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LIBERAL EDUCATION AND CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to analyse and explain the intimate connection that exists between liberal education and Catholic theology. This is done by analysing the changing patterns of interconnections in the historical and on-going relationship between both.

The thesis comprises nine chapters. The first two chapters outline the general principles governing the study. The next two chapters deal with the history of the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology, beginning with the early apologists via Augustine and culminating in Aquinas' scholastic synthesis. This part of the study describes the synthesis which took place from early Christianity until the fifteenth century.

The second part of the thesis deals with the separation of liberal education and Catholic theology, which began during the Reformation, and is discussed in Chapters Five and Six. The consequences of this separation which led to the establishment of a secular system of liberal education, divorced from theology, during the Enlightenment, is analysed in Chapter Seven.

The final two chapters of the thesis (Chapters Eight and Nine) deal with the 'Catholic Reaction' to the reformed rational system of liberal education, and the 'Rediscovery' of the comprehensive tradition of liberal education, brought about by the historic revival of Catholic scholarship, initiated by Pope Leo XIII.

## INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to examine the unique correspondence and connection between liberal education and Catholic theology, specifically. The underlying argument of the thesis is that liberal education; namely, the liberal arts and liberal knowledge exercise a positive influence on developments in Catholic theology; and, conversely, that Catholic theology exercises a positive influence on developments in liberal education.

The investigation of this mutual correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology centres around the analysis of a dynamic process of changing patterns of interrelationships. This dynamic process does not belong to any single period of cultural history but is co-extensive with and inseparable from the history of Western liberal education and Catholic theology as a whole. Thus, the study of this process reveals successive phases common to all periods of cultural development which account for the on-going patterns of interrelationships between liberal education and Catholic theology. These phases can be described as follows:

1. The encounter between liberal education and Catholic theology.
2. The process of permeation of one by the other.
3. The eventual creation of new forms of liberal thought and theological insights from the process of reception and transformation.

The subject-matter of this investigation involves two interdependent areas of study; namely, liberal education and Catholic



theology. The method used in the study of this broad subject-matter is at once historical and contemporary. Thus, the method may be described as historico-contemporary; that is, it purports to analyse the whole of the historical reality, involving liberal education and Catholic theology, illuminated by contemporary thought in both areas of the subject-matter. The method, therefore, is historical in that the presentation considers every major cultural development involving the history of liberal education and Catholic theology. The method is contemporary, on the other hand, in that it reflects on the data by means of the best available contemporary understanding of the subject-matter. This inquiry begins with the Apologetic period of the early christian church and continues up to, but not including, Vatican Council II.

The subject-matter of this study has been investigated, from different perspectives and modes of emphasis, by Catholic scholars of distinction such as John Henry (Cardinal) Newman, Hans Urs (Cardinal) Balthasar, Yves-Marie Congar, Henri de Lubac, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Jacques Maritain, Christopher Dawson, V. A. McClelland and, more particularly, in the official teachings and documents of the Catholic Church. It has also been researched no less originally, from other perspectives, by prominent non-Catholic scholars such as Paul Tillich, Paul H. Hirst, Sheldon Rothblatt, Mark Van Doren, G. R. Evans, Henry Chadwick, P. H. Phenix, Adolf Harnack, and Jaraslov Pelikan. This particular study owes much to the intellectual labours and insights of scholars and theologians

such as those just mentioned. Although the approach taken to the subject-matter in this thesis is different in emphasis and practical application, it is important to acknowledge our dependence on the valuable contributions of the aforementioned authorities. This will become more apparent throughout the thesis but it will be helpful to illustrate this indebtedness, as far as content and continuity are concerned, by means of an illustration.

John Henry Newman, for example, devoted much of his life to justifying the compatibility of liberal education with Catholic theology in the context of a university education. In his discourses, On the Scope and Nature of University Education, Newman tried to do for the university what Samuel Taylor Coleridge did for the encyclopedia; namely, to restore the "idea of unity" to liberal education by demonstrating "the integrity of all knowledge and the need of the human mind to reflect that integrity."<sup>1</sup> Newman's approach to the same subject-matter, however, was to clarify the principles of unity and progress governing liberal education and Catholic theology in the context of the university. He did not concern himself with the intimate and actual connections existing between them as manifested in their historical relationships. Newman explained his manner of treating this subject-matter in his first discourse:

I am investigating in the abstract, and am determining what is in itself right and true. For the moment I know nothing, so to say, of history ... I take things as I find them; I have no concern with the past.<sup>2</sup>



Newman's clarification of the principles of unity and progress governing liberal education and Catholic theology, however, is beneficial to this particular investigation. The contributions of other liberal scholars and theologians are no less beneficial and important. The object of this particular inquiry, however, is to explain the unique correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology with a view to appreciating their positive benefits and interdependence. This thesis purports to do this by examining, primarily, the historical patterns of interconnections between liberal education and Catholic theology.

The first two chapters of the thesis owe their importance to the fact that they lay the groundwork, by clarifying concepts and meanings, and by establishing the principles that govern the relationships between liberal education and Catholic theology. Chapter One, therefore, sets out to analyse 'the function of liberal education vis-à-vis Catholic theology.' To appreciate the pattern of interconnections between liberal education and Catholic theology, it is deemed necessary to understand, from the beginning, how liberal education functions with regard to Catholic theology, specifically. Thus, the first section of Chapter One begins with an analysis of the concept of liberal education. The role of Catholic theology as part of liberal education is discussed in this section, and the understanding of the word 'liberal,' as applied to Catholic theology, is explained. Theology, like other disciplines of knowledge, it is pointed out, can be cultivated in two ways--as liberal knowledge

and as useful knowledge. When Catholic theology is cultivated as 'liberal' it not only becomes an integral part of liberal education, it realises the highest form of liberal knowledge.

Section two of Chapter One focuses on the relationship between the liberal arts and Catholic theology. The function of the liberal arts with respect to Catholic theology is described as external; that is, they provide an intellectual tool of comprehension. This function is explained in various ways as constituting, for example, the 'supporting medium' or as being 'propaedeutic' to the study of Catholic theology.

The third and final section of Chapter One deals with the relationship of the liberal sciences to Catholic theology. The liberal sciences are defined and classified according to P. H. Hirst's classification of the primary forms of knowing. The influence of the liberal sciences, especially philosophy, on the development of theological systems, and the contribution of liberal knowledge to Catholic theology, by the addition to dogma of rational elements borrowed from the sciences, is explained in this section. The function of the liberal sciences vis-à-vis Catholic theology is described as auxiliary and organic.

The advantage of Chapter One is that it clarifies the ways in which liberal education functions with respect to Catholic theology. The intent of this chapter is not to establish any practical or historical connections between liberal education and Catholic theology but to explain the general principles whereby liberal education functions vis-à-vis Catholic theology.



The second chapter deals with the other side of the relationship; namely, 'the function of Catholic theology vis-à-vis liberal education.' Chapter Two is divided into three sections:

1. The characteristics of Catholic theology.
2. Catholic theology as a 'form of knowing.'
3. The relationship between Catholic theology and liberal education.

In the first section, Catholic theology is defined as "the human elaboration of revealed statements of the faith." Important distinctions are made between Catholic theology and other studies associated with religion such as philosophy of religion, religious psychology, scientific study of religions, and catechesis. Two different ways of approaching Catholic theology; namely, 'supernatural contemplation' and 'theological contemplation' are described, and the various levels of theological understanding are enumerated and explained.

The preliminary investigation concerning the characteristics of Catholic theology in section one is preparatory to the study of Catholic theology as a 'form of knowing' in section two. Reasons are proffered in this section justifying the scientific and academic quality of Catholic theology, as well as its rightful place among the liberal sciences.

The final section of Chapter Two deals with the relationship between Catholic theology and liberal education. The function of Catholic theology with reference to the liberal sciences is viewed as external; that is, Catholic theology does not intervene internally

in the disciplines of knowledge which possess their own object, method and epistemological autonomy. Nevertheless, it is pointed out that Catholic theology exercises a regulatory function over the findings of various disciplines. The nature of this regulatory function is described by means of illustrations and examples drawn from Catholic theology and some of the liberal sciences; namely, ethics and political economy.

In Chapter Two, therefore, the basic argument of the thesis is finally clarified. This is achieved by completing the definition of terms, by making appropriate distinctions and by establishing the principles governing the function of Catholic theology vis-à-vis liberal education.

Chapter Three, entitled 'The Making of a Synthesis,' deals with the intellectual challenge of early Christian scholars to reconcile the Hellenistic tradition of liberal learning with Christianity. This chapter explores the changing patterns of interconnections between liberal education and Catholic theology as it is manifested in the Church's doctrine and in the writings of early theologians. There are two sections to this chapter:

1. The early Apologists.
2. The contribution of St. Augustine.

The first section describes the encounter between Hellenistic thought (Stoics, Epicureans, Neo-Pythagoreans, Skeptics, and Neo-Platonists) and Christianity in the writings of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen. The process of incorporating concepts and ideas, taken from liberal education, into the Church's

official doctrine is illustrated during this early period. The different manners of absorbing liberal knowledge into Christianity by the early Apologists is also discussed. The differentiation of levels and degrees of collaboration between liberal education and Catholic theology in the writings of the Apologists throws valuable light on the role of the Church's Magisterium in regulating the views and ideas of Catholic theologians and scholars in matters of faith.

The second and final section of Chapter Three discusses the contribution of St. Augustine, the most influential and scholarly figure among the early fathers of the Church. St. Augustine's approach to theology and his view of the research potential of liberal knowledge and its impact for Catholic theology is analysed. The impact of the trivium of the liberal arts and the liberal knowledge of Neo-Platonism on the development of Augustine's theology is explained. Conversely, the impact of Augustine's theology on notions and concepts of liberal education, such as 'Time' and 'History,' is also discussed. The less than positive emphasis, however, of Augustine's theology on the quadrivium of the liberal arts and the natural sciences is likewise studied.

Section two expounds on Augustine's epistemology which was influenced by Neo-Platonism and the Catholic faith. This chapter ends with a critique of St. Augustine's contribution to the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology.

Chapter Four is called 'The Scholastic Union of Reason and Faith.' In this chapter we see how the relationship between liberal



education and Catholic theology was delineated differently during the Scholastic period. This chapter is divided into four sections:

1. New academic character of Catholic theology.
2. The development of the 'Questio' and 'Dialectics.'
3. The rise of the universities.
4. The contribution of St. Thomas Aquinas.

The first section deals with the intellectual factors responsible for the development of Scholasticism and their impact on the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology. The contributions of Ancius Manlius Boethius, the Pseudo-Dionysius and, particularly, the newly discovered philosophy of man by Aristotle, are discussed in this section. The newly academic quality of Catholic theology, which was able to invite the full concurrence of the conventional resources of liberal learning in the service of the faith, is described and contrasted with the Augustinian theological approach.

Section two investigates the development of the 'Questio' and 'Dialectics' in Catholic theology. The new literary form of the 'Questio' and 'Dialectics,' it is observed, gave Catholic theology its academic character as a 'form of knowing' and enabled it to take its place among the other branches of liberal knowledge. The contributions of Catholic scholars like Peter Abelard, Alan of Lille, Gilbert de la Porrée, Thierry of Chartres, Gratian and Peter Lombard to this development are discussed in this section.



Section three which is called 'The Rise of the Universities' deals with the connection between Catholic theology and university education. Through the efforts of the Scholastics, Catholic theology became an academic discipline and the queen of the sciences. The university concept of education emerged from the theological tenet that there is a unified world that is rational, that can be understood and articulated. As a result of the intellectual excitement brought on by the speculative and academic orientation of Catholic theology, students from all over Europe flocked to the urban or cathedral schools to learn from scholars like Abelard, Alan of Lille and Gilbert de la Porrée. These schools formed the nucleus out of which developed the great medieval universities. Section three also discusses the conflict between the old 'monastic theology' and the academic theology of the schools.

The fourth and final section of this chapter deals with the contribution of St. Thomas Aquinas. The epistemology of Aquinas that took experience as the starting point of knowledge and was able to put all the resources of liberal education to work in understanding the content of Revelation is analysed and explained. Aquinas' notion of Catholic theology as an academic discipline is contrasted with Augustine's view of Catholic theology. This chapter concludes with an analysis of the special kind of relationship that exists between liberal education and Catholic theology in the writings of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Chapter Five is concerned with the 'disintegration of Scholastic education.' This chapter analyses the major factors involved in the disintegration and dissolution of the unity that was forged between Greek liberal learning and Catholic theology. This breakdown of the old unity between liberal education and Catholic theology is treated in five sections:

1. Internal weaknesses of late Scholasticism.
2. Humanism.
3. Nominalism.
4. Devotio Moderna.
5. The Reformation.

In section one, the internal weaknesses of late Scholasticism are discussed from the viewpoint of a theological method which was too "exclusively rational and logical" and which downplayed the Scriptures. Other internal weaknesses such as the lack of "historical sense" and useless theological "subtlety" are treated in this section.

The next section investigates the effects of Humanism on the disintegration of Scholastic education. The contributions of Erasmus and Nicholas of Cusa, particularly, to the humanistic thrust in Catholic theology are discussed. The ways in which Humanism affected the old synthesis between liberal learning and Catholic theology, externally and structurally, are explained and developed.

Section three deals with the school of thought, known as Nominalism, which threatened to undermine the traditional harmony

that existed between Greek liberal thought and Catholic theology. The intellectual shift from "metaphysics to logic" in the writings of the Nominalist, William of Ockham, and the impact of this shift for liberal education and Catholic theology are discussed in this section.

Section four discusses another factor, known as 'Devotio Moderna,' and investigates its negative impact on liberal education. Writings such as the 'Imitation of Christ' by Thomas à Kempis and other literature of the 'Devotio Moderna' are discussed, and the implications for liberal education and Catholic theology are developed.

The final section of Chapter Four deals with the Protestant Reformation, and the Lutheran attack on the Scholastic synthesis of Greek liberal thought and Catholic theology. This section assesses the Lutheran approach to liberal knowledge vis-à-vis theology. Luther's theology of Pietism is discussed, and the consequences of this type of theology in creating a split between liberal education and Christianity are analysed.

Chapter Six is entitled 'Toward a Positive Catholic Theology.' This chapter analyses the effects of Humanism, the Reformation, and the Council of Trent on the positive development of Catholic theology.

Humanism, it is observed, was primarily responsible for the introduction of historic method into Catholic theology, and contributed to the development of 'positive theology' as an addition to speculative theology.



Reformation theology, which drew its strength from a predominantly scriptural base, is shown to have had a profound effect on developments in Catholic theology. Catholic theology was obliged to re-investigate its theological method, to re-examine the sources of Revelation, to take into account the discoveries of philology and biblical studies, and to reformulate its teaching on major issues like justification and grace.

The Council of Trent, it is pointed out, was able to clarify the 'formal' and 'material' principles of theology. Chapter Six discusses the formal principles which focus on the sources of Revelation, and the material principles which are concerned with the doctrines of the faith. This chapter concludes by studying the new patterns of interconnections which developed between liberal education and Catholic theology after the Reformation.

Chapter Seven examines the critical problem of 'Discontinuity in Liberal Education.' This chapter explores the origins of discontinuity in liberal education which reached its peak during the Enlightenment, resulting in the public separation of Catholic theology from liberal education. This chapter is divided into three sections:

1. British Empiricism.
2. French Enlightenment.
3. German Enlightenment.

The section on British Empiricism explains the intellectual trait of inductive reasoning which was set against classical methodology. The intellectual contributions of Bacon, Hobbes, Locke, and



Hume to the new thinking of the age are discussed. The final piece of this section concludes with an analysis of the implications of the new thinking on theology. This part is entitled, 'Natural Theology Revisited.'

The second section on French Enlightenment deals with Descartes, the Encyclopedists, and Rousseau. The impact of Descartes' philosophical principles and subjectivity in undermining Catholic theology is discussed. The new liberal thought of the Encyclopedists, which gave rise to a secular world and a secular philosophy independent of theology, is analysed, and the implications of their reformed system of rational education for liberal education as a whole is also discussed. Rousseau's reaction to Descartes and the Encyclopedists concludes this section, and his attempts to reclaim theology as part of liberal education are described.

The final section of Chapter Seven deals with German Enlightenment. The ideas of Leibniz, Lessing, and Kant are discussed in this section. The rejection of the traditional function of theology within liberal studies is analysed, and the implications of Kant's liberal thought for theology, particularly, are developed and explained. This chapter concludes with an assessment of the Enlightenment, generally, on Catholic theology. A summary of the effects of the Enlightenment on discontinuity in liberal education is offered.

Chapter Eight presents the 'Catholic Reaction' to the discontinuity in liberal education brought on by the Enlightenment. The critical problem for Catholic theology in this investigation is the preservation

of the continuity of liberal education while absorbing the genuine intellectual advances of the period. This chapter is divided into five sections:

1. Latitudinarianism.
2. Encyclopedic Education.
3. Liberalism.
4. Rationalism.
5. Modernism.

Section one, dealing with Latitudinarianism; that is, a mode of thought that was broad and 'liberal' in its standards of religious belief and conduct, addresses the thought of Blaise Pascal. Pascal, in his writings, tried to recapture the dynamism of faith that was lost in the new liberal education. His 'Penseés' which entered into a profound analysis of the human condition without Christianity and the human condition with Christianity are discussed in this section.

Section two on 'Encyclopedic Education' gives the responses of Catholic scholars to the reformed rational system of education of the Encyclopedists. Scholars like Pluche, Bergier and Berthier answer the intellectual claims of the Encyclopedists and argue forcibly for the traditional unity and integrity of all knowledge, including theology.

Section three deals with the problem of 'Liberalism' in Catholic theology which posed a threat to the Church's traditional teaching. The development of the Ultramontane Spirit in Catholicism, which was opposed to all forms of liberalism, is

explained. The conflict in the Church between the Ultramontane faction and the liberal faction, which sought to embrace the ideas of liberalism just as the Church had embraced Greco-Roman ideas in the past, is described and the implications for liberal education and Catholic theology are analysed.

Section four is concerned with the critical problem of nineteenth century 'Rationalism.' The writings of various Catholic scholars such as Hermes, Günther, and Newman who tried to reconcile modern philosophies and intellectual developments with Catholic theology are discussed. John Henry Newman was more successful than any of his contemporaries in paving the way for the acceptance of the modern exigencies of reason in the service of Catholic theology. Newman's intellectual approach to the faith and his contribution to the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology is explained. His major writings which seek a new basis for the harmonious connection between liberal education and Catholic theology are discussed.

The final section of Chapter Eight is about 'Modernism' which was a symptom of the tension that had developed within Catholicism over the claims of liberal education and Catholic theology. Modernism is distinguished from 'Reform Catholicism' which respected the basic tenets and structures of the Church while being open to scholarly developments. The writings of Modernists like Loisy, LeRoy, and Tyrrell are discussed, and the Church's response is presented. This section concludes by studying the crisis in the Catholic intellect that followed Modernism.



Chapter Nine is the final chapter and is entitled, 'Rediscovery of a Tradition.' This chapter analyses the complex renewal of Catholic studies which returned to the sources of the comprehensive Catholic tradition in order to accommodate modern liberal learning.

The first part of Chapter Nine examines the Apologetic phase of the Catholic theological revival, and discusses the contributions of the Tübingen and Munich Schools of theology to the rethinking of dogma from the historical dimension.

The next part of Chapter Nine deals with the Catholic theological revival initiated by Pope Leo XIII in his encyclical, 'Aeterni Patris.' The goal of Leo XIII to restore the close union between liberal education and Catholic theology by re-fashioning a Christian Weltanschauung is discussed.

The various intellectual movements within Catholicism that flowed from this revival of scholarship are examined. These movements or intellectual thrusts are described as (1) Neo-Thomism; (2) Neo-Scholasticism and 'La Nouvelle Theologie'; (3) New Philosophers. Each of these movements is analysed, and the ways in which the modern resources of liberal education are absorbed within the comprehensive tradition of Catholicism are described.

The final part of Chapter Nine summarizes the findings of this study. The intellectual benefits accruing from the intimate connection between liberal education and Catholic theology are listed and summarized as follows: (1) Theological knowledge opens up whole new dimensions of thought; (2) Theology provides a regulatory science



which integrates and unifies all knowledge; (3) A theological education offers a means of transcending the limits of the natural man and natural reason. These findings or positive benefits are illustrated throughout this thesis which studies the intimate connection between liberal education and Catholic theology.

INTRODUCTION  
REFERENCES

1. Culler, A. Dwight, The Imperial Intellect (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 178, p. 174
2. Newman, John Henry, On the Scope and Nature of University Education (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd, 1956), p. 6

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE FUNCTION OF LIBERAL EDUCATION VIS-À-VIS CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

The primary interest in this chapter is in establishing the connection between liberal education and Catholic theology by showing: (1) how liberal education includes Catholic theology within the circle of the sciences; and (2) how different aspects of liberal education; namely, the liberal arts and the liberal sciences influence developments in Catholic theology, specifically.

The materials, however, for the study of both liberal education and Catholic theology are very extensive, and the ways in which different authors have treated this subject-matter display a wide variety of perspectives and emphasis. Thus, it has been found necessary to choose sources and examples which are deemed to be central to the understanding of the special relationship existing between each.

To begin with, it is necessary to clarify the meaning of liberal education in order to appreciate how it functions and relates to Catholic theology. Hence, this chapter sets out to explain the meaning and function of liberal education with particular reference to Catholic theology. It purports to do this by discussing:

1. The broad concept of liberal education.
2. The relationship between the liberal arts and Catholic theology.
3. The relationship between the liberal sciences and Catholic theology.



