cause*, and two extrinsic, called *efficient cause* and *final cause*.

The first two causes make up the very essence of a thing, if, however, it is a material being, necessarily composed of matter and form, which are in a relationship of determining element (form) and determined element (matter). Those spiritual natures that are simple, as God and angels, have no formal and material causes; they are simply an act or simple reality, which may be called “form” in a broader sense.

The last two causes have an exterior influence on the nature of a thing. The *efficient cause* produces its existence (or puts it into existence), while the *final cause* specifies its essence or nature and also conditions its existence. Thus, man, whose nature is composed of matter and form, that is, of body and soul, is created by God (primary efficient cause) and generated by parents (secondary efficient cause), for the purpose of living and progressing (proximate final cause) in order to reach God himself (from whom he came) thus entering into an eternal state of beatitude, consisting in the beatific vision of God (ultimate final cause).

Moreover, the final cause is divided in *proximate* and *ultimate*, as in the example just given. The efficient cause is divided in *primary* cause (which is God alone in every created action and effect) and *secondary* cause (the creatures). This secondary cause can be either a *principal cause*, that is, acting by its own power (as the parents in generation, or the writer of a letter, or a smith forging his metal), or an *instrumental cause*, that is, acting by the power of another actually communicated to it (as the pen of a writer or the hammer of a smith).

Certitude is a state of mind, opposed to opinion, implying a firm assent to some truth, which is based on the evidence of an object. Such evidence can be either *immediate*, when it flows from the direct knowledge of the object, or *mediate*, when it is based on the evidence of an authoritative testimony about the object. In this second case, we have the certitude of faith.

The mediate certitude of faith is divided, according to the quality of the witness, into *human* (or natural) and *divine* (or supernatural), which is based on the testimony and authority of God himself.

The immediate or objective certitude is threefold according to its foundation. *Metaphysical* or absolute certitude is based on metaphysical laws, that is, on the very nature of things and hence allows no exception whatsoever. For instance, God exists, man is contingent and mortal, everything has its sufficient reason, etc. (This applies not only to metaphysical but also to mathematical objects or truths). *Physical* or *moral* certitude is only hypothetical, because it is based on physical or moral laws, which admit no exceptions only if a certain condition is fulfilled. For instance, according to the physical law of gravity, it is certain that a stone will fall, providing no extrinsic cause prevents it from falling, and, according to the moral law, which governs the moral actions and inclinations of men, it is certain that a mother will not kill her son, unless an unusual perversion makes her withdraw from such law.

The certitude of divine and *supernatural faith* (as well as that of theology and theological conclusions based on faith) is also *absolute*, by reason of the infallibility of the testimony of God, and in this sense it is to be reduced to metaphysical certitude.

Channels of revelation. The *source* of revelation is the Gospel itself, that is, the teaching of Christ and of the apostles. The *channels*, through which such source is transmitted to us, are *Scripture*, *Tradition*, and the *Magisterium*: but the first two channels, Scripture and Tradition, are also a *deposit* (one or two deposits, under various considerations), in which revelation has been placed, while the Magisterium is only the *organ* of revelation, the channel bringing revelation from the deposit to us. The three channels are also called the *rule of faith*; but the deposit is only the *remote rule* while the Magisterium is the *proximate rule*, because we are not obliged to believe a truth contained in the deposit unless it has been proposed to us, one way or the other, by the infallible definition of the Magisterium.

Conclusion, theological is that which is drawn from revealed principles and constitutes the proper object and function of theology. There are two kinds of theological conclusion or syllogism. One is a *proper and illative conclusion*, which contains a totally new concept, other than that contained in the revealed principles; for instance, Christ has a human will because he is a man. The other is an *improper and expository conclusion* which contains a mere explanation or analysis of the revealed truth; for instance, Christ has a soul, or he is rational, because he is a man. The first type of conclusion constitutes theology formally as a science; the second type belongs to theology as wisdom. Even the first type of conclusion implies an absolute certitude, otherwise they would be mere theological probable opinions.

Deity means God considered in his most intimate essence, or according to what makes God to be God and distinguishes him from creatures. Hence, Deity is something different from and beyond all those divine attributes which are in some way common to creatures, such as being, one, true, good, intelligent, willing, potent, acting, etc. All such attributes are really found also in creatures, although in God they are in an infinite manner proper to God, and, in this sense of infinity, they are proper to God.