## 1. The Concept of Liberal Education

Liberal education has a more ancient history than theology. Greek philosophers formulated a theory of liberal education long before the first theological system was constructed.<sup>1</sup> The western tradition of liberal education had its origins in Athens about twenty-four centuries ago. From the Greeks, this tradition was handed down to the Romans and from there to the monks and scholars of the Middle Ages who, in turn, passed it on to the humanists of the Renaissance who finally handed it down to the schools and universities of the Western World.

In his book, entitled: Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education, An Essay in History and Culture, Sheldon Rothblatt declares that liberal education has always been "difficult to define" since it cannot be properly understood apart from the "particular historical contexts" it has been "so closely associated with."<sup>2</sup> Writing about the different cultural manifestations which have been identified with "the purposes and meaning of a liberal education," Rothblatt asserts: "a liberal education can be truth, taste, sociability, liberality, humanism, sensitivity, sound critical principles, critical self-awareness, scientific detachment, a glimpse into the permanent realities of existence, civilization and culture."<sup>3</sup> Evidently, at different times and in different cultures there have been various shifts of emphasis in the theory and practice of liberal education.

Notwithstanding these different cultural manifestations and shifts of emphasis in liberal education, Rothblatt concedes that there are "ideas" which are "common to all phases of liberal education."<sup>4</sup>

It is with those "ideas" common to all phases of liberal education that have had an influence on Catholic theology that we are primarily concerned.

One meaning of liberal education which has assumed priority today, according to Rothblatt, is "the search for truth--not abiding truth, but contingent truth, based on facts and sources."<sup>5</sup> This meaning of truth, he explains, first appeared in Victorian times and is the result of the "knowledge revolution," the "research ideal," belief in the "power of the intellect," "specialism," "professionalism," the "breakdown of theological (and positivist) universe," and the "lack of confidence in liberal education to produce a reliable social type."<sup>6</sup> Scholars like John Henry Newman, Jacques Maritain, P. H. Phenix and Paul H. Hirst differ with Rothblatt's exclusively empirical concept of truth and tend to view liberal education as a process concerned simply and directly with the development of the intellect. Thus Hirst, for example, defines liberal education as "an education concerned directly with the development of the mind in rational knowledge, whatever form that freely takes."<sup>7</sup> The free development of the mind in rational knowledge, according to Hirst, includes the study of theology as one of the several forms of knowing.<sup>8</sup>

John Henry (Cardinal) Newman argued forcibly for the compatibility of liberal education, which imparts a complete culture of the mind, with Catholic theology in his discourses, entitled On the Scope and Nature of University Education.<sup>9</sup> These discourses were later enlarged into ten essays and called The Idea of a University Education. A liberal education, according to Newman, "is simply the cultivation of the intellect as such, and its object is nothing more or less than intellectual excellence."<sup>10</sup> Newman claimed that liberal education deserved the "name of culture of the mind" for it was not concerned with imparting mere information, nor was it concerned, primarily, with useful knowledge that would be helpful in a profession or in a career.<sup>11</sup> Nevertheless, as Newman also pointed out, liberal education was more useful than other kinds of education because of the long-term benefits that it achieved. By extending the circle of the sciences, liberal education increased the store of knowledge and enabled one to take up a profession or career with the grace and largeness of mind that belongs to it.<sup>12</sup>

The mark of intellectual culture which liberal education purports to achieve is, according to Newman, "enlargement of mind."<sup>13</sup> Enlargement of mind, for Newman, is brought about as a result of knowledge and the energetic action of the mind. According to A. Dwight Culler, Newman was offering an organic image of the mind with emphasis upon "unity of mind" and the need to "systematize" knowledge.<sup>14</sup> This concept of mind was derived from Samuel Taylor Coleridge. The other



image of the mind was a mechanical one, open to every impression and object without the penchant for synthesis. This view of the mind was derived from the intellectual tradition of the Enlightenment, and was rejected by Newman.<sup>15</sup>

The intellectual characteristic known as 'enlargement of mind' is distinguished from "mere addition to our knowledge" and is described by Newman as "the power of viewing many things at once as a whole."<sup>16</sup> Philosophical knowledge which produces this intellectual characteristic is especially liberal, according to Newman, for it "rises towards ideas" and is not exhausted upon what is "particular and external."<sup>17</sup> The philosophical habit was viewed by Newman as necessary for the cultivation of liberal knowledge which contained within it the "germ" of a "scientific or a philosophical process."<sup>18</sup> The word liberal "as applied to knowledge and education" expressed this "specific idea," according to Newman. Thus, while describing the characteristics of liberal knowledge, specifically, Newman wrote:

That alone is liberal knowledge which stands on its own pretensions, which is independent of sequel, expects no complement, refuses to be informed (as it is called) by any end, or absorbed into any art, in order duly to present itself to our contemplation.<sup>19</sup>

Catholic theology, therefore, lost its liberal attribute when it was cultivated, not "as a contemplation" but as "an art or a business making use of theology."<sup>20</sup> Thus catechesis, a practical art making use of theology (although meritorious and necessary), is not the same as theological education; that is, the ability to think

about theology. In the same way, the applied sciences which transfer the physical sciences "from the order of liberal pursuits" to the "distinct class of the useful" cannot be classified as liberal.<sup>21</sup> Thus, knowledge (whether theological or pertaining to the physical sciences) can be cultivated "in both ways at once," according to Newman. It can be cultivated as useful knowledge or as liberal knowledge.<sup>22</sup> Catholic theology only provided a liberal education when it was cultivated as "simple knowledge" within the universal context of the whole circle of knowledge. It provided useful knowledge, according to Ian Kerr, when it was concerned with the application of "certain theological information and skills to meet certain concrete demands and situations."<sup>23</sup> The philosophical habit was deemed necessary by Newman in liberal education for it permitted the cultivation of knowledge as liberal since liberal knowledge offered not "a mere extrinsic or accidental advantage" but was "an acquired illumination ... a habit, a personal possession, and an inward endowment."<sup>24</sup>

In his discourses, Newman illustrated the manner in which liberal education included theology as part of the circle of knowledge. He defined truth: "the object of knowledge of whatever kind," as "facts and their relations, which stand towards each other pretty much as subjects and predicates in logic."<sup>25</sup> The complex system of truth or "facts and their relations" is broken down, according to Newman, into portions of the whole which we call the sciences or "forms of knowledge." All knowledge, according to Newman, forms one whole for the





"subject-matter is one."<sup>26</sup> By "mental abstraction," the intellect separates portion from portion; that is, it creates sciences which are "the logical record of this or that aspect of the whole subject-matter of knowledge."<sup>27</sup> Theology, Newman claimed, is an integral part of this "mental exercise" or abstraction for it is concerned with the Creator and His works.<sup>28</sup> Philosophy, which Newman described as the "science of sciences" enables "the comprehension of the bearings of one science on another, and the use of each to each, and the location and limitation and adjustment and due appreciation of them all, one with another."<sup>29</sup> This kind of philosophical knowledge was especially liberal for it effected a recombination of the different forms of knowing. Theology, on the other hand, was regarded as the highest and most important branch of liberal knowledge. To exclude it from the liberal sciences would, according to Newman, throw "the circle of universal science into ... confusion."<sup>30</sup> Thus, Newman summarized his theory of liberal knowledge, inclusive of theology, as follows:

I have hitherto been engaged in showing that all the sciences came to us as one, that they all relate to one and the same integral subject-matter, that each separately is more or less an abstraction, wholly true as an hypothesis, but not wholly trustworthy in the concrete, conversant with relations more than with facts, with principles more than with agents, needing the support and guarantee of its sister sciences, and giving in turn while it takes, from which it follows that none can be safely omitted if we would obtain the exactest knowledge possible of things as they are, and that the omission is more or less important in proportion to the field which each covers, and the depth to which it



penetrates, and the order to which it belongs; for its loss is a private privation of an influence which exerts itself in the correction and completion of the rest.<sup>31</sup>

Newman concluded that religious truth was not only a portion, but a "condition of general knowledge." To remove theology from the circle of sciences would be tantamount, he claimed, to "unravelling the web of university education."<sup>32</sup>

Newman argued convincingly that liberal education was not only compatible with Catholic theology but that it brought Catholic theology to reasoned fullness. He also conceded that the alliance between liberal education and Catholic theology was not without danger. The main problem, Newman observed, was the tendency of human knowledge to make our minds the measure of things, "to impress us with a mere philosophical theory of life and conduct, in the place of revelation."<sup>33</sup> Thus, Newman stated that each form of secular knowledge is inclined "to view revealed religion from an aspect of its own--to fuse and recast it--to tune it, as it were to a different key."<sup>34</sup> For example, the tendency of scientific knowledge, which deals with the book of nature, tends to exclude "theological truth altogether"; and the tendency of literary knowledge, which holds the mirror up to human nature, tends to create "an adulteration" of the spirit of theology.<sup>35</sup> In theory, Newman envisioned no hostility or conflict between liberal education and Catholic theology since the several secular sciences and Catholic theology are derived from the same source; namely, the Creator. In practice or "in matter of fact,"

he offered three reasons as to why liberal education and Catholic theology were sometimes found incompatible.<sup>36</sup>

1. The drift of Catholic theology and the other liberal sciences is different. Catholic theology offers one viewpoint based on Revelation whereas physical science, for example, offers another viewpoint based on the study of the laws of nature. A problem arises when one viewpoint, legitimate in its own domain, is introduced into another area of study without regard to the nature of that study. The controversy over Galileo's theory of planetary motions was a case in point.

2. The method of Catholic theology is also different from method in the secular sciences. Catholic theology employs the method of deduction which yields no new truths, only an increase of understanding. The datum of Revelation remains the same. The inductive method of the sciences, on the other hand, produces new knowledge. The problem with liberal protestantism, according to Newman, was that it treated the datum of Revelation according to the inductive process of reasoning; that is, as a "large collection of phenomena from which ... each individual Christian may arrive at just those religious conclusions which approve themselves to his own judgment."<sup>37</sup>

3. The subject-matter of the physical sciences is concerned with the works of creation which "declare the glory of God" whereas Catholic theology is concerned with "the will of God" which is not deducible by the "light of nature."<sup>38</sup>

In spite of these conflicts between liberal education and Catholic theology, Newman firmly maintained that the hostility was only apparent and was the result of lack of understanding of the relation and bearing of one science upon another. Like Aquinas who demonstrated the compatibility of Aristotelian liberal thought with Catholic theology, Newman advocated a similar intellectual spirit by accepting "truth of whatever kind, whenever it is clearly ascertained to be such, though there be difficulty in adjusting it with other known truth."<sup>39</sup> In answer to the apparent opposition between the secular branches of knowledge and Catholic theology, Newman wrote:

If anything seems to be proved ... in contradiction to the dogmas of faith, that point will eventually turn out, first, not to be proved, or secondly, not contradictory, or thirdly, not contradictory to anything really revealed, but to something which has been confused with revelation.<sup>40</sup>

With reference to the autonomy of the secular sciences in their own domain, Newman also wrote:

It is a matter of primary importance, in the cultivation of these sciences in which truth is discovered by the human intellect, that the investigator should be free, independent, unshackled in his movements.<sup>41</sup>

Thus, Newman's concept of liberal education fostered, with respect to the secular sciences and Catholic theology, "a great and firm belief in the sovereignty of truth."<sup>42</sup>



## 2. The Liberal Arts and Catholic Theology

The advantage of Newman's definition of liberal education as intellectual culture is that it puts the emphasis in education on process; that is, a process of training that enables the intellect to conduct the search for truth, and a process of discovery that produces either new knowledge or new understanding. Thus, Newman underscores this concept of liberal education by stating that liberal education is a "process of training, by which the intellect ... is disciplined for its own sake, for the perception of its own proper object, and for its own highest culture."<sup>43</sup> The traditional distinction between two forms of liberal education; namely, liberal arts and liberal sciences,<sup>44</sup> suitably illustrates the twofold process of liberal education which has to do with the training of the intellect and with the search for new knowledge and understanding. We now turn attention to the liberal arts which are concerned with training the intellect to conduct the search for truth.

The word "liberal," in liberal education, has reference to the seven liberal arts. These seven arts: grammar, rhetoric, logic, arithmetic, music, geometry, and astronomy refer, as Mark Van Doren points out in his study: Liberal Education, to the basic operations of the mind.<sup>45</sup> These essential operations of the mind or intellectual arts are instrumental in nature and cannot be taught "in terms of courses" for they belong to every subject.<sup>46</sup> Every subject, as

Van Doren argues, has its grammar, that is "its data and terms"; its logic, that is "its reason for being among all the other subjects"; and its rhetoric, that is "its capability of being stated."<sup>47</sup>

The liberal arts have been grouped under two categories; the trivium (grammar, rhetoric and logic) which is literary in tone, and the quadrivium (arithmetic, music, geometry and astronomy) which is scientific in tone.<sup>48</sup> The history of the liberal arts, as Van Doren demonstrates, has not been smooth. Classical Greek education, he points out, possessed symmetry, but this was lost in later Roman education which "identified grammar with literature" and allowed rhetoric to dominate everything."<sup>49</sup> The early Christians saw the liberal arts as merely secular until the fourth century. Yves Marie Congar, in a History of Theology, points out that, in primitive Christianity, there was a definite prejudicial current of thought to the influence of the liberal arts and to "all attempts at speculation in matters of faith."<sup>50</sup> The liberal arts were seen by the early Christians as serving no other purpose except that of the world. It was not until the fourth century that the liberal arts were recognised as indispensable tools in the construction of a science of theology.

The new science of the seventeenth century created an unfortunate split between the trivium and quadrivium of liberal arts. It was then that the humanities and science became the enemies that they sometimes are today.<sup>51</sup> Van Doren explains that scientists developed "the quadrivium as [an] exclusive discipline, only purloining logic from the trivium because it was indispensable." Thus, he asserts



that "the old literary learning countered with an equally exclusive discipline in the trivium."<sup>52</sup> The consequence of this schism between the trivium and the quadrivium is that the operations of the mind which the seven liberal arts signified, suffered as a result. Although Van Doren acknowledges that "the liberal arts survive more intact" in the study of the physical sciences "than elsewhere in education today," he does not fail to observe that the scientist is being "trained for a profession rather than educated for understanding."<sup>53</sup> As a solution to the separation of science and the humanities, Van Doren argues for the interdependence of the two disciplines, the scientific discipline which "threatens to confine itself to facts, and therefore to the one art of observation,"<sup>54</sup> and the literary discipline which "starts from the facts of life."<sup>55</sup> He takes to task those educators who assume that each "half of the tradition is intelligible by itself" and who prescribe "certain masterpieces" in literature which are read separately from masterpieces in science.<sup>56</sup> Sheldon Rothblatt also shows, in Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education, how the emphasis placed on literature and science during the Georgian and Victorian periods in England were entirely different. During the Georgian period, the curriculum was literary because of the perceived cultural ends of a liberal education to foster "interpersonal relations."<sup>57</sup> During the Victorian period, on the other hand, literature was deprived of "its central role in education" and was even excluded from liberal



education by scientific method.<sup>58</sup> At stake here is the unity of the liberal arts, literary and mathematical, because, as Van Doren states, they control thinking wherever thinking is done.

The liberal arts are instrumental and necessary for the development and understanding of all knowledge, including Catholic theology. The seven names given to these intellectual arts refer to seven distinct ways of training the intellect.<sup>59</sup> With reference to Catholic theology, specifically, the seven liberal arts are indispensable to developing human understanding. In a History of Theology, Yves M. Congar makes clear that the best Catholic theologians recognised the interdependence of the liberal arts and theology. He asserts: "Albert the Great and St. Thomas plainly affirm the scientific worthlessness to theology of a purely mystical interpretation of the Scriptures."<sup>60</sup> The above remark was made with reference to the so-called "monastic theology" which gained some prominence during the twelfth century, and which regarded "arts and philosophy as something purely for the edification of oneself and others."<sup>61</sup> The Church did not sanction such a "theology" for it possessed "no purely intellectual or reasoning collaboration"<sup>62</sup> which must be provided by the liberal arts.

Dealing with the relationship between liberal education and theology, Van Doren asserts: "As every man is a philosopher of sorts, so every man is a theologian if he can see beyond his nose."<sup>63</sup> Van Doren does not develop the relationship between liberal education and theology in any great depth, nor does he make the distinction

between religion and theology. He clearly recognises, however, that there is an integral connection between both. Unlike many modern commentators, Van Doren does not make the claim that liberal education is the "source" of theology or religion, but he does affirm that "it comprehends religion."<sup>64</sup> The liberal arts make it possible for the mind to arrive at an understanding of Revelation. They are what Van Doren describes as the "supporting medium" out of which developed "the best works of the imagination."<sup>65</sup> The liberal arts, therefore, have reference to Catholic theology as the "supporting medium" or as an intellectual tool of comprehension. When these intellectual arts are perceived as supporting and developing theological understanding, the relationship between them (the liberal arts and Catholic theology) becomes one of harmony and mutual growth.

Liberal education, as Mark Van Doren points out, suffers "from its ignorance of the liberal arts."<sup>66</sup> The same can be asserted with reference to Catholic theology and the liberal arts. The development of Catholic theology will suffer if the profound and intimate connection with the liberal arts is not understood.

The operations of the mind which the seven liberal arts signify must be accepted in their entirety. These intellectual skills are essential to the development of Catholic theology, but they have to be understood, not as being the source of theology, but as being instrumental and constituting the "supporting medium." The Fathers of the Church, and especially St. Augustine, who wrote treatises

on six of the liberal arts, proclaimed "the propaedeutic and auxiliary value" of the liberal arts in bringing about a more profound "understanding of the Scriptures."<sup>67</sup> Thus, the function of the liberal arts with respect to Catholic theology can be described in many ways: as "instrumental," as "auxiliary," as "the supporting medium," and as "propaedeutic." Without the assistance of the liberal arts, there can be no Catholic theology. The liberal arts, therefore, are indispensable intellectual tools for the development of Catholic theology. They function with respect to it, externally; that is, they provide the intellectual skills whereby a theological system is constructed.



### 3. The Liberal Sciences and Catholic Theology

We have seen that the liberal arts are instrumental in the development of Catholic theology, and we have discussed how they affect Catholic theology externally by providing an intellectual tool whereby a theological system is constructed. Essential as the liberal arts are to the construction of theology, they make no claim to influence the content or datum of theology itself. The datum of Catholic theology is derived from Revelation.

Revelation, however, takes two forms--Revelation by grace, and Revelation by nature. Revelation by grace is contained in the Scriptures and in the Church's tradition. Revelation by nature is the knowledge we have of the Creator through the works of creation.

The liberal sciences are concerned, in principle, with all available human knowledge pertaining to man and to the world of nature. With respect to Catholic theology, the liberal sciences exercise an essential influence. It is largely because of the influence of liberal sciences on Catholic theology that we have had various theological systems and modifications of theology throughout the course of the Church's history. This is made clear by Yves M. Congar in A History of Theology. Congar defines theology as "the scientific construction and human elaboration of revealed statements."<sup>68</sup> This human elaboration of the faith results in the organic addition to dogma of elements borrowed from rational knowledge. The diversity

of theologies or theological systems, Congar explains, is born of a deliberate "choice of conceptual instruments and diverse philosophies."<sup>69</sup> Since the liberal sciences have "their own growth and development" the progress of Catholic theology, according to Congar, "is in some way a function of the state of the sciences."<sup>70</sup>

The purpose of this section is to discuss the status and development of the liberal sciences in order to clarify their unique function with respect to Catholic theology.

The liberal sciences have been defined by Rothblatt as "subjects studied for the knowledge they provided."<sup>71</sup> Up until the eighteenth century, traditional subjects like philosophy, jurisprudence, medicine and theology belonged to the liberal sciences.<sup>72</sup> After the second half of the eighteenth century and right up until the present, each phase of the development of knowledge has bequeathed something to the history of the liberal sciences. As Rothblatt has illustrated, "the relationship between liberal education and knowledge has had to undergo continual metamorphosis."<sup>73</sup> Knowledge, he pointed out, has been viewed as "received truths" during the eighteenth century, as new knowledge assimilated to old truths" during the nineteenth century, as "new knowledge employed to yield new truths and to construct an inclusive philosophical schema," and as "different ways of organizing facts, 'modes of thinking,' ways of arranging information, methods and models which no longer make claims on universal conceptions of order and value" during the twentieth century.<sup>74</sup>

With reference to the liberal sciences, therefore, the theoretical justification for a liberal education has to do with theories and forms of knowledge. This has been the approach of Paul H. Hirst in Knowledge and the Curriculum.<sup>75</sup> In this study, Hirst states that he sets out to formulate "a consistent concept of liberal education ... in terms of the forms of knowledge."<sup>76</sup> The traditional classification of knowledge under the liberal sciences, although adequate for the purposes of liberal education when they were originally classified and applied, are nonetheless too restricting for the purposes of liberal education today. The old classification did not keep pace with new developments in knowledge, and it failed to accommodate itself to the all-embracing purpose of a liberal education to be "broad and not narrow." Hirst's classification of the forms of knowledge, on the other hand, is more up to date and it broadens the scope and content of knowledge in liberal education.

Hirst defines "forms of knowledge" as "the complex ways of understanding experience which man has achieved, which are publicly specifiable and which are gained through learning."<sup>77</sup> The development of the human mind, therefore, is characterised by the forms of knowledge which it has acquired. These forms of knowledge are distinguishable or differentiated into various cognitive structures, each involving a "distinctive form of reasoned judgment."<sup>78</sup> Hirst enumerates the forms of knowledge as: "mathematics, physical sciences, knowledge of persons, literature and art, morals, religion and



philosophy..."<sup>79</sup> Hirst goes on to distinguish these "primary forms of knowledge" from "interdisciplinary areas of study" in which different forms of knowledge are focused on some particular interest, and from "fields of knowledge" that are characteristically rooted elsewhere in more than one discipline.<sup>80</sup> To ignore some of the "primary forms of knowledge," according to Hirst, is to be lacking in "certain whole dimensions of thought and mental development."<sup>81</sup> It is the function of liberal education to provide the kind of integral, intellectual development that opens up "whole dimensions of thought" through attention to "primary forms of knowing," according to Hirst in his more highly developed classification of knowledge. Like the liberal sciences, these primary forms of knowing, which Hirst develops, are specific and are not described loosely in terms like "growth," "needs," or "interests." They possess certain distinct, 'scientific' features such as: (1) a conceptual scheme; that is, central concepts peculiar in character to a particular form of knowledge; (2) a logical structure, appropriate to each form of knowledge; and (3) truth criteria; that is, "distinctive expressions that are testable against experience in accordance with particular criteria that are peculiar to the form."<sup>82</sup> Although Hirst rejects the ancient "hierarchy of knowledge" based on, what he calls, "realist metaphysics," he retains the "important logical distinctions that make it possible for us to see some intelligible pattern of knowledge."<sup>83</sup> Hirst also replaces the medieval concept of the "unity

of knowledge" based on a teleological universe with the notion of "unifying theories" clarifying the relationship between "logically distinct forms."<sup>84</sup> Thus, Hirst offers a theory of liberal education that retains its comprehensive character, as determined by the scope and content of the "primary forms of knowing." This educational theory, he claims, also retains its unity by means of "unifying theories" which clarify the relationship between the primary forms of knowing. It also offers an "intelligible pattern of knowledge" by means of "the important logical distinctions" which it makes between the different forms of knowing.

A liberal education, therefore, for Hirst is an education that "develops the intellect in as many as possible of the primary forms of knowing."<sup>85</sup> This form of education, he states, knows "no limits other than those necessarily imposed by the nature of rational knowledge."<sup>86</sup>

The advantage of Hirst's theory and classification of knowledge is that it offers a clear and logical analysis of the primary forms of liberal knowledge by a contemporary scholar of liberal education. These primary forms, according to Hirst, are: scientific, literary, ethical, mathematical, knowledge of persons, philosophical and theological. Other modern scholars such as Jacques Maritain, in Degrees of Knowledge, P. H. Phenix, in Realms of Meaning, and R. S. Peters in Authority, Responsibility and Education, have also made important contributions to the understanding of liberal education in



terms of the development of the mind in knowledge, whatever form that freely takes.<sup>87</sup> Although Hirst's classification appears helpful for the purpose of this study, the insights and contributions of the other scholars are no less important and may not be ignored.

Theology, therefore, is accorded a proper place in liberal knowledge since it represents a distinct type of understanding and thought. The relationship, however, between the other forms of liberal knowledge and theology is not apparent in the writings of contemporary scholars, and it is even less clear in their writings, how theology can be taught.<sup>88</sup> The reason for this, according to Hirst, is because there is no public agreement among scholars about the objective validity of religious truth to be taught.<sup>89</sup>

Thus, many contemporary educators recognise, in principle, the place of theology in liberal education, but they acknowledge their inability to include this dimension of knowledge in the curriculum on account of the limitations imposed by public education and the lack of publicly "agreed principles of justification."<sup>90</sup> The place of theology, therefore, in the curriculum is a difficult problem. This is especially true in education today since 'public' is often confused with 'secular.' What we are directly concerned with here is the precise relationship of the different forms of knowledge to Catholic theology within the broad context of liberal education. The study and place of Catholic theology as a distinct form of knowledge alongside the other liberal subjects in the curriculum of public education is another matter and is not our primary concern.



Traditionally, the relationship of liberal subjects to Catholic theology has been viewed as "auxiliary," since they provide theology with "that rational support without which it would not be able to be complete."<sup>91</sup> Theology regulates itself and develops by making use of the different forms of knowledge which have their own autonomy, conceptual scheme, logical structure, truth criteria and development. The very progress of theology, as was pointed out earlier, is a function of the state of the different forms of knowledge.<sup>92</sup>

What is being discussed here is not the actual datum of theology, which is derived from Revelation, and which will be treated in greater depth in the next chapter, but the progress of theological understanding which takes place according to the status and development of liberal knowledge at particular cultural levels. The special 'auxiliary' relationship of liberal knowledge to Catholic theology is evident when one considers that Catholic theology has borrowed and continues to borrow many of its organic elements from liberal knowledge. This is the nature of theological progress, for as Fr. H. Bouillard observed when discussing the impressive intellectual developments in the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas: "A theology which is no longer in tune with its time is a false theology."<sup>93</sup>

The positive and auxiliary relationship between all forms of liberal knowledge and theology has become the "doctrinal attitude" of Catholic theology. St. Augustine, for example, in De Doctrina Christiana, firmly proclaimed the legitimacy and the practical

utility of "profane studies" for the development of Christian wisdom.<sup>94</sup> Without rejecting the principle of the sufficiency of Revelation, St. Augustine drew from the liberal education of antiquity "to assist both in the practical application and study of this new Revelation."<sup>95</sup>

There have, undoubtedly, been different cultural manifestations of the auxiliary relationship between profane or secular knowledge and Catholic theology. During the Middle Ages, for example, profane knowledge was characterised by its total reference to Revelation and Salvation, with the result that "all elements of knowledge" were subordinated to the sacred science of theology.<sup>96</sup> This was a cultural development which must be understood in the context of the theological civilisation of the Middle Ages which perceived the propaedeutic value of profane knowledge as a structural concept.<sup>97</sup> This structural concept broke down when the teleological notion of the universe lost its hold and when cultural pluralism came into its own. Paul Hirst has shown the impracticality of holding on to the old medieval model of the hierarchy of knowledge which was associated with metaphysical realism and the teleological universe of the Middle Ages. In its place, Hirst substitutes the primary forms of knowledge which are logically distinct from each other and which include theology. Hirst, however, retains the notion of the unity of all liberal knowledge by means of "unifying theories." In this way, the autonomy of the different forms of knowledge is guaranteed since no one form may be viewed as subordinate to another.

Thus, the function of liberal knowledge with respect to Catholic theology is not only auxiliary, it is also organic. Liberal knowledge exercises an auxiliary function with respect to Catholic theology; that is, liberal knowledge assists Catholic theology both in its practical application and study. Liberal knowledge exercises an organic function with respect to Catholic theology; that is, liberal knowledge contributes to the on-going development of Catholic theology by adding elements to its datum borrowed from the other forms of liberal knowledge.

Theology, it is important to stress, recognises the autonomy of human knowledge in its own sphere. According to Congar, the data from the liberal sciences, when used by theology, remain "intrinsically what they are in their respective science according to the proper criteria of that science."<sup>98</sup> This is the official position of the Catholic Church concerning the function of liberal knowledge vis-à-vis Catholic theology. In the Enchiridion Symbolorum, Definitionum et Declarationum, the Church's theological position is clearly stated: (1) The secular sciences possess their own object, their own method and epistemological autonomy.<sup>99</sup> (2) Theology cannot contradict the findings of the secular sciences.<sup>100</sup> Thus, the function of liberal knowledge with respect to Catholic theology, is not one of subordination. This function, therefore, is both auxiliary and organic.



Liberal education as the pursuit of truth for its own sake makes use of the liberal arts and the liberal sciences. Catholic theology is a form of knowing and, hence is an integral part of liberal education. The liberal arts provide an intellectual tool for the study of Catholic theology. The several liberal sciences provide the organic addition to dogma of rational elements of knowledge.

CHAPTER ONE  
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into distinctive forms of knowledge such as science, history, mathematics, religion, and aesthetic appreciation. Peters claims that liberal education marks out the processes by means of which the individual is initiated into these inherited traditions which develop intellectual understanding.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE FUNCTION OF CATHOLIC THEOLOGY VIS-À-VIS LIBERAL EDUCATION

The central focus of attention in this chapter has to do with the other side of our inquiry; namely, the function of Catholic theology with respect to liberal education. Liberal education, as we have seen, performs an important function with regard to Catholic theology. The liberal arts serve Catholic theology in an auxiliary and propaedeutic fashion by providing an intellectual tool of comprehension. The secular sciences, in addition to assisting in the scientific construction of Catholic theology, perform an organic function by adding elements to the datum of Catholic theology borrowed from the other forms of liberal knowledge.

Catholic theology, on the other hand, has a special function in relation to liberal education. Not only does Catholic theology claim a place among the liberal sciences, it maintains a central position as the queen of the sciences. In order to appreciate the special position and function of Catholic theology, and the ways in which it relates to liberal education, it will be helpful to discuss:

1. The characteristics of Catholic theology.
2. Catholic theology as a 'form of knowing.'
3. The relationship between Catholic theology and liberal education.

### 1. Characteristics of Catholic Theology

Like liberal education, theology has undergone different interpretations and analyses during the course of its long history. Since our concern is with Catholic theology, our task has been made easier as far as offering a definition is concerned. Yves M. Congar, whom we have already quoted, defined theology as the "human elaboration of revealed statements" of the faith.<sup>1</sup> This definition brings together two elements: the element of faith which has reference to the revealed statements, and the element of reason which accounts for the human elaboration of that faith. Thus, theology depends on faith for the reception of its datum, and on the rational products of liberal education both for its external organization and construction, and for the addition to that datum of elements borrowed from liberal knowledge. There can be no theology, therefore, without the collaboration of reason which is provided by liberal education. And there can be no theology without faith for theological understanding develops from faith, as from a source. St. Anselm, echoing a long tradition in Catholic theology, clearly recognized the primacy of faith in its development when he defined theology as "faith seeking understanding."<sup>2</sup> In his work, entitled, Catholicism, Richard P. McBrien, commenting on St. Anselm's definition, states: "Theology is not simply talk about God, or about Christ, or about the Bible, or even about faith. Theology happens only when someone is trying,

in a more or less systematic and critical manner, to come to a better, clearer, more refined understanding of his or her own faith in God and in Christ, as it has become available to us in the Bible, in the Church, or wherever else."<sup>3</sup>

Before proceeding further in our discussion of the characteristics of Catholic theology in order to clarify its function with reference to liberal education, it will be helpful, first of all, to distinguish theology from other academic and educational pursuits which have to do with the subject of religion.

The meaning of the word religion has always been a matter for debate. As John Macquarrie observed in Principles of Christian Theology, "Religion assumes such a variety of forms that attempts to give a succinct definition covering them all have usually turned out to be unsatisfactory."<sup>4</sup> Going a step further, David Tracy, in Blessed Rage for Order, recognizes the futility of even trying to offer a definition of religion which everyone could accept. Thus, David Tracy acknowledges, "There is no universally agreed upon single definition for the human phenomenon called 'religion.'<sup>5</sup> The difficulty in offering a single definition of religion, agreeable to all, and the existence of the great variety of definitions is due, according to Thomas H. Groome, "to the different traditions of religion or to the different academic disciplines that would-be definers bring to discussion of religion."<sup>6</sup>

The etymology of religion, however, will help us to understand something of what is meant when the word is used. There appears



to be universal agreement that religion is derived from the Latin noun religio.<sup>7</sup> It is not so clear, however, which of the three verbs the noun is most closely allied with. The three verbs, according to Richard McBrien, are "relegere ('to turn to constantly' or 'to observe conscientiously'); religari ('to bind oneself [back]'); and reeligere ('to choose again')." <sup>8</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, adhering to the etymological meaning, offered a definition of religion which is consistent with any of the possible uses of the three verbs. For Aquinas, therefore, the word religion "denotes properly a relation to God."<sup>9</sup> This definition of religion as denoting "a relation to God" is broad enough to touch on the whole of human existence and on the totality of a person's relationship with God, whatever form that may take. Thus, McBrien gives some idea of the scope and content of religion when he states, "Religion is the whole complex of attitudes, convictions, emotions, gestures, rituals, beliefs, and institutions by which we come to terms with, and express, our most fundamental relationship with Reality (God and the created order, perceived as coming forth from God's creative hand)."<sup>10</sup>

Catholic theology offers a unique, intellectual explanation and appreciation of the Christian religion. It is the "human elaboration" of the Christian faith, and is, therefore, concerned with the systematic and critical understanding of the faith of that particular religion only. Even though Catholic theologians draw insights from the study of other religions and establish parallels between the faiths of different churches, their primary concern is the elaboration of the Christian faith itself.

Catholic theology, therefore, is to be distinguished from a 'philosophy of religion' which "studies the essence of religion, the bases of the religious fact in man's nature, the rational criteria of truths in matters of religion."<sup>11</sup> The essential difference between theology (that is, Catholic theology) and a philosophy of religion, according to McBrien, is that theology exists to give us "a greater understanding of what we already believe" whereas a philosophy of religion reflects on "the faith-commitment of others."<sup>12</sup> In discussing the theology of St. Augustine, Paul Tillich asserted that St. Augustine developed a philosophy of religion.<sup>13</sup> Yves M. Congar, the renowned Catholic theologian, preferred to describe the achievement of St. Augustine as conceiving "a theory of theological contemplation."<sup>14</sup> This description of St. Augustine by Congar is a more apt description than that of Tillich. We will see later, when discussing the two main approaches to Catholic Theology, that Congar's description of St. Augustine's theology is the more accurate and *insightful*.

Catholic theology must also be distinguished from 'religious psychology,' which has for its object "the different manifestations of the religious fact in individuals and in groups, and for its method, that of psychology."<sup>15</sup> William James in The Varieties of Religious Experiences clearly adopts the method of psychology in his approach to "personal religion" which he describes as "the feelings, acts, and experiences of individual men in their solitude, so far as they may consider the divine."<sup>16</sup> Without doubt, Catholic theologians



recognize the need to address the findings and insights of psychology, as an auxiliary discipline, in their research.<sup>17</sup>

Still the distinction between Catholic theology and religious psychology is apparent when viewed from the standpoint of object and method.

Catholic theology must not be confused either with the 'scientific study of religions,' which is dedicated to describing in their origins, their forms, their content and development the different religions with the help of resources from the historical method. Theology, as Bernard J. F. Lonergan observed, involves "reflection on religion,"<sup>18</sup> and, as such, certainly draws support for its materials from the scientific study of religions. Catholic theology, however, uses the resources of the speculative intellect primarily, and not historical reason only, in the systematic elaboration of its doctrines.<sup>19</sup>

Since we are concerned with Catholic theology, it will be helpful, finally, to make the important distinction between 'Catechesis' and Catholic theology. Catechesis is an ancient Christian word, derived from the Greek verb, Katechein, meaning "to hand down." It is employed frequently by the teaching church to denote an all-embracing instructional activity that is aimed at transmitting the heritage of the Catholic faith.<sup>20</sup> Pope John Paul II, in Catechesis Tradendae, points out that the name of Catechesis was historically attributed "to the whole of the efforts within the Church to make disciples, to help



people believe that Jesus is the Son of God."<sup>21</sup> He goes on to describe Catechesis in our day as "an education of children, young people and adults in the faith, which includes especially the teaching of Christian doctrine imparted, generally speaking, in an organized and systematic way, with a view to initiating the hearers into the fullness of Christian life."<sup>22</sup> John Paul II recognizes the profound connection that exists between Catholic theology and Catechesis since "every stirring in the field of theology also has repercussions in that of Catechesis."<sup>23</sup> Nonetheless, the distinction between Catholic theology and Catechesis is evident since Catholic theology is primarily a speculative activity which engages in research, whereas Catechesis is an instructional activity and a process of initiation that is concerned with formation in the faith. It is interesting to note that Paul Hirst, writing in Moral Education in a Secular Society,<sup>24</sup> approaches the study of religion from the viewpoint of Catechesis, although he does not actually use the term 'Catechesis' to describe his concept of Religious Education. Thus, Hirst offers two approaches to religious education, one he calls the 'Primitive Concept' which is concerned with "the transmission of beliefs and customs" from one generation to another; the other he calls the 'Sophisticated View,' concerned with "passing on beliefs and practices according to, and together with, their objective status."<sup>25</sup> Hirst acknowledges the difficulty of conceding a place in the curriculum to either of these forms of Catechesis and, therefore, he

advocates a place in the educational curriculum only to a "form of secular religious education where an objective understanding of religion is fostered but where the private nature or character of religion remains intact."<sup>26</sup> Hirst offers this type of solution based on the autonomy of the process of education which he says must "respect the limits of reason and nevertheless aim at developing the rational autonomous person," and "in principle, attend to development in all those domains of reason that man has achieved."<sup>27</sup> Notwithstanding this opinion which views religion from the standpoint of Catechesis, Hirst also acknowledges the efforts of theologians, "neothomists and others" to arrive at "an agreed rational basis" in the "domain of Religious knowledge."<sup>28</sup> It is the opinion of this author that Catholic theology, because of its unique relationship with liberal education, respects "the limits of reason" and aims "at developing the rational autonomous person" while, in principle, it attends to "development in all those domains of reason that man has achieved."

Theology is derived from the Greek word *Θεολογία*. It was first used by Plato in The Republic to point out the educational value of mythology.<sup>29</sup> Thus, theology was viewed by Plato as a convenient manner of explaining the things of this world. It enveloped the nymphs and dryads and various deities of ancient Greek mythology. The poets of the ancient world--Orpheus, Homer and Hesiod, who speculated on the origin of the world were called "theologians" because they were concerned with a mythological explanation of the world. It is in



Aristotle's metaphysics, however, that theology takes on the more precise meaning of a reasoned account about God. Thus, Aristotle, in his metaphysics, asserts "there must, then, be three theoretical philosophies; mathematics, physics, and what may be called theology, since it is obvious that if the divine is present anywhere it is present in things of this sort. And the highest science must deal with the highest genus."<sup>30</sup> It must be pointed out, however, that, in his other writings, Aristotle employed the word theology to designate mythology rather than a systematic treatment of the divine.

Thus, before the Christian era, the main characteristic of theology was to give a mythological explanation of the universe. In the City of God, St. Augustine makes it clear that pagan theology treated the Divinity as an explanation of mundane things, and that it did not possess a true theology which considered "the personal mystery" and "intimate nature of God."<sup>31</sup> St. Augustine, however, as Yves M. Congar pointed out, treated the term, theology, in the "etymological sense" and he did not develop its "epistemological meaning" as a "defined discipline exposing a rational explanation of Revelation."<sup>32</sup> It was not until the thirteenth century that theology attained the precise meaning that it has for us today.<sup>33</sup>

Catholic theology is situated in the general economy of our knowledge of God. But, knowledge of God comprehends divine knowledge and human knowledge. Each of these manners or modes of knowing God has its "connatural object."<sup>34</sup> For example, God's manner of knowledge



is shown to us through Revelation and its datum; the human manner of knowledge is shown to us through physical objects and the things of nature. These two modes of knowledge are mutually beneficial and they cannot contradict each other for they both originate from the same source; namely, God. Catholic theology recognizes that the human mode of knowledge, through natural intelligence, has its own autonomy of object and method, just as, in its own order, it conveys its own truth. St. Thomas Aquinas offered the intellectual justification for this position and theological approach in the Summa Theologica by means of the method of 'analogy' which furnished the link between the truth of natural intelligence and the truth of faith.<sup>35</sup>

The Catholic theological tradition, as Yves M. Congar points out, reveals also two ways of approaching Revelation.<sup>36</sup> The first may be described as "supernatural contemplation" which is based on an affective union with God. The second way has been described as "theological contemplation," based on the activity of knowledge of the rational and discursive type. In the first approach, the soul possesses God by way of experience, so that the mystery of God works on the soul interiorly, rendering it conformable to its nature. In this approach, the soul is passive and the type of theology that is characteristic of this manner is called mystical or spiritual theology. Catholic theology incorporates this approach of supernatural contemplation into its scheme, attributing the affective activity of the soul to the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The second way

of approaching theology properly describes the activity of Catholic theology. In this approach, the mind possesses knowledge of God in the order of cognition. The type of theological understanding emanating from this approach is "properly rational" in which the mind is active, not passive, and in which the theologian profits from the work of others and communicates his or her own acquisitions. It is important to note that, in this approach, the act of theological understanding is made by rational activity, according to the laws and methods of reason. Thus, Catholic theology establishes the unity between natural knowledge and the knowledge of faith. It is opposed to the "theory of double truth"; that is, what is true in the realm of faith can contradict reason or what is true in the realm of natural knowledge can contradict faith. In Catholic theology, faith and reason both present data which have legitimate claims to intelligibility and order.

Theological understanding, therefore, is formed by the vital and organic union of faith and reason. It is not merely a rational activity for it is conducted by the light of faith, and it is not only a mystical activity for it is a rational activity applied to the datum of faith. There are different levels of theological understanding which may be described as follows.