But infinity itself is a negative concept, that is, absence of limit in a positive perfection; hence it cannot be the intimate and proper essence of God. All the other positive attributes of God, as those we just mentioned, are only analogical concepts taken from creatures, and therefore they do not express the proper and inner essence of God.

This essence, rather than being, unity, truth, goodness, intelligence, will, power, is *something above being, unity, truth, etc.*, which founds and explains all such attributes in an infinite and simple way. *That something is what we call Deity.*

God, according to the aforesaid common attributes can be known through natural reason and is the proper object of *theodicy*, the highest part of Metaphysics. But God as Deity can be known only through a supernatural light of beatific vision or of faith, and he is also the proper object of *theology*, which proceeds from the principles of faith.

Essence is a word frequently used in theology, as well as in philosophy, to designate the proper nature of something, its constituent and distinctive element, that which makes it such and distinguishes it from all other things (thus the essence of man is rational animal, the essence of a brute is irrational animal). The essence of a thing is called also nature and substance. But there is a shade of meaning or a distinction of concepts between these three words. Properly, the same thing is called *essence* in relation to existence (thus essence and existence are the two constituent parts of every created being); it is called *nature* in relation to its acts or operations, which proceed from the essence; it is called *substance* in relation to the accidents, which are placed in the essence as in a subject or a support.

In that sense we talk of essential parts, essential properties, essential division, things essentially supernatural, etc.

In God, as considered by philosophy or theodicy, we distinguish his *physical essence*, that is, the aggregate of all his perfections and attributes with their infinite character, and his *metaphysical essence*, that is, the one fundamental attribute which is the root and the reason for all the others. This is, according to the thomistic opinion, the Subsisting Being, the “*esse subsistens*,” in which there is no distinction between essence and existence. However, the real and proper nature of God is not even such metaphysical essence, which is only the dominant note among the divine attributes common to creatures, but it is that mysterious and sovereign reality which transcends all human concepts and which under the name of *Deity* (see this entry) is the proper object of faith and of theology-

Faith. We must carefully distinguish the meaning of several expressions occurring here and there in theology, which are intimately connected with the concept of faith.

Faith itself is taken either subjectively, for the infused virtue through which we assent to the revelation of God, or objectively for the revealed truths we believe.

Preambles of faith are those truths about God which we can know through the natural reason without revelation (as the

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existence of God and his providence); they are called preambles because they prepare for faith. *Foundations of faith* are the revealed truths themselves, or generically revelation. *Principles of faith* are the same truths which become also principles, properly so-called, of theological science. *Truths of faith* is another name for the same. *Articles of faith* are more strictly the fundamental truths of faith, as those contained in the Creed or Symbol of faith. *Formula of faith* is a definite expression of the truths of faith, as the various *Symbols of faith*.

Rule of faith is the threefold channel, that is, Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium, as explained above. *Dogma of faith*, or simply *dogma*, is a truth revealed by God (placed in the deposit of Scripture and Tradition) and infallibly proposed by the Magisterium, which is the proximate rule of faith. *Dogmatic formula* is the expression of a dogma, which can be of various kinds.

Fathers of the Church. The generic concept of Father of the Church is connected with that of generation. Hence a Father of the Church is one who helped to bring to maturity the adolescent Church or to generate the faith in others at the beginning of the Church. *Four qualifications* are required to be a Father of the Church. First, *sanctity* by reason of the intimate connection between Christian life and Christian doctrine. Second, *orthodox doctrine* (as a whole, notwithstanding a particular or material error); hence, some outstanding doctors, as Tertullian and Origen, are not strictly Fathers of the Church on account of various important errors. Third, *antiquity*, corresponding to the beginnings of the Church. This means the first five centuries, up to St. Gregory the Great, 4-604; however this period is usually extended to the eighth century in order to include such outstanding writers as St. Isidore of Seville and St. John Damascene. Fourth, *ecclesiastical approbation*, because the Magisterium alone is qualified to judge on the orthodoxy of a writer; this approbation need not be individual or explicit; a general or implicit approbation is sufficient.

All the other doctors, who lack one or another of these requisites, particularly orthodoxy or antiquity, are called

strictly and merely *ecclesiastical writers*.