The first level concerns the preliminary function of reason to establish, by means of natural intelligence, the Praeambula Fidei; that is, those truths which, although contained in Revelation, are



nonetheless, capable of proof or convincing demonstration by means of unaided reason. Some of the truths that are considered capable of rational demonstration are: the existence of God, the existence of the soul, and immortality. The preliminary function of reason which establishes some truths of faith by means of natural intelligence is sometimes referred to as natural theology for it does not require one to believe in the supernatural. John Dewey is perhaps the classic example of a modern educator who advocated a natural theology, exclusively, in his book, A Common Faith. Dewey perceived "the method of natural intelligence" as being the exclusive source of insights into faith.<sup>37</sup> He rejected the notion of the supernatural and assigned a "religious force" to what he termed "the vital factors in the natural process of human creativity."<sup>38</sup> Writing about faith, Dewey perceived it as an entirely rational and natural phenomenon. Thus, he defined faith as the "unification of the self through allegiance to inclusive ideal ends, which imagination presents to us and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices."<sup>39</sup> In this definition of faith, Dewey presented a natural or rational theology that acknowledged the preliminary function of reason only. Another limiting factor in Dewey's 'theology' is the fact that he only accepted "scientific reason" and its "method" in matters of faith.<sup>40</sup>

The next level of theological understanding concerns the application of reason to the datum of Revelation in order to demonstrate its



rational suitability. This type of theological understanding received its formal determination during the 'Apologetic Movement' of the early Christian Church. Paul Tillich claims that the apologetic movement which Justin Martyr espoused gave rise to "a developed Christian theology."<sup>41</sup> The early apologists were faced with the perennial issue of defending the rational suitability of Revelation. They did this, (1) by showing what Christianity had in common with the best features of the culture; (2) by pointing out the defects in the opposing arguments; (3) by demonstrating the intrinsic reasonableness of their view.<sup>42</sup> This level of theological understanding has exercised and will always exert an important role in Catholic theology because of an inherent conflict between Christianity and the 'world,' and because of the apparent antagonism between liberal education and the claims of faith.

The third level of theological understanding is concerned with the rational construction of the mysteries of faith into a coherent body of doctrines consistent with reason. Thus, theological understanding, at this level, recognizes that the knowledge we have of the laws and nature of things, based on sense experience, enters into the objective construction of theology. This level of theological understanding uses formal reasoning in the human elaboration of the faith and it links faith and reason in such a way that rational knowledge enters into the constitution of dogma. Theological understanding, at this level, surpasses the normal capabilities of human reason. This is why it has been said that the contribution of reason by St. Thomas Aquinas was greater than that of Aristotle.<sup>43</sup>

## 2. Catholic Theology as a 'Form of Knowing'

We have discussed already the views of scholars, like John Henry Newman and P. H. Hirst, concerning the role of theology as an integral part of liberal education. For Hirst, religion is one of the primary forms of knowledge or knowing which cannot be excluded from a theory of liberal education for it provides the kind of intellectual development that opens up "whole dimensions of thought." We have also discussed the various usages of the word 'religion' and have shown how difficult it is for scholars to arrive at an agreed definition or understanding of the term. With Catholic theology, however, the situation is different. Catholic theology offers an intellectual explanation and appreciation of the Christian religion. It is "the human elaboration" of the Christian religion in a systematic and critical manner. It has, therefore (1) its own conceptual scheme; that is, its own datum or ideas, (2) logical structure; that is, an orderly and systematic presentation of doctrine, and (3) truth criteria; that is, a method of verification.

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate that Catholic theology is a 'form of knowing,' possessing a methodology that respects the integrity and functioning of human reason in all its aspects.

During the second half of the twelfth century, theology gained consciousness of itself and of its place among the different branches



of knowledge or the sciences, as they were then called. Gilbert de la Porrée was among the first to list the different disciplines of knowledge as "natural," "mathematical," "theological," "civil," and "rational."<sup>44</sup> St. Thomas Aquinas, in the Summa Theologica, argued that theology was a science, even though it involved many aspects and acts which did not belong to the scientific order. Aquinas, however, understood science after the manner of Aristotle and he applied that notion of science to theology.<sup>45</sup> Notwithstanding the limitation of applying Aristotle's notion of science to theology, Aquinas demonstrated that theology possessed the scientific qualities necessary for a discipline of knowledge. Theology, as Yves M. Congar pointed out, can take its place among the disciplines of knowledge and the sciences because it can justify "a proper object and a proper method and arrive at certitude of a certain type which may be communicable to other minds."<sup>46</sup> In addition to having its own object and method, theology uses all the sciences and disciplines of knowledge to work on its object and to achieve its goal.

Catholic scholars, generally, have justified the scientific quality of theology and its proper place among the disciplines of knowledge by pointing to the uniqueness and value of religious knowledge in liberal education. According to John Henry Newman, for example, the only valid reason for the exclusion of theology from liberal education would be that theology is "barren of real knowledge."<sup>47</sup> Newman pointed out, however, that Revealed doctrines of Christianity, such as the Incarnation, are true, not only



historically but philosophically.<sup>48</sup> Catholic theology, Newman argued, assists human reason, as it is practically exercised so that reason may be exercised in a "straight and satisfactory direction."<sup>49</sup>

Natural reason offers a philosophy of education based on "truths in the natural order," but faith enables reason to "look out for what is beyond nature."<sup>50</sup> Thus, according to Newman, "religious doctrine is knowledge" and the exclusion of theology from liberal education would be "simply unphilosophical."<sup>51</sup>

Newman claimed that the Lutheran doctrine of pietism was responsible for excluding theology from liberal education since it reduced religious knowledge to "a feeling, an emotion, an affection, an appetency."<sup>52</sup> This religious trend, he argued, led to the severance of faith from reason, and to the consequent isolation of theology from the other liberal sciences. Thus, theology lost the rightful place which it held "in the intellectual world from time immemorial."<sup>53</sup> All the great philosophers, even empirically-minded thinkers like Francis Bacon, John Locke and Emmanuel Kant, started their speculations with theology and introduced it, at will, "without any apology."<sup>54</sup> Theology has received a wide reception in the literature of the world, and appears in the writings of literary geniuses from every culture no matter how different they are "in creed or cast of mind."<sup>55</sup> Writing about the literature of his own country, Newman declared that theology:

occupies our language, it meets us at every turn in our literature, it is the secret assumption, too

axiomatic to be distinctly professed, of all of our writers; nor can we help assuming it ourselves, without the most unnatural vigilance.<sup>56</sup>

Thus, according to Newman, theology cannot reasonably "be passed over in a scheme of universal instruction" because it is "a subject of thought" which has earned its place, "by prescription."<sup>57</sup>

The scientific quality of theology, however, was first attacked, within the folds of Catholicism, by the nominalists of the fourteenth century. William of Ockham, for example, asserted that the affirmations of reason in theology had "no validity beyond our concepts and our words," and that they applied "in no way to the Divine Reality."<sup>58</sup> Duns Scotus affirmed Ockham's position, denying the scientific quality of theology and the "continuity from knowledge of things to knowledge of God."<sup>59</sup>

Notwithstanding the position of Ockham and Scotus which was motivated, in part, by a desire to preserve the purity of faith and Revelation, detached from any rational elements, the teaching Church defended the scientific quality of Catholic theology. Like all the other sciences and disciplines of knowledge, Catholic theology engages in research and discovery. The datum of Catholic theology is immutable, but the theological activity which draws from rational sources is on-going and scientific. The scientific quality of Catholic theology cannot fulfil its function if denied the possibility of trials, hypotheses, questions and solutions which are subjected to the test of criticism and which benefit from the co-operation of

the academic community. This is the stated policy of the Catholic teaching authority as described in the encyclical, Ad Petri Cathedram, by Pope John XXIII. In virtue of possessing the quality of a science, Catholic theology progresses according to "the law of all progress made by specialization."<sup>60</sup> Theology must keep abreast of all those sciences and disciplines of knowledge which it can make auxiliary to its work. Theology, unlike any other discipline of knowledge or science, has nothing above it. Each science, each discipline of knowledge proves its own conclusions, and leaves to a higher discipline the task of defending its principles. Theology defends its own principles and the principles common to all the other sciences. It uses metaphysics, for example, to defend the value of the first principles of reason and the validity of human knowledge. It defends its own principles; namely, revealed truths, by means of apologetics which, we have seen, constitutes the second level of theological understanding. Catholic theology has more divisions and parts than any other form of knowing because of the richness of its datum and the fact that it utilizes the service of numerous auxiliary disciplines. Theology has been called the queen of the sciences because it directs the different acquisitions of human intelligence toward God, not only from the standpoint of their use but according to their intrinsic content and richness.



### 3. Relationship of Catholic Theology to Liberal Education

We have discussed the relationship of liberal education to Catholic theology in the previous chapter and have observed that the liberal arts provide the intellectual skills whereby a theological system is constructed and that the products of liberal knowledge enter into the organic development of Catholic theology itself. We now focus attention on the relationship of Catholic theology to liberal education.

Catholic theology functions with reference to the intellectual products of liberal education, externally. It does not intervene in the internal work of the liberal sciences, nor does it attempt to prove the conclusions of other disciplines. The liberal sciences, as we have already pointed out, possess their own object, method and epistemological autonomy. The data which theology uses from the disciplines of knowledge remain "intrinsically what they are in their respective science according to the proper criteria of that science."<sup>61</sup> Thus, Catholic theology works through the disciplines of human knowledge to arrive at an understanding of Revelation, but it does not intervene internally in the work of these disciplines. In Catholic theology, the datum of Revelation is primary, but it is through the acquired skills and knowledge of liberal education that it receives its speculative and scientific development. Thus, Yves M. Congar describes the

mutually autonomous and organic relationship that exists between Catholic theology and the products of liberal education. Theology, he states, "deals with concepts chosen by God from our world to fit corresponding concepts which we can attain by the different sciences which concern them."<sup>62</sup> Congar, therefore, demonstrates the validity and effectiveness of using liberal knowledge in Catholic theology from the fact that it is guaranteed by God Himself, Who used the findings of liberal knowledge as "revealed analogies" in His Self-Revelation.

Although Catholic theology functions externally with reference to the intellectual products of liberal education by not intervening internally in the work of the liberal sciences, it nevertheless exercises a regulatory function over the findings of the various disciplines of knowledge. The immutable and common feature of theology is the datum of Revelation. This datum, by the very reason of its transcendence, supports, in its rational organization, the service of liberal education and the diverse forms of knowledge. The datum of theology exercises a critical or regulatory function with regard to all conceptualization and reasoning. Thus, Catholic theology regulates intellectual theories so that if a theory proves to be too narrow or too rigid to take the datum of Revelation into account, then that theory must be remolded. For example, Aristotle's theory of subsistence was absorbed into the intellectual construction of the Trinity, whereas the Cartesian theory of matter, identified as extended substance, was rejected because it conflicted with the doctrine of the Eucharist.



John Henry Newman justified the regulatory function of theology over the findings of the secular disciplines so that they might teach "what in its place is true."<sup>63</sup> The rational tendency of each intellectual discipline or form of knowledge is to speak, not "the whole truth" but a "narrow truth" which can only be rectified when it is "compared with other truths, which are acknowledged as such in order to verify, complete and correct them."<sup>64</sup> Thus, the regulatory function of theology is necessary, not only "to defend its own boundaries," but also to "hinder the encroachment" of other sciences in areas outside their own pale of inquiry.<sup>65</sup> Newman mentions 'political economy' as one example of a science requiring "the control of revealed truth."<sup>66</sup> Political economy is a science which offers rules for gaining and disposing of wealth, but it can lead to "occasions of sin" if some of its selfish conclusions which conflict with or distort "the ultimate end of all things," are not "overruled by a higher teaching."<sup>67</sup> The apparent hostility of secular sciences (like political economy) to theology, comes about, according to Newman, when "theology is not allowed to occupy its own territory" and when the secular sciences usurp its function.<sup>68</sup> "Private judgments" give rise to "enunciations" hostile to theology if theology is not allowed to exercise its regulatory function, according to Newman.<sup>69</sup>

Throughout the course of its history, Catholic theology has exercised a regulatory function with regard to various aspects of liberal education. Professor V. A. McClelland, in English Roman Catholics and Higher Education, points to the moral regulatory



function of Catholic theology in Victorian England which saw its moral teachings threatened by the contradictions in character formation at Oxford. The idea of character formation which was prevalent in Oxford and Cambridge during the nineteenth century was described in such terms as a "generous atmosphere," but as Sheldon Rothblatt also observed, it was questionably 'liberal' in the true sense; namely, to produce real moral character.<sup>70</sup>

John Henry Newman offers, perhaps, the most impressive critique of the English ideal of the gentleman detached from his theological moorings. Newman's portrait of the gentleman in Discourse VII of his lectures on university education is the highest expression of the natural man at his best. The idea of the gentleman, which was developed by James Forrester in The Polite Philosopher and which was adopted by Lord Shaftesbury in his Advice to his Son, represented the ideal end of a liberal education in Victorian England.<sup>71</sup> Newman writes so eloquently and attractively about the virtues of a gentleman in a famous passage that one tends to take it literally without perceiving the irony in his portrait.<sup>72</sup> The passage begins: "Hence it is that it is almost a definition of a gentleman to say that he is one who never inflicts pain." Newman's eloquent portrait offers a picture "of the ethical character which the cultivated intellect will form apart from religious principle."<sup>73</sup> The problem with this type of ethical character, however, was that it could attach itself to the "profligate" or the "saint."<sup>74</sup> It was not a serious expression of the positive ideal of moral character, inspired by theological

principle. The gentleman who strove to be all things to all men was really nothing in himself. His moral standards offered the "shallowness of philosophical religion" without Christianity and appealed only "to what is in nature."<sup>75</sup> It was a moral view, Newman claimed, which "is content with setting right the surface of things" but it remained shallow for, unlike the Christian view, it could not aim "at regenerating the very depths of the heart."<sup>76</sup>

Thus, the natural ideal of the gentleman could only go so far, and so far as it went it served the positive ideal of Christianity. It needed the super addition of grace, however, because the refinement of intellectual culture on its own, without theology, could not produce a reliable moral type.

Catholic theology, therefore, exercises an external function with regard to liberal education; that is, it works with the liberal arts and the liberal sciences in order to arrive at an understanding of Revelation. Catholic theology also exercises a regulatory function with regard to all intellectual reasoning and conceptualization. It can reject different theories and practices in liberal education or it can augment the certitude of theories and endorse favourable practices. The function of Catholic theology with regard to liberal education, therefore, is to absorb without detracting from its own datum and unity or interfering in the autonomy of other disciplines, the data of the auxiliary sciences and disciplines of knowledge.

CHAPTER TWO  
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56. *ibid.*, p. 52
57. *ibid.*, p. 53
58. Congar, *op. cit.*, p. 133

59. *ibid.*, pp. 127-131
60. *ibid.*, p. 274
61. *ibid.*, p. 284
62. *ibid.*, p. 245
63. Newman, *op. cit.*, p. 61
64. *ibid.*, p. 75
65. *ibid.*, p. 77
66. *ibid.*, p. 68
67. *ibid.*, p. 69
68. *ibid.*, p. 77
69. *ibid.*, p. 78
70. Rothblatt, Sheldon, Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education, An Essay in History and Culture (Great Britain: Faber and Faber, 1976), p. 142
71. Culler, A. Dwight, The Imperial Intellect (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), pp. 242-243
72. Newman, *op. cit.*, pp. 181-182
73. *ibid.*, p. 183
74. *ibid.*
75. *ibid.*, p. 175
76. *ibid.*, p. 176



CHAPTER THREE  
THE MAKING OF A SYNTHESIS

Introduction

Within the early folds of Christianity the unique correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology is evident in the attempts of Christian scholars to reconcile Greco-Roman culture with Christianity. Even the attempts of some Christian scholars to disparage liberal studies and build a theology solely on sacred sources gave way to a recognition of the positive relationship between both. Thus, Yves M. Congar quotes Deacon Pontius, the biographer of St. Cyprian, who wrote a damaging indictment of St. Cyprian's liberal arts training by stating: "Whatever have been his studies, whatever influence the liberal arts have had upon him personally, I will omit all that, for it will serve no purpose except that of the world."<sup>1</sup> This view of Deacon Pontius represents a definite prejudicial current of thought regarding the influence of the liberal arts in the construction of theology, but it does not represent a significant trend.

The intellectual challenge facing the early Christian scholars, however, was the reconciliation of the humanist tradition of learning with Christianity. Thus, John Herman Randall, Jr., in Hellenistic Ways of Deliverance and the Making of the Christian Synthesis, asserts that the emergence of theology in the early Christian church was a logical synthesis of Hellenistic culture and Christianity.<sup>2</sup> Although

Randall describes the limitations of the synthesis between Hellenistic intellectual life and Christianity, his observation aptly demonstrates the real relationship between theology and liberal education at the time.<sup>3</sup> Yves M. Congar offers two main reasons why early Christian scholars set about the task of reconciling Christianity with the humanist tradition of learning: (1) the fact of classical Greco-Roman culture; and (2) the need for believers to reflect upon faith in terms of their own knowledge and the intellectual categories of the age.<sup>4</sup>

Classical Greco-Roman culture was a fact that had to be contended with. Inevitably, there had to be a reconciliation between the liberal education of the ancients and Christianity. The view espoused by many of the Apologetic Fathers of the church that classical education was a foreshadowing of Christianity meant that some sort of amalgam had to be fashioned between theology and liberal studies. Clement of Alexandria, for example, writing in Stromateis (meaning 'frameworks'), defends the positive relationship between "the activity of reason" and theology, asserting that "Greek philosophy purifies the soul and prepares it to receive the faith on which truth constructs knowledge."<sup>5</sup> Here, at a very early stage of Christianity is stated the mutual dependence between the activity of reason in philosophy and theology.

There was a need also for the believer to reflect upon his faith in terms of his own knowledge and the intellectual categories of the culture. The intellectual categories of the age were

represented in the writings of liberal educators who perceived philosophy, especially, as the highest expression of reason. According to Adolf Harnack, Clement of Alexandria viewed philosophy as opening "the door for thinkers to the understanding of Christianity." He was conscious, Harnack continues, "that his task consisted in adapting the content of that ecclesiastical tradition by submitting it to the grind and toil of philosophical thought. Faith is a gift. It must be translated into terms of gnosis, in other words, it must turn into a doctrine which can satisfy the exigencies of an ethic and a philosophical conception of the universe."<sup>6</sup>

Thus, the labour of theological reflection among early Christian thinkers was marked by their attention to classical Greco-Roman culture and the need to reflect upon faith in terms of their personal knowledge and the intellectual categories of the age.

In the following pages, we will explore the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology as it is manifested in the Church's doctrine and in the writings of early theologians. The study of this mutual relationship reveals, as Paul Tillich pointed out, two main characteristics, namely, Reception and Transformation.<sup>7</sup> Thus, liberal education has affected developments in Catholic theology through the application to theology of the liberal arts and the liberal sciences, and by means of the adoption of ideas and insights of particular cultures into theological systems. Similarly, Catholic theology has influenced developments in liberal education by means of



the addition to liberal studies of new ideas and concepts from Christianity and by means of the 'regulatory function' which theology exercises over liberal studies as a whole.

Catholic theology may be defined as the human elaboration of the Christian faith. The term "human elaboration" comprises all the efforts of man's reason to arrive at a fuller understanding of the Christian faith. Throughout the centuries, Catholic scholars have reasoned about the faith in terms and categories of their intellectual culture. Needless to say, liberal education has undergone many phases of development which have influenced developments in Catholic theology. Hence, the exploration of the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology will reveal different phases of development and shifts of emphasis.

### 1. The Early Apologists

Paul Tillich and John Herman Randall maintain that early Christianity was influenced by Hellenistic thought rather than classical Greek thought.<sup>8</sup> This is an important observation for it explains the negative view of the Fathers of the Church towards many aspects of Hellenistic culture and thought. The Classical Greek heritage and culture endured for about a century and a half, from the battle of Marathon in 490 B.C. until the death of Aristotle in 322 B.C. The Hellenistic culture which succeeded it lasted about 1,000 years. Hellenistic thought lacked the unity and symmetry of classic Greek thought, however, and included many divergent philosophies and intellectual systems. Thus, Tillich asserts that the Hellenistic period includes "Stoics, Epicureans, Neo-Pythagoreans, Sceptics, and Neo-Platonists."<sup>9</sup>

The influence on Catholic theology of the Stoic tradition of liberal education which shaped the educated person of the first century A.D. is evident in the application of the doctrine of the 'Logos' to explain the nature of Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity. For the Stoic philosopher, 'Logos' meant "divine power which is present in everything that is."<sup>10</sup> Salvation or fulfillment for the Stoics was achieved through reason, but for the Christian salvation was achieved through grace. The 'Logos' for the Christian was not simply "the universal law of reality" or "the reasonable structure which is indicated by a word."<sup>11</sup> The logos for the Christian was Christ, the

son of God. Thus, St. John's Gospel begins: "In the beginning was the Word (Logos) ... and the Word (Logos) was God."<sup>12</sup> Early Christian scholars, like Justin Martyr (100-165 A.D.) viewed Christianity as universal truth, possessing all truth implicitly. By asserting that Christ is the 'Logos' meant "that by definition there cannot be any truth which cannot in principle be taken into Christianity."<sup>13</sup> Thus, the Apologists were not hesitant to absorb into their theology the best available understanding of truth in the writings of liberal educators.

The earliest Christian scholars were called "Apologists" because they had to answer the accusations that stemmed from the leading centres of education during the Hellenistic period that Christianity was "a superstition mixed with philosophical fragments."<sup>14</sup> In order to meet the challenge of secular philosophy and liberal studies in the leading centres of learning, the Apologists organised Catechetical schools.<sup>15</sup> These catechetical schools were in reality the first Christian academies of education.<sup>16</sup> The catechetical schools were not sectarian institutions like the catechumenal schools which were concerned with the preparation and training of converts to Christianity. In the catechetical schools, non-Christians as well as Christians, lay students as well as ecclesiastics, women as well as men were enrolled.<sup>17</sup> Their goal was to offer as good an education under Christian tutelage as was given by the ancient teachers of Greece and Rome. The curriculum of studies consisted of the classics, philosophy



and theology. The Greco-Roman world accepted the liberal arts and sciences as preparatory to the study of philosophy. The Apologists accepted this point of view, but they went a stage further by declaring that philosophy and all its preparatory studies were a preparation for the study of theology. Thus, the Apologists built on the tradition of liberal education that was handed down, and added another stage or ingredient to the educational process; namely, the study of theology. With the addition of theology as part of liberal education came new ideas which revolutionized the development of Western education and culture.<sup>18</sup>

The first catechetical school appeared at Rome under Justin Martyr around A.D. 160. Others soon followed throughout the Empire at locations such as Alexandria, Caesarea, Antioch and Carthage.<sup>19</sup> The Alexandrian school produced many famous scholars such as Pantaenus, Clement of Alexandria and St. Jerome. The most famous scholar at the catechetical school of Caesarea was Origen. Under Origen's influence Caesarea soon rivalled that of Alexandria. The catechetical school of Antioch was founded by Melchion who made it famous as a center for biblical studies and it boasted such famous names as St. John Chrysostom and St. Cyril.<sup>20</sup> The most outstanding and successful Christian scholar at the catechetical school of Carthage was St. Augustine.

According to Tillich, the Apologetic movement of the second century was "the birthplace of a developed Christian theology."<sup>21</sup>

The famous 'Apologies' of Justin Martyr do not seek to formulate a system of theology, but they do record the efforts of one of the earliest Christian scholars to justify Christianity to the Greco-Roman *intelligentia*.<sup>22</sup> The main opponent of Christianity in the second century was Celsus, an educated Greek philosopher and scientist, who attacked Christian beliefs such as the Resurrection, Incarnation and victory over demons.<sup>23</sup> The Apologists showed their interest in reconciling liberal education with Christianity by maintaining three approaches in their writings. (1) They started with what they had in common with educated people. (2) They pointed out the defects in the opposing views. (3) They argued for the intrinsic reasonableness of their views.<sup>24</sup> Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria and Origen maintained these three characteristic approaches in their writings in the attempt to reconcile Christianity with various types of liberal education during the Hellenistic period.

The writings of Clement of Alexandria are the earliest example of a synthesis of Christian thinking and Neo-Platonic philosophy.<sup>25</sup> Neo-Platonism was a "religious philosophy," combining Stoic, Platonic and Aristotelian concepts. It posed the most significant challenge to Christianity in the second century A.D. Julian the Apostate tried to create "a new religion" out of Neo-Platonism in opposition to Christianity.<sup>26</sup> Clement, on the other hand, set out to reconcile the best elements of Neo-Platonic liberal ideas with Christianity in his famous trilogy--Exhortation to the Greeks, The Pedagogue, and



Stromateis. These works give some indication of Clement's vast learning and of his comprehensive plan of education for the learned Christian. In his scheme of education, Clement advocated the use of the classics and philosophy as a condition for understanding the truths of Christianity.<sup>27</sup>

Origen took the Scriptural sources of Christianity more seriously than either of his predecessors--Justin Martyr and Clement of Alexandria. Origen, however, has been criticised for relying too heavily on Neo-Platonic philosophy in his interpretation of Scripture. In order to make Scripture agree with existing notions in Neo-Platonic liberal education, Origen resorted to allegorical methods of interpreting Scripture and he advocated a form of Christian Gnosticism similar to the mysticism of Neo-Platonism.<sup>28</sup> In De Principiis,<sup>29</sup> written between A.D. 219 and 230, Origen endeavoured to reconcile Neo-Platonic liberal education with Christianity. As Catholic orthodoxy was progressively defined by the Church, however, the imprecisions and inadequacies of Origen's application of Neo-Platonic ideas to the truths of the faith became increasingly more noticeable. Yet, the contribution of Origen in trying to reconcile the claims of existing liberal ideas with the faith cannot be overlooked. His influence on his immediate successors, not to mention future Catholic scholars, such as St. Augustine and Erasmus of Rotterdam, was immeasurable. One of the highest compliments paid to Origen's liberal scholarship was penned by Joseph Wilson Trigg in his book entitled,



Origen.<sup>30</sup> Thus, Trigg wrote: "The role of the intellect in religion has been a particular problem for the modern era when it seems more and more as if the application of critical reason, whether in the natural sciences or in the interpretation of the Bible, poses a threat to established religious convictions. This is simply not a problem for Origen, for whom the unimpeded application of the intellect in all areas is precisely the way to come to a fuller knowledge of God."<sup>31</sup>

Thus, Origen is important in that he paved the way for the scientific development of theology by adopting liberal ideas and insights as a means of interpreting the truths of Scripture. According to Congar, Origen's application of liberal thought to theology primarily contributed to the development of theological method.<sup>32</sup> Thus, Congar offers three reasons for Origen's importance. (1) He was the founder of the scientific exegesis of Scripture. (2) He formulated a theory of knowledge. (3) He composed the first great work of systematic theology: De Principiis. In his works, Origen was careful to assimilate into Christianity whatever appeared reasonable to assimilate from his liberal studies. Although some of his theological conclusions were later declared heretical by the Church, the validity and importance of his methodology was never in question. Even St. Jerome, who took umbrage at some of Origen's theological theories, defended the application of liberal studies to theology. Thus, St. Jerome, in his famous letter to Magnus, the orator of the City of Rome,

upheld "the use of the humane sciences, pagan literature, and, in general, rational elements in the sacred sciences."<sup>33</sup>

The writings of the Apologists in the second and third centuries A.D. defended the use of liberal studies, philosophy and the various rational elements of liberal education in Catholic theology. The Catholic church, according to Paul Tillich, was already formed around the year A.D. 300.<sup>34</sup> Although Tillich was himself a Protestant theologian, he nevertheless rejected the claim that Protestant theology derived its roots from the "so-called agreement of the first five centuries."<sup>35</sup> Many of the fundamentals of Catholic theology, Tillich asserts, existed as early as about A.D. 250.<sup>36</sup>

The impact of liberal studies on the development of the Church's doctrine was felt at the Council of Nicaea, A.D. 325. The Nicene Creed took philosophical concepts and terms from liberal education and made them part of the Church's theology. The word "invisible" in the Nicene Creed--"We believe in one God ... Maker of all things visible and invisible" had reference not only to angelic beings but also to the Platonic "ideas" or "essences." Thus, God is the creator not only of the things of earth, but of the "essences" as they appear in Plato's philosophy.

The Church rejected the demi-gods of Olympus and thus, the Council of Nicaea had to clarify the nature of Christ who was portrayed by Arius as a demi-god. Nicaea declared that Christ was true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in substance with the Father." Philosophical concepts such as "Homoousios," meaning



substance, were incorporated into the Church's doctrine to explain the nature of Christ. In dealing with the question of creation, the Church had to contend with the pagan concept of "demiurge" or "resisting matter."<sup>37</sup> The Church's teaching on "creatio ex nihilo" (creation from nothing) was meant to convey that God created everything directly "without any resisting matter." Again, the terms and concepts of the Church's theology were borrowed from pagan philosophy.

At the Council of Chalcedon (A.D. 457), the Church defined the doctrine of the 'Hypostatic Union' which taught that Christ was one person (a divine person) in two natures (a divine nature and a human nature). Again, the Church took from pagan philosophy the terms, 'persona' and 'naturà' in order to explain the personality and nature of Christ.

This process of incorporating concepts and ideas, taken from liberal education, into the Church's official doctrine was made possible by the intermediary work of Catholic scholars who toiled ceaselessly to establish the correspondence between liberal education and the truths of the faith. Justin, Clement and Origen displayed, as we have seen, similar characteristics in the way they approached liberal studies and theology, namely: (1) they started with what they had in common with liberal studies; (2) they pointed out the defects in the opposing views; (3) they argued for the intrinsic reasonableness of their views.<sup>38</sup> Yet, the application of liberal knowledge to the



truths of Christianity was remarkably different in the writings of these great Apologists. Each one established different levels and degrees of collaboration between liberal knowledge and the truths of the faith. It will be helpful for our understanding of the ongoing relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology to examine the different results and findings of these early Apologists. The comparison of their views should also clarify the role of the Magisterium, namely; the teaching office of the Church, in monitoring and regulating the divergent views of Catholic theologians and scholars in matters of faith.

Henry Chadwick in Early Christian Thought and The Classical Tradition,<sup>39</sup> offers a profound analysis of the intellectual contribution of Justin, Clement and Origen. With reference to the relationship between liberal education and theology in a chapter entitled, "The Perennial Issue," Chadwick discusses the contribution of each Apologist. For Justin, according to Chadwick, the relationship between Hellenic philosophy and Christianity was set in "an amicable juxtaposition without any harsh words or accusation on the Christian side and with the quiet, courteous assumption that Christianity is the fulfillment towards which philosophy, like the Old Testament itself, was always pointing."<sup>40</sup> For Clement, on the other hand, the intellectual reconciliation between Hellenic ideas and Christianity became inwardly "much deeper and more intimate."<sup>41</sup>

Chadwick attributes this to Clement's doctrine of God which was more deeply impregnated with "Platonic transcendentalism."<sup>42</sup> Origen, Chadwick observes, produced a "profounder synthesis between Christianity and Platonism."<sup>43</sup> Thus, the early Apologists show a marked difference in the intensity of their application of liberal studies to theological speculation. This is particularly noticeable when we compare Clement's application of Neo-Platonic ideas to theology with that of Origen. Each of them had a different appreciation of the relationship between both, and their theological conclusions were a consequence of different kinds of emphasis and appreciation.

Origen, it seems, relied too much on Neo-Platonic ideas of matter and form which influenced his theology.<sup>44</sup> Although Origen disagreed with some aspects of Plato's view of creation in Timaeus, he accepted the Platonic doctrine that heavenly bodies: the sun, moon, and stars, are "ensouled by spiritual beings."<sup>45</sup> Clement, on the other hand, rejected the Neo-Platonic view that heavenly bodies have souls.<sup>46</sup> Clement too had a more positive appreciation of the Christian doctrine of a Transcendent Creator upon "whose will and providence the created order is dependent and with whom this world is in no way identical."<sup>47</sup> The introduction into current thought of the Christian idea of a Transcendent Creator by Clement brought about important changes in liberal education regarding matter and spirit. Celestial objects were regarded as physical phenomena by

Clement, and were given an entirely naturalistic explanation. The Platonic doctrine that the stars, the comets, the sun and moon are invested with divine souls did not agree with the Christian doctrine of a transcendent creator. St. Jerome concurred with Clement's theological insight and criticised Origen for his acceptance of the Platonic doctrine about pre-existent souls falling from heaven to become imprisoned in matter. According to St. Jerome, Origen espoused the doctrine of the transmigration of souls even to animals.<sup>48</sup>

Regarding the doctrine of 'creatio ex nihilo,' the views of both Clement and Origen show the influence of Neo-Platonic philosophy. For Clement and Origen, 'creatio ex nihilo' (creation from nothing) was necessary, in principle, to refute "gnostic dualism" and "monistic pantheism."<sup>49</sup> Clement's teaching exhibits an understandable vagueness about 'creatio ex nihilo' since, like Origen, he had not the benefit of later Church councils which clarified this doctrine. For Clement, 'creatio ex nihilo' suggested creation from "relative non-being or unformed matter."<sup>50</sup> Origen was even more influenced than Clement by Neo-Platonism, and his views regarding matter and the status of the world in the divine purpose reflect this influence. Thus, Origen gave three possibilities or views regarding the world and matter:

- (1) Matter is eternal and will be transformed eschatologically like the glorified body;
- (2) There is the possibility of spirits existing



without bodies; (3) The possibility exists for the destruction of the visible world and the glorious existence of spirits in higher forms.<sup>51</sup> In his effort to understand the status of the visible world, Origen was relating to Neo-Platonic notions of matter and spirit.

Clement, Origen and Justin Martyr accepted stoic morality as preparatory to Christian living.<sup>52</sup> Both Clement and Origen rejected stoic materialism because of its "inherent pantheism" and "deterministic doctrine of world cycles."<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, stoic morality was accepted by both and incorporated into their Christian ethical systems. The difference between Clement and Origen in moral emphasis and tone has been attributed to the fact that Origen incorporated Christian and stoic ethics within a "Platonist metaphysic."<sup>54</sup> Clement simply affirmed the inherent goodness of the natural order as a gift of God. The doctrine of creation, for Clement, implied that, contrary to the views of the Gnostics, the material world is not evil, but good.<sup>55</sup> Clement also substituted the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation for the idea of platonic dualism which claimed that the "physical condition of man is evil" and that only the soul is good by nature.<sup>56</sup> Origen, however, did not share Clement's positive view regarding the inherent goodness of nature. For Origen, marriage was inferior to celibacy because it distracted from the spiritual love of God. Sex was seen as defilement, and sin was viewed as "inextricably bound up" with sex.<sup>57</sup> Origen avoided the extreme views of some Gnostics

who regarded sex as diabolical. Since he viewed sex as instinctive, he regarded it as imperfect and thus "bound up" with sin.<sup>58</sup> Clement, on the other hand, accepted more fully the stoic positive view of marriage with the caution to avoid self-indulgence. He defended marriage as a good in itself, and he praised the state of celibacy when chosen for a higher purpose.<sup>59</sup>

The interaction between Christian morality and pagan ethics produced a new moral type, modelled on the example of Christ. This new morality was more than advice and recommendation. It spoke of "grace and moral power."<sup>60</sup> The early Apologists set out to build on what was positive in pagan ethics, and to point out weaknesses in the old system. Thus, Clement criticised the stoic approval of suicide and the stoic notion "that mercy is an emotional weakness that the wise man will suppress."<sup>61</sup> Still, the moral emphasis and tone is different in the writings of Clement and Origen. This difference is attributable to the various levels and degrees of rapprochement that exist in their writings between liberal education and Catholic theology.

The rational investigation of the truths of the faith by Origen relied heavily on the Neo-Platonic philosophy. Writing in A.D. 374-5, Epiphanius concluded that Origen was "blinded by Greek culture."<sup>62</sup> Marcellus of Ancyra opposed Origen's doctrine of the Trinity for the same reason that he was "led astray by the Platonism with which his mind was filled."<sup>63</sup> The use of allegory by Origen has

been criticised as his way of introducing Neo-Platonic speculation into Scripture. Chadwick asserts that allegory was "the indispensable tool without which Origen could not find what he wanted in Scripture."<sup>64</sup>

Origen, it appears, took for granted the Platonic conception of the metaphysical structure of the world.<sup>65</sup> Plato was Origen's master, and the philosophy of Plato represented for him the highest achievement of wisdom which could be absorbed by the 'Logos' of Christianity. Origen was critical of Aristotle's metaphysics, logic and ethics which he felt were not reconcilable with Christianity and the Scriptures.<sup>66</sup> This is significant for an understanding of the on-going relationship between liberal studies and Catholic theology. The twelfth and thirteenth centuries witnessed a resurgence of Aristotle, whose philosophy and thought supplanted that of Plato in the writings of Catholic theologians.

In the effort to reconcile liberal education and Catholic theology, the early Apologists made a significant contribution. Origen's orthodoxy has often been questioned, but this is a judgement that is easily made from the vantage point of hindsight since we have the benefit of the Magisterium's definitions and clarifications of doctrine in the councils of the Church. It appears that Origen erred, however, by expressing himself too radically in terms of Hellenistic liberal thought. Clement, on the other hand, showed more balance in reconciling liberal thought with Christianity in his writings. It



is indeed interesting to note that Professor Chadwick describes Origen as "illiberal" because of his strict asceticism and "world-denying theology."<sup>67</sup> Origen's "world-denying theology" stemmed more from his Neo-Platonic philosophy than from Christianity. Thus, the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology in the writings of the early Apologists exhibits various shifts and degrees of emphasis. At this early stage, the correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology was unclear and there was lacking that sense of harmonious development which was to take place during the thirteenth century. The early Apologists made significant contributions to the dynamic relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology by attempting to reconcile Christianity with the best available understanding of liberal education in the second century A.D. As orthodoxy was progressively defined and clarified by the Church, the special correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology became clearer. The Apologists are important, however, in that they furnished the first example of Christian writings that attempt to reconcile liberal studies and Christianity. These writings influenced the development of theological method and they have been responsible for developments in the Church's doctrine.

## 2. The Contribution of St. Augustine

The greatest figure among the early fathers of the Church to make a lasting contribution, reconciling elements of Neo-Platonic liberal education and Catholic theology, was St. Augustine (354-430 A.D.). He was a product of the secular tradition of classical learning, and was a Professor of Rhetoric in Milan prior to his conversion to Christianity.<sup>68</sup> The writings of Augustine reveal, in greater depth than any of his predecessors, the reciprocal relationship and correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology during the Hellenistic period.

In De Doctrina Christiana (On Christian Doctrine), Augustine acknowledges the research potential of secular knowledge in the development of theology. In this later work, Augustine developed a dialectic of liberal learning and theology.<sup>69</sup>

According to Congar, there are two approaches to the fulfillment of knowledge which comprises the truths of faith and reason. One approach has been termed: 'Intellige ut credas'--Understand that you may believe. In this approach to the fulfillment of knowledge, reason and the rational elements of knowledge and experience come first as the basis for understanding the truths of Revelation. The second approach to the fulfillment of knowledge has been summed up in the formula: 'Crede ut intelligas'--Believe that you may understand. In this approach, the contemplation of faith and Revelation comes first as the basis for understanding God and the world.

Augustine's approach to the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology favoured the second approach: 'Crede ut intelligas.' Congar describes this contemplative theological approach of Augustine as proceeding "in and through faith," and as producing "a deepening of the spirit by an effort of intelligence and contemplative activity."<sup>70</sup> Congar admits that in the writings of the early Augustine after his conversion in 386 "he was in search of wisdom exclusively concerned with the polarities of himself and God," and that during this stage of his development "the liberal arts and the sciences were less than secondary in his search for knowledge."<sup>71</sup> In De Doctrina Christiana, however, Congar asserts that Augustine "firmly proclaims the legitimacy and the practical utility of profane studies even for the development of Christian wisdom."<sup>72</sup> Without rejecting the principle of the sufficiency of the Christian faith, Augustine elicited the full support of Neo-Platonic liberal education both in the practical application of Christianity and in the study of Christian doctrine. In book two of De Doctrina Christiana, Augustine lists the liberal studies which he considered necessary for an understanding of Revelation. Thus, he lists "knowledge of languages," "knowledge of the nature of being," "knowledge of dialectics" which can "discover and refute sophisms and which teaches the art of definition and of the proper division of the matter to be considered, without which," he explains, "no presentation of truth is possible." In addition, Augustine lists the knowledge of "rhetoric," "grammar," "the science of numbers," "history" and "law."<sup>73</sup>



Peter Brown in his book, Augustine of Hippo, describes Augustine as "the great secularizer" of the pagan past.<sup>74</sup> Augustine, according to Brown, rescued classical culture and learning from pagan mythology. In De Doctrina Christiana, Augustine reduced the gods of pagan mythology to "purely human dimensions," stating that they were only "traditional forms laid down by men; adjusted to the needs of human society, with which we cannot dispense in this life."<sup>75</sup> In the 'City of God,' the most ambitious and arduous work Augustine ever attempted, he completed the process of demythologising pagan culture. Without rejecting what was good and positive in classical liberal education, Augustine offered an alternative literary culture based on Christianity to the "literary culture that had dominated men's minds" up until then.<sup>76</sup> According to Brown, Augustine "deliberately juxtaposed" the scripture with the old literary classics such as Virgil.<sup>77</sup> The writings of literary people in the past which Augustine had hitherto taken for granted "no longer belonged to him."<sup>78</sup> He had passed beyond them.

Augustine took a more positive view of Platonic philosophy than he did the classics of pagan literature in the 'City of God.' Thus, Brown observes: "By contrast, Augustine's treatment of the Platonists throughout the City of God, shows the extent to which a part of the pagan past was still alive in Augustine, stimulating his finest thought, and challenging him to continuous inner dialogue that would last up to his death."<sup>79</sup> This inner Augustinian dialogue, stemming

from Platonic philosophy and Revelation, has lasted beyond Augustine's death. It has become an essential part of the Catholic theological heritage to this day.

Not only was Augustine "the great secularizer" of the pagan past, he was also a great Christianizer of that past. Augustine substituted the Scriptures for the literary classics of paganism, and was most successful in applying the great tools of classical liberal education; namely, the liberal arts and the liberal sciences, especially Philosophy, to the study of theology. It will be helpful to examine the influence of Augustine's liberal education background, especially his philosophy, on the development of his theology, and the influence of his theology on the development of concepts and notions in liberal education.

Marie-Dominique Chenu, writing on Nature, Man and Society in the Twelfth Century, discusses the various influences of Platonic philosophy on the development of Catholic theology.<sup>80</sup> With reference to Augustine's Neo-Platonism, Chenu observes that Augustine came to Platonism through Plotinus which accounts for the fact that Augustine organised the elements of his thought around "the theory of ideas" rather than around another Platonic doctrine; namely, the "mysticism of the one."<sup>81</sup> Thus, Augustine's theological doctrine of the ascent to God emphasized the "inner life" of the individual, who found God "in the intimate depths of his own mind as it became freed from the scattered condition native to creatures and from the anguish of becoming."<sup>82</sup> According to Tillich, Augustine's scepticism, arising



from the inability of Neo-Platonic philosophy to build a system of truth gave rise to "a new epistemology" (that is, a doctrine of knowledge) beginning with the "inner man" instead of the experience of the external world.<sup>83</sup> The theological orientation of Augustine, which we have already discussed; namely, Crede ut Intelligas, combined with his Platonic philosophical orientation, favoured the development of this epistemology that emphasized the immediacy of truth in the inner soul and which encouraged escape from the world.