Several of the Fathers (20 of them, among others Athanasius, Basil, Gregory Nazianzen, Chrysostom in the East, and Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory the Great in the West) received also a special approbation of the Magisterium through the official title of *Doctors of the Church*. But also several theologians (12 of them, first in time Thomas Aquinas and Bonaventure, last in the present time two women, Teresa of Avila and Catherine of Siena) have received the same title, based on a special doctrinal contribution to the cause of faith.

“Loci theologici” are the places where theologians find the bases and the principles for their scientific investigations. The principal “loci” are the same three channels of revelation mentioned above under the proper entry, that is *Scripture, Tradition, and the Magisterium*; the first two are “loci” or places which contain revelation, the last is a place which only proposes revelation. To these three can be reduced other “loci,” that is *the believing Church* (the faithful as a whole body), the *Fathers*, and the *theologians*, who are part of Tradition. Also *natural reason* and the authority of philosophers can be accounted as foreign or borderline ‘loci,’ inasmuch as they may confirm some revealed truth.

Magisterium is the teaching authority in the Church, which is proper to the Pope and the bishops (even individually). It is the right and duty of authoritatively proposing revealed truth. It is divided into ordinary and extraordinary. The *ordinary Magisterium* is carried out in a common manner of teaching by the official pastors (Pope and bishops) or by others under their direction, through preaching, allocutions, pastoral letters, catechetical instructions. The *extraordinary* or solemn Magisterium consists in a formal, explicit, and solemn declaration of the supreme authority (Pope, or bishops acting as a body with the Pope). Both kinds of Magisterium are either infallible or not infallible, depending upon their intention (thus Vatican I proposed its teaching infallibly, Vatican II not infallibly). The infallible definition made by the Pope alone has received the special name of definition *ex cathedra*, by reason of its peculiar character of solemnity.

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As we noticed in the preceding entries, the Magisterium is the *organ of revelation*, the *proximate rule of faith*, and the third *theological "locus"*

Notes and censures, theological. By this expression, often occurring in theology, is meant the qualification given to a proposition or doctrine as to its agreement (note) or disagreement (censure) with a revealed truth proposed by the Magisterium.

The principal censures, often assigned by the Magisterium itself, are the following five: 1) *Heretical*, that is a proposition or doctrine directly opposed to a truth of faith (for instance: Christ is not a man); the opposite note is: *de fide*. 2) *Erroneous*, that is, a proposition directly opposed not to faith itself but to a doctrine necessarily following from faith (for instance: Christ does not have a human heart); the opposite note is: *theologically certain*, or *Catholic doctrine*. 3) *Temerarious*, that is, a proposition which has no sufficient foundation or is opposed to the common and firm opinion of the theologians (for instance: St. John the Baptist had the privilege of an immaculate conception like the Blessed Virgin); the opposite note is: *highly probable*, or *morally certain*. 4) *Ill-sounding*, that is, a proposition lacking correct expression which may lead to an error about faith (for instance: In God there are three relative essences; which may lead to believe that there are three Gods); the opposite note is: *correct-sounding*. 5) *Offensive to pious ears*, that is, a proposition expressing a truth without the reverence due to holy things (for instance, calling St. Peter a perjurer or St. Paul a persecutor of the Church); the opposite note is: *fitting to piety*.

Object of a science, or rather of every knowing faculty, is roughly speaking the subject matter, the whole thing which is dealt with in a science or by a faculty. But we must distinguish three ascending degrees in it, in the manner of getting in touch, as it were, with the knowing faculty; in other words there are three manners of considering the same total object, and hence three kinds of object. The first is called *material object*, that is, the concrete being or reality under consideration; for instance, the concrete quantitative body

which I see with my eyes. The second is called *formal object*, that is, the particular aspect or quality which is considered or reached by a faculty or a science in that material object; for instance, the color which the eyes see in the body and without which the body could not be seen. The third may be called the *formal light* (or a more formal object; as a matter of fact philosophers call it formal object “quo,” that is, “through which”). This is more difficult to understand and the very name “light” may be misleading. The light under which an object is reached is nothing else than its own immateriality, which makes an object knowable or proportioned to the knowing faculty (for knowledge consists precisely in abstracting or separating an object from material conditions) and which for this reason is called light. Thus the formal light under which the eyes see the color of a body is the sensible light, meaning by that, the proper immateriality of color which makes the color visible, that is, adequate and adjusted to the eyes.