It is necessary to understand something of Augustine's epistemology in order to appreciate his theological thought. For Augustine, according to Tillich, we have immediate evidence of two things: (1) the logical form; that is, the structures which make questions possible, (2) immediate sense experience or impressions which are often mistaken and, of necessity, involve scepticism.<sup>84</sup> Given this awareness that he could not discover objective truth in the immediate evidence of logical forms which were not real or in sense experience which was often mistaken and subject to doubt, Augustine re-discovered truth in the interior world, in "the immediate self-consciousness" of the asking person.<sup>85</sup> Truth, for Augustine, was found in the soul, not in the world outside. The soul, for Augustine, was not the 'power of life' as it was in Greek philosophy and which permeated everything.<sup>86</sup> The soul, for Augustine, was the inner realm. Thus, for Augustine, real truth was found in the inner realm of the soul which leads to knowledge of God, the unconditional.<sup>87</sup> This knowledge, for Augustine, was union; union with the divine ground of all being. Knowledge of the physical world, on the other hand, involved participation in



it and was perceived by Augustine as a distraction to union with God.<sup>88</sup> From this awareness, Augustine developed his beautiful doctrine of love, for which he has become famous. The divine ground of all being is love or union, which is beyond the separation of subject and object. We love things in the correct and proper way, according to Augustine, when we love the divine substance in them. We love things in the wrong way, when we love them for their own sake or when we love them in separation from the divine ground in them. To love oneself is to love oneself as loved by God or to love the divine ground of everything through oneself.<sup>89</sup>

Augustine's epistemology, based on his unique blend of Neo-Platonism and faith, instilled into theology an indifference to the concrete world of nature. Thus, Chenu declares that Augustine's Platonism introduced into Christian spirituality "the radical indifference of the Platonic ousia (essence) to the world of concrete things."<sup>90</sup> Knowledge of God and the soul was more important to Augustine than knowledge of natural things. Hence, Augustine's disregard for natural or political science.<sup>91</sup> Augustine's appreciation and love of the liberal arts, however, did help to separate him from the extreme views of Manichaeism which took a negative view of the world of nature. Tillich observes that the study of Astronomy enabled Augustine to abandon Manichaeism. Thus, Tillich asserts that "the Greek Pythagorean ideas of the cosmos," which showed,

"the harmonious structure of the universe" enabled Augustine to abandon the idea of a "demonic creative principle"<sup>92</sup>

Augustine's interest in "existential" rather than theoretical truth has been attributed to his early Manichaeism. Although Augustine later rejected the philosophy of Manichaeism and explained the reason for his rejection of that philosophy in his Confessions,<sup>93</sup> the development of his theological thought was nonetheless influenced by certain aspects and features of Manichaeism. Tillich mentions three features of Augustine's theology which stem from his Manichaean background:

1. He explained truth existentially, not theoretically. The two principles of creation, one good and one evil, were factors in Augustine's development of existential truth.

2. Manichaeism offered Augustine a convenient doctrine of salvation which he later rejected for the Christian doctrine of salvation.

3. From Manichaeism, Augustine derived an interpretation of reality and history as the struggle between good and evil.<sup>94</sup>

Conversely, Augustine's theology also influenced notions and concepts in Greek liberal education. For example, Augustine inaugurated a new era of thinking regarding the notion of TIME and HISTORY. Augustine opposed the Greek concept of time as "cycles of birth and rebirth that repeat themselves infinitely."<sup>95</sup> For the Greeks, time was infinite; it was "the form of decay and repetition" that went

on endlessly, and had no meaning in itself.<sup>96</sup> Augustine declared that time was "the form of the finitude of things," it was created with the world. Before Creation, according to Augustine, there was no time, for time denotes "a definite beginning and a definite end."<sup>97</sup> Before time, there was eternity, and, after time, follows eternity.

The finitude of time gave ultimate meaning to existence on earth, for Augustine. The meaning of time was, therefore, qualitative; that is, "the Kairos, the historical moment" is the "qualitative characteristic of time."<sup>98</sup> Time began with the divine act of creation. The earth is at the center of the world; mankind is at the center of everything, Christ is at the center of mankind and human history.<sup>99</sup> For Augustine, there were three periods of time and history: before the law; under the law; and after the law. Humankind is now living in the last period of time and history: the period after the law in which Christ inaugurated his Kingdom. In the City of God, Augustine described the struggle between the City of the Earth and the City of God. In this work, Augustine's orientation towards Platonic dualism is evident in his description of the two cities. The City of the Earth, though not wholly evil, as was the extreme view of Manichaeism, was, nevertheless, a "gangster state" for Augustine.<sup>100</sup> The City of God, on the other hand, was present or actualized in the Church and was a "corpus mixtum" (a mixed body of those who belong spiritually and of those who do not).<sup>101</sup> Augustine's view of time and history was



realistic from a theological perspective, but it was conservative, educationally, in that it did not anticipate or make allowances for another state. Joachim of Floris, writing in the twelfth century, had a different view of history to that of Augustine. For Augustine, nothing new will happen in history any more since we are living in the final period, awaiting eternity. For Joachim of Floris, the ideal for Christianity lay, not in the past or present period of history, but in the future where we await "the ideal development" of Christianity.<sup>102</sup>

Augustine's emphasis on the WILL as the decisive function in the individual led to a tension between the educational and mystical elements in his theology.<sup>103</sup> The will possesses the quality of love. Love, for Augustine, was participation in the divine life brought about by an act of the will. The soul is both immortal (that is, it survives the body) and eternal (that is, it participates in divine being). The problem arose regarding a soul that is excluded from eternity (that is, damned) when it is immortal and shares in being. How does one explain the unity of being in God or the ground of being in God or divine being which is love, when a being--a soul, that is damned, is excluded from unity with divine being forever? Origen experienced the same tension in his theology as Augustine, but he solved it through his mystical doctrine of recapitulation or final salvation of all immortal souls.<sup>104</sup> Augustine, on the other hand, favoured the educational view of personal responsibility for eternal

damnation or eternal salvation. This educational point of view, however, would seem to contradict Augustine's "ontological concept of love" which cannot admit 'being' which is not "in unity with love."<sup>105</sup> Educationally, however, Augustine's doctrine of salvation with the threat of hell and divine retribution, was superior to Origen's doctrine, because it motivated people into action and the practice of Christianity.

Augustine also put the resources of Platonism to work in his theology of grace. According to Chenu, Augustine's theology of grace did not consider "the order or disposition or intelligibility of nature."<sup>106</sup> Not only was the Augustinian distinction between nature and grace different to that of St. Thomas in the thirteenth century, it was very different to the distinction drawn by the Pseudo-Dionysius who, like Augustine, was also influenced by Platonism. Thus, Chenu states that Augustine favoured a theology of grace that "provided for the free-play of divine benevolence through personal encounter between God and man."<sup>107</sup> Augustine developed his doctrine of grace against Pelagius who challenged the Church's teaching of original sin.<sup>108</sup>

Pelagius represented stoic thought which celebrated freedom as the "essential nature of man."<sup>109</sup> Man, as a rational being, possessing freedom of choice, posed no problem for Augustine. The problem arose when Pelagius denied original sin in all individuals and saw it as the original sin of Adam alone. For Pelagius, original

sin, like all other forms of personal sin, was a matter of freedom and it was not inherited as part of the human condition. According to Pelagius, man was born in a state of innocence, and not in a state of original sin as the Church taught. This view of original sin influenced Pelagius' idea of grace. Grace, for Pelagius, was initial general remission of sins in baptism for believers.<sup>110</sup> After that, grace was without meaning since man had the freedom to do everything himself by simply following the example of Christ.

Augustine opposed the view of Pelagius that visualized grace as being contrary to the freedom of the individual. Augustine's theology of grace attempted to reconcile individual freedom with the spiritual reality of divine grace that directed freedom toward the good.

Original sin, according to Augustine, is not a moral failure and is different from personal sins or immoral acts committed by free individuals. Thus, original sin, which is inherited, requires not a moral but a religious remedy: that is, a return to God through grace. Sin takes place in the spiritual realm and is described by Augustine as a "turning away from the ground of being to whom one belongs."<sup>111</sup> The fall of Adam was a fall from grace, a "turning away from God" to live autonomously, independently and separately from God. The fall of Adam was viewed by Augustine as the sin of pride: "the beginning of all sin is pride, the beginning of pride is man's turning away from God."<sup>112</sup> According to Augustine, grace and



freedom co-existed in Adam before the fall. He had the "adjutorium gratiae" (the help of grace), and the freedom not to fall.<sup>113</sup> With the fall of Adam from grace, we all fell. Augustine stated that Adam's fall from grace was original for two reasons: (1) All people existed potentially in Adam and have fallen from grace. (2) Concupiscence was introduced into sexual generation as hereditary after Adam's fall.<sup>114</sup> Thus, according to Augustine, original sin is both spiritual and bodily. It is spiritual because it is a sin of the soul, resulting in the absence of grace; it is bodily because it resulted in hereditary concupiscence. The individual personality was not free to overcome the spiritual and bodily weaknesses arising from original sin and, thus, needed grace without merit, a special predestined act of God, to be saved.

Augustine's doctrine of grace and Predestination possessed some extreme elements, and, like Origen's extreme doctrine about salvation and ultimate recapitulation, it could not be taught in an educational way.<sup>115</sup> Augustine stressed the "ultimate tragic element" of original sin to which the Protestant Reformers of the sixteenth century returned. Everyone, according to this doctrine, belonged to a "mass of perdition," and no one was spared, not even 'innocent' infants who were relegated to 'limbo.' The Church did not go along with the extreme elements of Augustine's doctrine of Predestination which was educationally lacking since "it did not appeal to the free will of those to be educated."<sup>116</sup>

It appears, therefore, that Augustine's doctrine of grace was influenced by his Neo-Platonic background. As Chenu observed, Augustine did not consider "the order or disposition or intelligibility of nature" in his analysis of the operations of grace in the individual. The free will of the individual, as we have observed, was compromised by Augustine's extreme doctrine of Predestination, which made it unacceptable, educationally, to the Church. There is also evidence of Platonic, and perhaps, Manichaeism in Augustine's theology of grace, especially with his emphasis on concupiscence or sexual desire as evil. Augustine's theology of grace exercised enormous influence on the life of the Church right up to the twelfth century. It was only with the advent of the theology of St. Thomas Aquinas, who favoured the philosophy of Aristotle to that of Plato, that a more integral doctrine of grace perfecting nature, was developed.

Augustine, however, offers the most impressive and convincing reconciliation between Neo-Platonic liberal education and Catholic theology. His writings have made a lasting and creative contribution to the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology. Notwithstanding this lasting contribution of Augustine, there are certain features or aspects of his thought which merit special attention because of the way the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology is perceived in his writings.

Firstly, Augustine's contemplative theological approach to the fulfillment of knowledge, summed up in the motto: 'Crede ut intelligas,'



did not invite the full concurrence of liberal education in the development of his theology. This is particularly noticeable with respect to the application of the quadrivium of the liberal arts which Chenu described as "the instructional framework for what we call the sciences."<sup>117</sup>

Secondly, Augustine's Epistemology, which was influenced by the Platonic "theory of ideas" adopted a largely 'symbolic' approach to nature. Augustine was more influenced by the dualistic world-view of Plato and Plotinus than by the epistemology of Aristotle who espoused a system of mediation leading to the fulfillment of knowledge. The epistemology of Augustine, which perceived knowledge of God and of the soul as more important than knowledge of natural things, had the negative effect of disregarding any real knowledge of concrete things except in so far as they were expressions of the glory of God.

The writings of Augustine, it is clear, display a mastery of the intellectual skills, especially of rhetoric, which he acquired as a student and professor of classical liberal education. In his theological writings, Augustine has handed down for posterity the fruits of his intellectual speculation and contemplation of the truths of the faith. The epistemological, theological and philosophical outlook of Augustine necessarily influenced, as we have seen, his application of the liberal arts and the liberal sciences to the study of Catholic theology. In the next chapter, which deals with Scholasticism, we will see how the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology was delineated differently.



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## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE SCHOLASTIC UNION OF REASON AND FAITH

The Scholastic period signifies a major shift in the perception of the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology. This period cannot be described simply in terms of an historical interval of time, even though the thirteenth century is regarded as the period of history in which scholastic theology achieved maturity. The Scholastic period suggests, rather, an intellectual era which spans many centuries and which was set off by a new and distinct appreciation of the relationship between faith and the rational elements of knowledge.

We have already examined the implications for liberal education and Catholic theology of St. Augustine's contemplative theological method which was summed up in the motto: 'Crede ut intelligas'-- believe that you may understand. In this approach, faith came first as the basis for understanding God and the world. This approach was also supported by Plato's idealist philosophy.

The scholastic method, on the other hand, has been characterized by an 'a posteriori' rather than a predominantly 'a priori' approach to the fulfillment of knowledge, that is, a rational approach to truth that proceeded from the evidence of the senses and natural phenomena to an understanding of truths beyond the grasp of the senses.

This approach to the fulfillment of knowledge was supported by the philosophy of Aristotle. With reference to Catholic theology, this approach brought into play another intellectual orientation which has been described as: "Intellige ut credas'--understand that you may believe.

The purpose of this chapter is to show: (1) how the shift in the understanding of the relationship between faith and the rational elements of knowledge took place; and (2) how the correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology was set forth differently by Scholasticism. In practice, it is difficult to separate these two areas of interest since the correspondence that is developed between liberal education and Catholic theology is naturally influenced by the way reason is perceived in relation to faith. The distinction between the two is important, however, in order to clarify our appreciation of the developments that took place in liberal education and Catholic theology during the Scholastic period.

### 1. New Academic Character of Catholic Theology

According to Yves Marie Congar, Catholic theology received its "formal determination" during the sixth century.<sup>1</sup> This was due, in particular, to the influence of Ancius Manlius Boethius, who has been described as the "first scholastic" and who was responsible for introducing the philosophy of Aristotle into Catholic theology.<sup>2</sup> The aim of Boethius, in his writings, was to "join faith to reason"-- "fidem, si poteris, rationemque conjunge."<sup>3</sup> His most famous writings are: The Consolation of Philosophy and The Theological Tractates.

Boethius, according to Marie-Dominique Chenu, tried to reconcile the two traditions of liberal philosophy in Plato and Aristotle; namely, the "world of essences" in Plato's writings, and the world of "particular realities" in Aristotle's writings.<sup>4</sup> This amalgam of Platonic and Aristotelian philosophy in the writings of Boethius divided the world of knowledge and the world of reality into two separate, though non-contradictory orders. Thus, Boethius divided the world of knowledge into the order of reason and the order of faith. In the order of reason, Boethius adopted "the logic of Aristotle" and he applied Aristotelian logic to "the domain of the First Being."<sup>5</sup> This is something which Origen and Augustine avoided, preferring rather to apply Platonic reason only to the domain of faith. Chenu observes, that Boethius retained the Platonic function of the "intellect" as the religious faculty in theology, but used, in addition, the logic of Aristotelian reason in the realm of faith.<sup>6</sup> Boethius also



divided the world of reality into "intelligible objects" and "intellectible objects."<sup>7</sup> Intelligible objects, which included the soul and spirits for Boethius, were those objects which were known by immersion in the sense world. The intellectible objects referred to God and the mysteries of the faith. Boethius became the great authority for the Scholastics who followed him in developing "a systematization of knowledge differentiated according to its objects."<sup>8</sup> He is credited with formulating concepts that became common in Catholic theology such as 'nature,' 'person,' 'substance,' 'eternity,' and 'providence.'<sup>9</sup> By distinguishing two orders of objects; namely, natural objects and divine objects, and by showing their interdependence and hierarchical relationship, Boethius gave authority back to the natural sciences and the quadrivium of the liberal arts, which had diminished in importance during the Hellenistic period.

The concept of 'Hierarchy' was yet another keystone of Scholastic theology and was developed by the Pseudo-Dionysius in his treatise On the Divine Names.<sup>10</sup> The notion of hierarchy, according to Chenu "shattered the metaphysical scheme which locked up each nature within its own ontological perimeter."<sup>11</sup> In other words, it opened up other natures and beings to the action of God, thus creating an awareness of the intimate kinship or relationship emanating from God and involving all things created. The most significant implication of the concept of Hierarchy for Scholastic theology was the combination of "God as creator and God as saviour into one."<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine kept the doctrine of 'God as Creator' and 'God as Saviour' separate in his

theology of nature and grace. The psychological and somewhat irreconcilable conflict between the order of grace and nature which Augustine seems to have established in his writings did not fit into the Pseudo-Dionysian hierarchy which became an essential part of the Scholastic theological system.

To create a bridge between reason and faith, nature and grace, the Scholastics, following the lead given by Pseudo-Dionysius in his treatise On the Divine Names, had recourse to the concept of analogy. In question thirteen, Part One, of the Summa Theologica, also entitled On the Divine Names, St. Thomas Aquinas developed this concept of analogy with reference to the concept and practice of theology.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Chenu states that as a result of the concept of analogy, a "full-grown faith" took root in an "authentic system of human thought."<sup>14</sup>

The liberal arts and the liberal sciences were always recognized as "disciplines of the mind" as is evident in the writings of St. Augustine. During the second half of the twelfth century, however, an important development, making the old disciplines "newly academic," took place by the introduction of the new logic or dialectics of Aristotle.<sup>15</sup> This "newly academic" approach to the application of the liberal arts to theology manifested itself by concern with the "theory" of the subject, by posing questions regarding Scripture, and by conducting the search for systematic and logical answers that would be consistent with reason.<sup>16</sup> Thus, G. R. Evans states in Old Arts and New Theology, that the subject-matter of theology "properly fell within the scope of an academic discipline" by the twelfth century.<sup>17</sup>



Theology--the study of God, was approached, according to Evans, like any other academic discipline "by the conventional procedures of learning."<sup>18</sup> Evans points out, that prior to the Scholastic period "the scholarly and technical" were subordinated to "the needs of the general reader" in the writings of theologians.<sup>19</sup> Thus, he observes that Augustine wrote De Doctrina Christiana for the ordinary Christian who was not highly educated.

Marie-Dominique Chenu makes a similar observation regarding the development of the academic character of Catholic theology during the second half of the twelfth century. Thus, Chenu observes that the trivium of the liberal arts--Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic, was already employed by writers like Augustine in "the service of understanding the sacred text and of shaping doctrinal concepts."<sup>20</sup> The difference, however, between the Scholastic approach to liberal education with that which preceded it was that "reason and its various disciplines" no longer only provided "the tools for studying the sacred text," they introduced "well ordered arrangement" into "the structuring of the faith itself."<sup>21</sup> This approach to theology by the Scholastics, using the conventional procedures of liberal learning, resulted in "deep reflection and penetration into the faith" that brought it to what Chenu terms--"reasoned fullness."<sup>22</sup> The truth criteria of theology, therefore, "were no longer based solely upon the rule of faith as operative in the revealed texts."<sup>23</sup> The criteria of theological truth outlined by the Scholastics were also based "upon the rational coherence of propositions taken from a philosophy of man."<sup>24</sup>



The newly discovered philosophy of man by Aristotle was responsible, according to Yves-Marie Congar, for modifying Catholic theology in its "modus operandi" by introducing different "methodological regimes."<sup>25</sup> Thus, Congar states that the introduction of Aristotle to the West via Boethius was responsible for three "entries" into Catholic theology.

1. The "classification of terms and analysis of propositions" by Aristotle changed the 'modus operandi' of theology which was heretofore conceived "as a knowledge of the Bible based on grammar."<sup>26</sup> This 'newly academic' approach to theology by the introduction of Aristotelian categories and analysis of propositions no longer confined itself only to a commentary on the text of Scripture.

2. A theology developed as a result of the influence of Aristotle's Organon which formulated itself in "problems or questions." Thus, the "scientific study of the syllogism and different kinds of demonstration" in Aristotle's Organon led to the development of dialectics in Catholic theology.<sup>27</sup>

3. Theology came "under the regime of philosophy" through the introduction into Christian thought of Aristotle's metaphysics, psychology and ethics.<sup>28</sup>

The Scholastics, therefore, provided Catholic theology with the needed methodology that enabled it to penetrate more fully the mysteries of faith with the conventional resources of liberal learning.

Thus, Marie-Dominique Chenu identifies two major intellectual contributions or innovations of the Scholastics in Catholic theology.

1. The "religious dimension of faith" was deepened because the Scholastics offered a "threefold order of study" for Scripture compared with the monastic 'collatio.' The Scholastics approached the study of Scripture on three levels or orders: (a) the literary and historical level; (b) the sense of the Scriptures; (c) the deeper meaning or 'sententia' of the Scriptures.<sup>29</sup>

2. The "knowledge and understanding of God" was increased because of the adoption of "categories taken from the rational analysis of secular phenomena" into "sacred doctrine."<sup>30</sup>

Thus, Catholic theology during the Scholastic period became truly academic by inviting the full concurrence of the conventional resources of liberal learning in understanding the faith and in developing doctrine.

The academic character of Catholic theology is derived from its intimate interaction and interconnection with liberal education which began seriously in the twelfth century. The scholars of the twelfth century, according to G. R. Evans, gave "a further systematic reappraisal of the relation between secular and Christian learning" in the light of the revival of interest in the liberal arts.<sup>31</sup>

These twelfth century scholars created a more thorough reconciliation of the liberal arts and the liberal sciences, especially philosophy, with theology. As a result they reduced great problems of theology to "manageable dimensions."<sup>32</sup>

In De Trinitate, Boethius distinguished a twofold method in theology.<sup>33</sup> These two methods in theology were as follows:

1. The method of the contemplative which was concerned with direct experience of God, not immediately accessible to others.
2. The method of the academic theologian which employed a form of reasoning about the divine that sought examples in external evidence and that appealed to human reason.

The second method was adopted by the Scholastics and it established theology as an academic discipline like any other academic discipline in which Evans observes: "the rules of argument and the laws of evidence and organization of material provide the guarantees of soundness of procedure."<sup>34</sup> Thus, Scholastic theology which began seriously in the twelfth century became an activity of the intellect which could be taught in the classroom. It became a study of a higher order than any other discipline and it was profoundly influenced by the laws of reason and liberal education which governed other disciplines. For the Scholastics, theology was viewed as the 'scientia scientiarum,' the 'ars artium,' and the 'queen of the sciences.' It was, therefore, possible "to define its scope and its methods in terms similar to those which were used for other disciplines."<sup>35</sup> Catholic theology also aspired to be most 'rigorously scientific because of the total claims of its object."<sup>36</sup>

The search to find a principle of organization around which the correspondence between the new resources of liberal education and



Catholic theology could be developed took some time. For the Fathers of the Church and early Catholic scholars, theology was concerned with the study of the Bible. The application of the trivium of the liberal arts to the study of the Bible, however, introduced no content into theology. The trivium provided the way of thinking about God or "a certain external organization" in Catholic theology.<sup>37</sup> As Yves-Marie Congar observed, the heritage of the Fathers of the Church provided a theological datum in the Scriptures which "needed only a commentary" based mainly on the application of grammar.<sup>38</sup> The application of the new resources of liberal education; for example, the physics, metaphysics, psychology and ethics of Aristotle, involved, according to Congar, "a definite contribution of content and object into the very fabric" of Catholic theology.<sup>39</sup>

Peter Lombard is credited with producing the first well known theological textbook, The Sentences, which approached theology from a logical order rather than offering a biblical commentary and chronology.<sup>40</sup> This work by Peter Lombard was a "compilation of what the fathers [had] said"<sup>41</sup> and was the first serious effort by a theologian to present a rational and systematic presentation of theological datum based on the works of Catholic theologians as well as the Scriptures.

Just as Peter Lombard is credited with producing the first well known theological textbook, Peter Abelard is credited with raising

anew the question of the relationship between reason and faith. In his work Questiones Naturales, Abelard defended the rational and scientific investigation of nature as an activity "proper to man."<sup>42</sup> In this work, Abelard took a different approach to the study of nature from that of St. Augustine, and he made the distinction between "the properly creative act of God and the forces of nature."<sup>43</sup> The theology of Abelard was influenced by his use of logic. Congar observes that Peter Abelard was "a dialectician and a logician primarily, not a philosopher."<sup>44</sup> Thus, Congar states that the theology of Abelard "must be interpreted as a function of his logic."<sup>45</sup> In his theological work, Tractatus de Unitate et de Trinitate Divina, Abelard offers, according to Congar, "a logical explanation and justification of the announcements of Revelation."<sup>46</sup>

## 2. The Development of the Questio and Dialectics

Abelard is best known for his contribution to the development of the Questio in Catholic theology. In his most famous work, Sic et Non Abelard set out to reconcile different authoritative texts in the Scriptures and in the writings of the fathers of the Church by means of a form of dialectical reason, called the Questio.<sup>47</sup> The development of the Questio is significant for it signalled a move away from the use of grammar only in explaining the Scriptures to the use of dialectical reason in developing a scientific and systematic theology.<sup>48</sup>

According to M-D Chenu, the Questio was "the characteristic act as well as the literary form assumed by scholastic theology."<sup>49</sup> This "new literary form" developed as a result of the application of new ideas in liberal education, particularly Aristotelian method and logic, to the rational investigation of the faith. The development of the Questio was also made possible by the literal and doctrinal differences presented by the text of Scripture, and by the intellectual curiosity aroused by the fathers of the Church and Catholic scholars regarding the variety and richness of the Church's doctrine. As G. R. Evans observes, the development of the Questio in the second half of the twelfth century grew from the need to answer questions presented by "comparisons of different texts," by the need to compare "viewpoints



of different authors," to compare "rules and principles of different arts, secular studies and the Bible."<sup>50</sup> With the Questio, Evans states that the problem of theological method was established-- "whether a universal method applicable to all subjects could be established or whether each study had its own method."<sup>51</sup>

As mentioned earlier, Peter Abelard was the first to develop the methodic use of the Questio. A Questio, Congar explains, "derives from an opposition of propositions whereby the mind is placed in a state of doubt. To escape this doubt the mind must find a motive which swings it in favour of one of the alternatives, destroys the power of the opposing argument or acknowledges to each of the two positions its portion of truth and so grants it consequential assent."<sup>52</sup> In the prologue to Sic et Non, Abelard justifies the use of this methodic dispute in Catholic theology-- "For to doubt we come to inquiry and from inquiry we come to truth."<sup>53</sup> The application of this technique of the Questio to the truths of the faith resulted, according to Congar, "in treating theological matter by the same epistemological procedure as any other object of truly scientific knowledge."<sup>54</sup> Thus, theology no longer relied "principally on textual commentary"; but "like any other science," it consisted "in research initiated by a Questio."<sup>55</sup> M-D Chenu concurs with Congar's appreciation of the research value of the Questio. Chenu asserts that theological reason "had achieved maturity" with the development of the

Questio because it was no longer directed by arguments based mainly on "authorities"--that is, an 'argumentum ad hominum,' but by reasons that convinced and created understanding.<sup>56</sup>

Although Abelard is credited with developing the methodic use of the Questio, his use of logic played down "the religious setting" or the datum of Revelation.<sup>57</sup> Abelard's use of logic or reason tended to dominate the datum of Revelation, thus emptying the mystery of faith. At the Council of Sens, A.D. 1140, many of the conclusions of Abelard's theology were condemned by the Church. Thus, in the development of the relationship between reason and faith, and by implication, the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology, Abelard's theology like that of John Scotus Erigena, who wrote in the ninth century, emphasized reason to the detriment of faith.<sup>58</sup> The theology of St. Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century brought both parts of the Church's tradition together, creating the best synthesis between the contemporary resources of liberal learning and the datum of Revelation.

According to M-D Chenu, Abelard elaborated a "theological anthropology" showing the importance of "subjective factors in human behavior, including its supernatural phases."<sup>59</sup> Paul Tillich makes an interesting comparison between the 'subjective factors' in the theologies of Abelard and St. Augustine. Tillich asserts that Abelard's self-analysis was done in "relation to himself" and not in

"relation to God" as St. Augustine had done.<sup>60</sup> In the theology of Abelard, subjective reason had free reign with the result that the ontological elements of faith were played down.

Abelard's rationalistic approach to Christian doctrines which failed to take into account the strict objective norms of Revelation can best be appreciated by examining some of his theological conclusions.

#### 1. The doctrine of original sin

Abelard's subjectivity dissolved this doctrine. For Abelard, sin was an act of the personal will, and, since we did not concur with our own will in the sin of Adam, the original sin of Adam was not sin for us. In this doctrine or explanation of original sin, Abelard demonstrated the personal, subjective side.<sup>61</sup>

#### 2. Christology or the theology of Christ

Abelard emphasized the 'humanity' of Christ at the expense of his 'divinity.' He stressed "the personal activity of Christ" and not "his ontological origin in God."<sup>62</sup>

#### 3. The Doctrine of Atonement

Abelard viewed salvation as a personal response "to the forgiving act of divine love."<sup>63</sup> He played down the objective dimension of atonement and the order of grace. In the sacrament of Penance, Abelard stressed the importance of personal contrition, not absolution.<sup>64</sup>

#### 4. Moral Theology

Abelard emphasized the primacy of "intention" and "conscience" in human actions. Thus, he exalted sexual pleasure and concupiscence



rather than cautioned against them as St. Augustine had done. He also justified the "clear conscience" of Christ's persecutors because they acted in good 'faith.'<sup>65</sup>

Not all of Abelard's theological conclusions, however, were without justification. Our primary concern here is not with Abelard's theological opinions but with his theological approach which shows the way he applied current liberal thought to Catholic theology. As Chenu observes, Abelard's theology resulted from "an awakening of conscience" by the rise in the "level of culture" and "refinement" during the twelfth century.<sup>66</sup>

The application of dialectical reason to Catholic theology by Abelard, however, constituted a breakthrough even though Abelard's application of dialectical reason lacked the kind of balance that would do justice to the ontological status of Revelation. Notwithstanding his limitations, Abelard occupies a respectable place in Catholic theology by means of his contribution to the development of the Questio or dialectical method.<sup>67</sup>

Gilbert de la Porrée was one of the early scholastics who wrote in the second half of the twelfth century and made a profound contribution to the understanding of theology and of its place among the liberal sciences. Thus, Congar states with reference to Gilbert, that theology truly gained "consciousness of itself and of its place in the different branches of science."<sup>68</sup> The word 'science' in this context is to be understood as meaning 'knowledge.' Gilbert, according to

Congar, used the term "faculties" in order to distinguish "the various disciplines which made up the contemporary education."<sup>69</sup> Some of these diverse disciplines were listed as "natural," "mathematical," "theological," "civil," and "rational."<sup>70</sup> In his commentary, Gilbert was the first to outline the idea of a methodology, not only in theology, but in the various disciplines of knowledge. He tried to isolate the rules which were proper to each discipline and which corresponded to the object of that discipline.<sup>71</sup>

With reference to theology, specifically, Alan of Lille developed Gilbert's methodology in his Rules of Sacred Theology (Regulae Theologicae).<sup>72</sup> Theology and liberal education, therefore, were drawn into close "technical juxtaposition" by the end of the twelfth century. This gave rise, according to Evans, to the "methodical introduction of technical terms and principles point by point into every corner of theological science."<sup>73</sup> Jacques Maritain, in The Degrees of Knowledge describes theology as "the primary and great technology of the Christian world."<sup>74</sup> This close technical juxtaposition of theology and liberal education which, in Maritain's words, made theology the "great technology of the Christian world" was made possible by the labours of scholastic theologians like Alan of Lille.

Alan of Lille offers one of the best examples of early scholastic theology which tried to apply "the technical language and the technically exact methods of the day directly to the problem of talking about God."<sup>75</sup> Thus, Evans states that Alan showed that "language used

of God obeys special rules, but that these rules may be formulated in the conventional technical terms of grammar or rhetoric or dialectic."<sup>76</sup> Regarding the rules whereby words are applied to God, Alan stated that abstract words are more appropriate than concrete words since abstract words are 'simpler' and closer to Divine simplicity.<sup>77</sup> Substantives were considered more proper than adjectives which signified concrete phenomena. Positives were regarded as more appropriate than comparatives or superlatives since, in God, there is no more or less. Nouns were viewed as more appropriate than verbs, since verbs denote time, not eternity.<sup>78</sup> Alan developed the rules of theological language which could be applied to discussions concerning the Deity. There were three aspects to the "universality of theological language" which Alan emphasized: (1) The words used of God should be familiar; (2) These words should be in general use; (3) These words should be comprehensible, and not obscure.<sup>79</sup> Thus, Alan found the means in the liberal arts and the liberal sciences, which he had at his disposal, of making knowledgable statements about God. D. Cupitt in Christ and the Hiddenness of God recognized the importance of making the kind of headway which Alan made against the fundamental barrier to the knowledge of God when he wrote: "To be able to move, a theology needs to include at least one affirmative statement about God; a statement, that is, expressing a proposition whose logical subject is God."<sup>80</sup>



The Scholastic Period also ushered in a new appreciation of Epistemology (understanding of the truth) in liberal education. This new epistemological understanding resulted from the application of Aristotelian reason to theology. Prior to Scholasticism, all knowledge was seen as "in some way rooted in the knowledge of the divine within us."<sup>81</sup> This approach to knowledge was the one adopted by St. Augustine, and it seemed to imply "that there is no such thing as secular knowledge."<sup>82</sup> Tillich describes this approach to the truth as 'theonomous'; that is, "God is prior to all conclusions making them possible."<sup>83</sup>

With the advent of Scholasticism and the application of the liberal thought of Aristotle to theology, the problem of knowledge was posed again in a new light. The task of the Scholastics was to reconcile the resources of natural reason and faith or as Chenu put it: "to use the resources of reason to build up faith in the mystery of God from within the faith itself."<sup>84</sup> Paul Tillich, however, viewed the task of the Scholastics differently, as reconciling reason and authority.<sup>85</sup> This view of Tillich regarding the essential task of the Scholastics is misleading since it confuses faith with authority. The task of reconciling reason and faith, on the other hand, finds its validity, not only in the discoveries of liberal thought, but, in the never-ending challenge to confront the materials of liberal education anew with, what Chenu describes as "the one light of Christian Revelation."<sup>86</sup> St. Anselm of Canterbury defended the use of reason

as the servant of theology, not by dominating the 'datum' of Revelation, but by giving it its "rational basis."<sup>87</sup> St. Anselm presented a theology that has been described as "the organic law of the believing intelligence."<sup>88</sup> Anselm, like other Scholastics, justified his efforts to reconcile the conventional resources of liberal learning with theology when he wrote: "It seems to me a case of negligence if, after becoming firm in our faith, we do not strive to understand what we believe."<sup>89</sup>

The development of a new epistemology by the Scholastics is evident in the way they set out to apply the quadrivium of the liberal arts to the study of theology. According to M-D Chenu, the Scholastics "rediscovered nature in authentic fashion."<sup>90</sup> This discovery of nature led to a new appraisal of the quadrivium of the liberal arts and of the relationship of the quadrivium to theology. Abelard, for example, wrote Questiones Naturales in which he defended the scientific investigation of nature as proper to man. William of Conches wrote Philosophia Mundi in which he investigated the activity of secondary causes; namely, the activity of science in addition to the activity of the primary cause.<sup>91</sup> Thierry of Chartres wrote a treatise On the Work of the Six Days in which he set out to show that science supports theology in spite of "superficial differences."<sup>92</sup> For the Scholastics, science or 'scientia' meant knowledge, and it did not have the precise meaning then that it has in modern science.<sup>93</sup> There is, however, an area of common ground between the scholastic



notion of natural science and modern science. The subject matter of the quadrivium, though limited in scope during the Scholastic period, corresponds to the subject matter of modern science.<sup>94</sup> The Scholastic theologian, who was influenced by the epistemology of Aristotle, viewed knowledge about the natural world as revealing something about God. Hence, the Scholastic theologian showed an interest in the "discoveries of science."<sup>95</sup>

The conflict which later arose between science and religion was viewed by Chenu as being a conflict between "natural science and symbolism."<sup>96</sup> The symbolic approach to nature which characterized the theology of the Hellenistic period came under the influence of Neoplatonic philosophy which favoured renouncing "the world from which God is radically distinct."<sup>97</sup> The re-discovery of nature and the place of the quadrivium in theology changed, according to Chenu, the course of theology from Augustinian symbolism to the scholastic notion of grace perfecting nature.<sup>98</sup>

The Scholastics were the first seriously to attempt to reconcile the quadrivium of the liberal arts with theology. This is particularly noticeable in the endeavour to offer a systematic interpretation of the "two accounts of creation, that of Genesis and that of the ancient philosophers who tried to explain the beginning of the world in terms of natural causes."<sup>99</sup> In his treatise On the Work of the Six Days, Thierry of Chartres took the scriptural text as his basis and interpreted it point by point according to the scientific principles



of the day.<sup>100</sup> The views of Thierry and his contemporaries on the origin of matter and the world were indeed limited on account of the inadequacy of scientific knowledge at that time. Plato's Timaeus was then recognized as the authoritative work dealing with the origin of the universe and the world of nature.<sup>101</sup> Many Scholastics wrote commentaries on the Timaeus which furnished them with concepts regarding physics, heavenly spheres, and space.<sup>102</sup>

It cannot be claimed that the Scholastics employed the strict objective scrutiny of the modern scientist to the investigation of natural phenomena "as something of interest in its own right."<sup>103</sup> The Scholastics were, indeed, interested in the quadrivium of the liberal arts, but only with reference to the Creator for whom their discoveries provided "materials for analogies and illustrations."<sup>104</sup> Thus, Thierry of Chartres only worked out the application of some of the laws of the quadrivium to theology in his treatise On the Work of the Six Days.<sup>105</sup> Nonetheless, as a result of the new appreciation of the role of the quadrivium in leading people to a knowledge of the Creator, mathematical and scientific terms found their way into Catholic theology. Examples of such technical terms, newly introduced into theology, were: "magnitude," "multitude," "continuous," "unity," "plurality," "proportion" and "progression."<sup>106</sup> Thus, Catholic theology benefited in two ways from the application of the quadrivium of the liberal arts by the early Scholastics: (1) New technical terms were introduced into Catholic theology. (2) The "rational character" of Catholic theology was strengthened by giving due recognition to the discoveries of nature and to the role of scientific reason.<sup>107</sup>

### 3. The Rise of the Universities

The genesis of the university or 'studium generale' owes its origin to Scholasticism, and it came about as a result of the development of speculative theology and canon law.<sup>108</sup> The term 'studium generale,' according to Rashdall, referred not to a place where all subjects were studied but where students from all parts were received.<sup>109</sup> 'Studium generale' as an intellectual term is sometimes mistranslated as 'general education' when in fact it signifies general cultivation of the mind. The new science of canon law was important in the development of the university for it enabled "the practical application" of Revelation to be taught just as speculative theology imparted a rational and scientific construction of the truths of faith. The science of canon law was made possible through the efforts of Gratian, whose 'Decretum Gratiani' became the most basic text of canon law. According to Hans Wolter, the 'Decretum' laid the groundwork for the "legislative accomplishment of the papal leadership" in the Catholic Church. The new canon law sought to master the questions of the Scholastics and various church authorities "by the light of reason" and it offered a rational line of thought, logically planned and developed.<sup>110</sup> The 'Decretum' was a remarkable feat for it assembled "all the texts of the Church's first millenium in an intelligible and ordered whole."<sup>111</sup> Thus, the academic study of Catholic theology in its speculative and canonical dimensions created an intensive inquiry into truth, and it had the force of attracting students from all parts of Western Christendom to the urban or cathedral schools of Europe.



During the twelfth century the educational system of Europe, under the influence of Scholasticism, experienced an astounding transformation. The monastic schools yielded to the cathedral schools which represented a different kind of learning. Renowned teachers like Abelard, Alan of Lille and Gilbert de la Porrée attracted students who flocked to the cities which offered better possibilities of residence and who found in these centres answers to the intellectual outburst of the time. The universities evolved from these Catholic theological centres whose intellectual thrust was not directed to vocational learning but to "a knowledge of the truth," that is, "a knowledge transcending the needs of daily life."<sup>112</sup> Scholastic education met the new intellectual needs of the age for it offered the newly developed methodology of the 'questio' and dialectics which "sought to throw light on the mysteries of the faith, transmitted in Scripture and the patristic tradition, to acquire a systematic total view of the truths of faith by means of intensive rational reflection."<sup>113</sup>

Monastic theology, on the other hand, was "oriented to the religious life itself, to prayer, meditation, and mystical union with God."<sup>114</sup> The older monastic tradition followed the Augustinian approach in Catholic theology. It was limited in intellectual scope for it focussed attention merely on the trivium of liberal arts which it viewed as necessary for a deepening of the understanding of Scripture and the Church's tradition.<sup>115</sup> The representatives of monastic learning developed their own literary forms and methodology such as the "sermo, the dialogue, the letter, the florilegia and the



biography."<sup>116</sup> Rupert of Deutz (d. 1129) and St. Bernard of Clairvaux were the most renowned monastic scholars of the twelfth century. Rupert, for example, displayed the kind of theological outlook which viewed "an appreciation of salvation history rather than intellectual abstraction" as the "proper concern of research" in theological matters.<sup>117</sup> He is credited with being the founder of biblical theology. According to Hans Wolter, "a visual concept" rather than intellectual categories of thought, "determined Rupert's exegesis."<sup>118</sup> This approach by Rupert had important implications later in the development of theology which moved away from considering the divine mysteries abstractly, according to intellectual categories, to putting the emphasis on the personal experience of faith in the concrete and as it appears in 'Salvation History.' This approach to theology was revived during the Reformation when the Reformers rejected the Scholastic synthesis of Greek liberal education and theology.

It would be unfair, however, to attribute the rise of the universities to Catholic scholars who were not inclined to meditation or prayer. The Catholic scholars who developed the new Scholastic methodology did so as a result of a "more comprehensive ... intellectual need" and in order to gain "insights into the faith."<sup>119</sup> Hans Wolter maintains that there was a "continuity of intellectual development" in spite of the shift in the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology, from monastic learning to the education of the schoolmen.<sup>120</sup> The founders of Scholasticism, such as Hugh

of St. Victor and Abelard, were monks. Hugh of St. Victor created a bridge between monastic learning and Scholasticism. The focus of Hugh's exegetical and theological studies revolves around 'Salvation History,' but as Wolter observed, "the systematization of his theological works" earns him a place in early Scholasticism.<sup>121</sup>

Scholasticism was called the "theology of the schools" because its leaders founded schools that cultivated their "theological specialization" and because of its association with "the urban schools from which the universities were to develop."<sup>122</sup> The earliest school was the school of Bec which appeared in the eleventh century. Lanfranc and Anselm of Canterbury taught at Bec. The Cathedral School of Laon could boast such famous pupils as Abelard and Gilbert de la Porrée. The most notable feature of this school was its academic and intellectual approach to Catholic theology. Laon became famous for initiating an intellectual shift away from the fundamentalism of Scripture based on a literal and tropological interpretation to the "lecture notes of the magistri" which assumed authority similar to "patristic texts."<sup>123</sup> The 'questio' also emerged for the first time at Laon as "the classical method of teaching and of dealing with problems" in Catholic theology. Abelard, as we have seen, developed the 'questio' as the major literary form of Scholastic theology.