In the case of *theology* its material object is *God* and his divine works; the formal object, which is directly considered in God himself, is his intimate nature called the *Deity*; the formal light is the light of revelation, that is, the high and pure immateriality of this nature, which becomes adjusted to our intellect by an action of God revealing, and for this reason is called *the light of revelation*.

Revelation, which etymologically means the removal of a veil, in theology is taken in two ways, namely, for the action of God manifesting his mysteries to men (*active revelation*), and for its effect in man (*passive revelation*). This effect is twofold, that is, the presentation of an object or truth to the intellect (*objective revelation*) and a supernatural light infused in the intellect to make it able to understand such an object (*subjective revelation*).

When we speak of source, channel, deposit, organ or principles of revelation, revelation is taken objectively, for the revealed truth. In this sense revelation is both *the principle and the formal light of theology*. It is also the proper object of that introductory part of theology which is called Apologetics.

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Supernatural means anything above nature. It can be taken either in a relative sense, and thus whatever is natural to a being is supernatural to a lower being (as speech, which is natural to man, is supernatural to a brute), or in an *absolute and theological sense*, and thus it is defined: *that which is above all created things, as to their nature, their power, and their exigencies.*

This is twofold. Either it is *essentially supernatural*, if the essence of the thing itself is supernatural (such are the intimate myteries of God, as Trinity and Incarnation, and their participation is us, through revelation, grace, and glory). Or it is only *modally supernatural*, if the essence of the thing is natural, but it is produced in a supernatural manner, that is, in a manner in which no power of created things can do it. Examples are what we call miracles of the physical order, as resurrection, healing of incurable diseases, etc.

The principles of theology (revealed truths), its formal object (Deity) and its formal light (revelation), are essentially supernatural, and in this sense theology is fundamentally supernatural. But the science of theology' itself, as a habit of the mind, is not formally supernatural, because it is essentially based on a process of natural reason and it is an acquired habit, while no supernatural habit can be acquired, but must be simply infused by God.

Theology strictly so-called is a science about God, considered in his intimate essence, or inner attributes, which we call Deity (see this entry). If God is considered in his external attributes, that is, those perfections that are common to him and to creatures, such knowledge or science is called properly theodicy (or natural theology) which is the highest part of metaphysics.

With the word and the concept of theology are connected three technical expressions, namely "theological conclusions," "theological loci," and "theological notes and censures," of which we spoke above in the corresponding entries.

Tradition is derived from the Latin word "tradere," meaning to hand over or on. As a theological term, it means the handing on of revelation or of the things preached by Christ

and the apostles. It can be taken in two senses. First, in an active sense (*active Tradition*), that is, for all the means through which revelation is transmitted, which are the inspired books themselves (Scripture), the Magisterium, the writings of the Fathers and other doctors, liturgy, canonical laws, etc. Second, in an objective sense (*objective Tradition*), that is, for the object or truths handed on.

This objective Tradition again can be taken in two senses. First, in an integral sense (*integral Tradition*), that is, for all the truths which are handed over through whatever means, and therefore also for the truths that are contained in Scripture. Second, in a partial sense (*partial or constitutive Tradition*), that is, only for those truths that are not contained in Scripture (at least not sufficiently), but only in the other aforementioned means of transmission (such are the list of the books of Scripture, their divine inspiration, and other truths and usages).

Among such means of transmission, the writings of the Fathers of the Church and other ecclesiastical writers (see entry: Fathers of the Church) are an outstanding and certain element for knowing the traditional truths, and for this reason the *argument from Tradition* in theology refers mainly to the doctrine of the Fathers.

As has been said in the preceding entries (“Channels,” “Loci”), Tradition is a *deposit* of revelation, a *remote rule of faith*, and a theological “locus.”

Vision, beatific, is the immediate vision of God, in his infinite essence and as it were face to face. On the part of our intellect, this act supposes a supernatural light, called *light of glory*, which elevates the intellect and makes it able to see God intuitively. This kind of act constitutes essentially what we call heaven, beatitude, eternity.

Beatific vision is at once the supernatural and ultimate *end of man*, the *fulfillment of our state of grace*, which is called the seed of glory because it will blossom into a full vision and love of God (replacing faith, hope and other virtues presently needed), and the *ultimate resolution of theology*, whose revealed principles are immediately evident only in the beatific vision.

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