Peter Lombard taught at the Cathedral school of Paris. Under his influence, Catholic theology had imbibed the full force of "critical reason," had achieved "scientific status," and had prepared the way



for the great summae of high Scholasticism.<sup>124</sup> Peter Comestor of the School of Paris introduced the concept of 'Transubstantiation' to explain the change that took place in the Eucharist. This term was adopted by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 to explain the Real Presence in the Eucharist. The 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard which provided the scientific and orderly classification, codification, and synthesis of the Church's doctrine was designated by the Fourth Lateran Council as "the leading theological textbook."<sup>125</sup> The School of Paris was very influential in developing theological education in the Catholic Church.

After the Third Lateran Council, the Cathedral Schools became permanent institutions with a chancellor ('Scholasticus Canonicus') who gave teachers authorization to teach. Thus, the institutional nucleus of the university existed in the cathedral schools--at Paris, Bologna, Padua, Salerno, and Oxford. The liberal arts, theology and canon law were taught. The teachers (magistri) began to form themselves into a 'collegium,' into which students who graduated and qualified were co-opted. The union of students was called a 'universitas'; that is, a body of persons taken collectively.<sup>126</sup> The universities were a spontaneous growth, and were not instituted or planned by the highest authorities.<sup>127</sup> With time the Cathedral Schools lost their importance and the interest of teachers and students shifted to the most intellectually active centres--Paris, Oxford, Bologna and Padua. These intellectual centres developed the structures that determined the course of the university in Western education.



The University of Oxford was granted papal privileges as a university in 1214, and Robert Grosseteste, later Bishop of Lincoln, was appointed Chancellor. The union of students--'universitas,' was divided into three nations: English, Scots and Irish. The Franciscans occupied the leading positions at Oxford and were introduced to the university by the chancellor--Robert Grosseteste. Grosseteste promoted interest in science at Oxford, putting great stress on the cultivation of the quadrivium of the liberal arts, above all mathematics. Roger Bacon, a Franciscan, was one of the most famous scholars of the newly formed university. Bacon set out to pursue the study of science, not only for its own sake, but for the service of Catholic theology. He deplored the separation between speculative thought and experimental science, and in his 'Opus Maius' he advocated experiment in science and asked that it be put at the service of practical life.<sup>128</sup> Pope Clement IV commissioned Bacon to draw up a plan for "the reform of ecclesiastical studies," but it appears that his ideas were so revolutionary that nothing came of this project. Bacon was bound to the Augustinian tradition in theology and this led to an uneasy alliance between his theology and his scientific ideas. The most famous theologian at Oxford was Duns Scotus who, like Bacon, followed the Augustinian tradition in theology.

The University of Paris was most famous for its theology department, which received its seal in 1219. Four faculties were

distinguished at Paris--theology, medicine, liberal arts, and canon law. Like the University of Oxford, the union of students was divided into nations--French, Picards, Normans, English. Paris achieved an international position. St. Thomas Aquinas taught at Paris from 1268 until 1272. The intellectual connection between the faculty of arts and theology was constantly maintained, and almost all the theologians first taught in the arts faculty. The College of the Sorbonne was founded in 1257 by Robert de Sorbon to house students and to offer a place of instruction.<sup>129</sup>

The University of Bologna was even older than the University of Paris. Bologna achieved international status as "the chief center of legal studies in the West."<sup>130</sup>

The course of studies offered at the medieval universities was intense. After matriculation in the faculty of arts, it took a full six years of study for the M.A. degree. A further twelve years of study after the M.A. were necessary in order to obtain the doctorate degree. Those who achieved the degree of doctorate in divinity at Paris or in civil law at Bologna were in a position to reach the highest ranks in Church and State.<sup>131</sup>

Thus, the idea of the university that developed from Scholasticism has moulded the Western mind. The intellectual and spiritual forces of Scholasticism were strong enough to reconcile the newly discovered rational philosophy of Aristotle with Catholic theology. The universities which the Scholastics gave form to were leading centres

of learning which brought together the different forms of knowing available at that time--philosophy, theology, medicine, canon law and civil law. The thrust of Scholastic education has been criticised for fostering a predominantly "scientific-metaphysical" culture which led to a decline in the general literary standards of Western education.<sup>132</sup> Still, the academic interchange among the various faculties of the university stimulated and activated new insights into the various disciplines, especially theology.

Writing about the intellectual achievements of the Scholastics and the contribution which they made to Western education, Rashdall has this to say:

Through all the changes which have taken place in the subject matter and the methods of the education regarded as the highest from the twelfth century down to the present time, that education has continued to be given through the machinery supplied by a distinctively medieval institution--an institution which still, even in the minute details of its organization, continues to exhibit its continuity with its two great thirteenth century prototypes, medieval Paris and medieval Bologna.<sup>133</sup>



#### 4. The Contribution of St. Thomas Aquinas

The Scholastic theologians of the twelfth century laid the groundwork from which a principle of organization, uniting the new resources of liberal education and Catholic theology, could be developed. The contribution of St. Thomas Aquinas to the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology is truly unique because he forged an authentic synthesis between the different developments in the understanding of human reason and faith in the Church's tradition. The Summa Theologica of Aquinas offers the most thorough and comprehensive correspondence between the conventional resources of liberal learning and Catholic theology up until the thirteenth century.<sup>134</sup> Aquinas' construction of a rational and scientific theology is considered so important by the Church that, even today, he still holds a position of eminence among Catholic theologians.<sup>135</sup>

The Catholic theologian of the thirteenth century had to reconcile the Christian faith with the new-found liberal learning. The complete edition of Aristotle's writings furnished a new "secular system of ideas and meanings" in which all realms of life were discussed.<sup>136</sup> Prior to the thirteenth century, the logic of Aristotle was used as a tool in theology. Aristotle's philosophy and system of thought did not exercise any direct influence on the content of theology itself.

After the publication of Aristotle's complete writings, Catholic theology came into contact with a system of thought which encompassed nature, politics, ethics, and metaphysics. Aristotle's metaphysics, for example, offered a new "doctrine of matter," a new understanding of "the relation of God to the world," and "an ontological analysis of reality."<sup>137</sup> In the Summa Theologica, Aquinas set out to reconcile the new liberal thought of Aristotle with the Christian faith. Paul Tillich aptly describes Aquinas as a "mediating theologian" for his writings are concerned with "the mediation of the message of the gospel with the categories of the understanding as they exist in any given period of history."<sup>138</sup>

#### Aquinas' Epistemology

Aquinas was responsible for adopting Aristotle's epistemology; that is, Aristotle's approach to knowledge in Catholic theology. Unlike Plato or Augustine, Aristotle took "experience" as the starting point of knowledge, not "immediate intuition."<sup>139</sup> Theologically, therefore, the question of arriving at truth was posed anew by Aquinas. He did not espouse or propound an "inner light" theory of truth like Augustine, rooting "all knowledge in the divine ground."<sup>140</sup> According to Aquinas, "God is first in Himself, but he is not first for us."<sup>141</sup> Human knowledge starts, not with God, but with His effects--the finite world. The principles in the structure of the human mind, such as the five transcendentals: good, true, being, beauty, one; were referred to as "created light" by Aquinas, not

"uncreated light."<sup>142</sup> Thus, all knowledge begins with sense experience and can reach God in terms of rational conclusions. These conclusions in theology, though logically correct, do not produce real conviction about God. This conviction is given by faith which raises the mind to the level of the divine object. Although Aquinas' epistemology put all the resources of human reason to work in understanding the content of Revelation, M-D Chenu observes that Aquinas developed a theological science that "can only come to birth and grow to maturity within the faith."<sup>143</sup>

By applying the epistemology of Aristotle to the truths of the faith, Aquinas was able to develop a rational and unifying method in theology. The theology of Aquinas, according to Chenu, is "one" because it preserves "the law of an intelligence" which "proceeding from faith in the word of God, can never consent to receive the content of that word in bits and pieces."<sup>144</sup> Thus, the law of the believing intelligence was re-defined by Aquinas after the manner of Aristotle's epistemology. Chenu describes this law in the following way: (1) The objects of knowledge, even divine, enter the consciousness of the subject according to the psychological laws and structure of the subject. (2) The act of knowing possesses two characteristics: A. It is rational, not intuitive, because it uses analysis and composition for achieving knowledge; b. It develops through the resources of sensible knowledge.<sup>145</sup>



Aquinas' unified intellectual approach to truth in theology led him to reject Augustinian dualism which advocated two zones of the spiritual life: one directed "toward God and wholly spiritual," the other directed "toward matter and confined to science."<sup>146</sup> Thus, M-D Chenu eloquently describes Aquinas' integral approach to truth in comparison with Augustine's dualism: "This dualism, wherein the spirit is bidden to shun the shadows and deceits of this world, as if the temporal order were by its nature a sort of stain upon the white radiance of truth, is an attitude which St. Thomas rejects, down to its subtlest manifestations. As against this 'eternism,' whose doctrinal consequences may easily be guessed at, St. Thomas holds that contemplation for an incarnate soul does not find its consummation in ecstasy, that wisdom (to resume our own vocabulary) is not to be attained by turning out of doors all the manifold sciences of this world."<sup>147</sup> The mental attitude of Aquinas, therefore, in analysing reality and truth was influenced by Aristotle's epistemology which was to replace, in Catholic theology, the epistemology of St. Augustine, who was influenced by Neo-Platonism.

Aquinas held that theology was an academic discipline that "follows the human mode" of understanding.<sup>148</sup> The proper mode of human understanding, according to Aquinas, is to link up conclusions with principles. The principles are the truths of faith which theology, by following the proper mode of human reason, explains and develops, linking up conclusions drawn from those principles.<sup>149</sup>

Aquinas asserted that theology reasoned in a "strictly discursive manner" wherein the less is linked up with the more intelligible.<sup>150</sup> This academic view of theology by Aquinas was very different from the mystical view of theology which is found in the writings of Origen and Augustine. Although the Scriptures appeal to symbols, metaphors and images, the rational method of Aquinas in theology resisted the temptation to construct a theology based on 'allegory' and having a 'purely symbolist basis.'<sup>151</sup> Aquinas was aware that theological knowledge was in constant need of "purification of our modes of thought."<sup>152</sup> He did not rely on allegory or symbolism in theological language as Origen and Augustine had sometimes done, but on the rational use of 'analogy.' Thus, Aquinas set up a system of negatives--'via negativa' in theology, since he maintained: "We cannot know what God is but only what He is not, and in what way everything else relates to Him."<sup>153</sup>

The Catholic theologians of the twelfth century discovered the use of analogy as a rational way of dealing with the mystery of God, but it was Aquinas who, as explained in his Treatise on the Divine Names, brought this method to fulfillment. Thus, Catholic theology was approached by Aquinas, according to the strict rational method of an academic discipline. Yves-Marie Congar offers a definition of theology as practised by Aquinas which underscores its rational and academic character. The theology of Aquinas, he states, is "a rational and scientific consideration of the revealed datum, striving to



procure for the believing human spirit a certain understanding of the datum."<sup>154</sup>

Not only did Aquinas maintain that theology was knowledge received by the intellectual mode, he also held that theology was a 'science,' not just any science but the supreme science.<sup>155</sup> Aquinas classified theology as a subaltern science because in "its traditional meaning," according to M-D Chenu, it included "the functions of a science in its broadest epistemological sense."<sup>156</sup> There is certainly disagreement among scholars about calling theology a science, but as Chenu observed, the disagreement centres around "the precise designation and qualification of this work (theology) in its full scientific significance."<sup>157</sup> The subject matter of theology cannot be treated according to the methods of modern science because modern science is concerned with analysis of the things of nature in order to discover their laws and, by discovering relationships between facts and laws, proceed to "increasingly general hypotheses."<sup>158</sup> Experience attests to the fact that those who adopt an "empirical scientific approach as the sole pattern for the life of the mind" inevitably are led to deny the existence of God.<sup>159</sup> The object of theology far transcends the power of human reason and the mystery of God can only be reached ultimately by faith. In what sense then did Aquinas maintain that theology was a science? M-D Chenu offers the following explanation for calling theology a science. Firstly, theology is a science, according to Chenu, in a "general sense" because it enables us "to



participate in God's own knowledge of Himself."<sup>160</sup> Secondly, theology is a science in a "more exact sense" for it provides the understanding of the faith with "scientific form."<sup>161</sup> Thus, theology which is acquired knowledge, follows the laws which govern all other forms of human knowledge, in accordance with the dictates of intelligence. Theological science strives to define its objects, including God himself. It sets in motion "the techniques of reasoning" such as "conceptual analysis, definitions and subdivisions, classifications, inferences," and a "rational search for explanations."<sup>162</sup> Theology, according to Chenu, possesses "the characteristic operation of science" in leading to a "deduction," wherein the "process of rationalization achieves its fullest effectiveness."<sup>163</sup> Aquinas maintained that theology was the supreme science because of the inclusive nature of its object--God, and because it endeavored to employ all the resources of human reason. He firmly established the rational character and methodology of theology as an academic discipline.

Thus, the contribution of liberal education to Catholic theology was strengthened by St. Thomas Aquinas. The trivium of the liberal arts, as we have discussed, introduced no content into theology; they merely provided the way of thinking about God. By adopting the epistemology of Aristotle, Aquinas enabled the quadrivium of the liberal arts to play a more important role in theology. Aquinas' application of the new liberal learning of Aristotle; namely, his epistemology, his physics, his metaphysics, his psychology and his ethics,

introduced "a definite contribution of content and object into the very fabric" of Catholic theology.<sup>164</sup> Thus, the liberal sciences, especially philosophy, which represent a genuine knowledge of the world in which we live supplied "ideological matter" which affected "the term and content" of theological reasoning itself.<sup>165</sup> The theology of Aquinas transformed the output of liberal education by supplying a rational system of the world which was able to impart truth of its own and by strengthening the overall contribution of human reason.<sup>166</sup> The Augustinian view of theology gave to the liberal sciences only "a symbolic value to assist the understanding" of Revelation.<sup>167</sup> For Aquinas, on the other hand, the sciences possessed their own autonomy of object and method and conveyed their own truth which had value in and of itself and was not just symbolic.<sup>168</sup> The theological system of Aquinas is truly unique because of its rational and scientific character. The relativity of systems in Catholic theology arises, according to M-D Chenu, from "their unequal value in respect of intelligibility, and therefore of truth."<sup>169</sup> Every detail of Aquinas' theology, Chenu explains, is "saturated by his original conspectus of the whole."<sup>170</sup> According to Jacques Maritain, it is "the vital movement of intellection" that binds the whole system of Aquinas' theology together.<sup>171</sup>

Catholic theology, especially the Scholastic system of Catholic theology, traces its intellectual ancestry to the rationalism and



liberal thought of the ancient Greeks, particularly Plato and Aristotle. But, Catholic theology has a scriptural ancestry whose categories, procedures, modes of thought and literary forms derive from a very different culture to that of the Greeks. Thus, theology cannot be confined to the use of a particular form of reasoning alone since the mystery of God cannot be imprisoned within any one set of intellectual boundaries. The weakness in Abelard's theology, according to Chenu, was that he confined theology "in a rationalistic cage" which introduced a negative spirit of criticism into the mystery of the faith.<sup>172</sup>

The strength of Aquinas' theological system, unlike other systems and other forms of Scholasticism, is that it was supported "by a genuine science of the mind."<sup>173</sup> Human reason, in its fundamental purposes, is immutable and universal. The liberal arts, which represent the basic operations of the mind; and the liberal sciences, which transmit fundamental forms of knowing do not condemn theology to narrowness. The transcendence of the faith and the manifold resources of human reason join in Catholic theology to receive the light of God. Although there have been many developments in the capacity of human reason to discover truth, Aquinas' contribution to the relationship between liberal learning and Catholic theology is unique. The privileged status of Aquinas and his special contribution to the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology has been described by M-D Chenu in these words: "The system of St. Thomas is ... the most universal, the best adapted to take account of fresh discoveries-- in the universe of grace and the universe of nature."<sup>174</sup>



Aquinas certainly strove to place liberal education--the liberal arts and the liberal sciences, at the service of Catholic theology. It is understandable that Aquinas' main educational thought was limited to the Aristotelian legacy which he rethought in connection with the Catholic educational tradition up until then. Naturally, he had little or no knowledge of the auxiliary sciences, important for the understanding of Scripture today, such as history and archeology. His theological acquaintance with the text of Scripture was confined to what the patristic writers and early Scholastics had said.<sup>175</sup> He was also hindered by his unfamiliarity with Greek and Hebrew languages.<sup>176</sup> Nevertheless, his literary contribution was prodigious and can be arranged under six headings:

1. Philosophical commentaries on Aristotle's most important works.
2. Scriptural commentaries on many books of the Old and New Testaments.
3. Theological commentaries on the works of Boethius, Pseudo-Dionysius, and Peter Lombard.
4. Major works of theological synthesis:
 

'Summa contra Gentiles' and 'Summa Theologica.'

The 'Summa Theologica' was unfinished after seven years, but was completed by Reginald of Priverno from the writings of the 'Scriptum Super Sententiis.'
5. Notes for academic disputations: 'Quaestiones Disputatae,' and 'Quaestiones Quodlibetales.'
6. Miscellaneous works covering a variety of topics--philosophical, theological, and apologetic.

Philosophical topics: 'De Ente et Essentia,'  
'De Aeternitate Mundi,' "De Unitate Intellectus.'

Theological topics: 'De Articulis Fidei et Ecclesiae Sacramentis,' 'De Regimine Judaeorum.'

Apologetical topics: 'De Rationibus Fidei Contra Saracenos, Graecos et Armenos,' 'Contra Errores Graecorum.'

The value of Aquinas' theological and philosophical contribution was to prove enduring and timeless. Notwithstanding prohibitions that were issued by the Church against the writings of Aquinas in the thirteenth century and the almost fanatical opposition of the leaders of the Protestant Reformation to his theology, he was not to be appreciated fully for centuries. According to Etienne Gilson, Aquinas "did not write for his own century, but the future was to belong to him."<sup>177</sup>

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### Disintegration of Scholastic Education

The sense of harmony and intimate correspondence that existed between liberal education and Catholic theology prior to the Reformation found its classical expression in the methodology of Aquinas, whereby according to Congar, "the scientific and philosophical knowledge of the laws and the nature of things, based on sensible experience" entered into the objective construction of Revelation.<sup>1</sup> Aquinas recognised that human knowledge had value 'in itself' and not only in relationship to God. Scholastic theology, therefore, was an intellectual activity "which was developed for itself" and hence, held pride of place among the liberal sciences.<sup>2</sup>

The main reaction to this methodology was provided by Augustinianism which favoured an illumination view of theology.<sup>3</sup> The Augustinian approach, in its extreme form, faulted theology for borrowing from the liberal arts and the liberal sciences a vocabulary and categories of thought "to conceive and express the things of God."<sup>4</sup> Although the canonization of St. Thomas Aquinas secured his official position in theological method, the intellectual battle continued to rage in the universities during and after the thirteenth century over the relationship between reason and faith and, by implication, the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology.

The disintegration of the medieval theological synthesis, however, in the fifteenth century had the effect of undermining the old equilibrium and sense of partnership that existed between Greek liberal education and Catholic theology. There are many factors which contributed to this disintegration and the dissolution of the unity that was forged between liberal learning and Catholic theology. Following is a list of major factors which contributed to the breakdown of the scholastic synthesis.

1. Internal weaknesses of late Scholasticism
2. Humanism
3. Nominalism
4. 'Devotio Moderna'
5. The Reformation

It will be helpful to discuss each of these major factors separately in order to appreciate how the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology was affected.



### 1. Internal Weaknesses of Late Scholasticism

According to John P. Dolan, the problem with the medieval synthesis of reason and faith and, by implication, the synthesis between Greek liberal thought and Catholic theology, was that it resulted in a diminished interest in one of the sources of Revelation; namely, the Scriptures. Thus, Dolan asserts: "the great medieval synthesis, while providing a rational basis for the superstructure of revelation, fostered a mentality that diminished interest in the very font of that Revelation, the Scriptures."<sup>5</sup> Thus, it appears that Scholastic theology which, in principle, held reason and faith in harmony, developed, according to Congar, a method that became "too exclusively rational and logical."<sup>6</sup>

Henri de Lubac in Catholicism, offers a similar critique of scholastic methodology when he stated that Aristotelian logic which the Scholastics borrowed "showed itself unsuited to the organic, unitary ideas which had formerly, in some respects, found an ally in the Platonic mentality."<sup>7</sup> A conflict naturally arose, which scholastic methodology failed to address, between the great, open-ended truths of the faith in the Scriptures, on the one hand, and the type of logical and analytical reasoning, on the other hand, which diminished the idea of mystery. Thus, de Lubac pointed out, "Logical intelligence begins by separating, defining, isolating objects in order afterwards to connect them again artificially; and it is no less certain that its desire for analytical clarity makes

it impatient of any idea of mystery--a condition of science which carries with it its own penalty."<sup>8</sup> The dialectical method of Scholasticism, therefore, seemed to supplant the word of God and presented the risk of being developed for its own sake. This method, according to Congar, degenerated into a form of "useless subtlety" that solved questions by "distinctions setting up an ideological scheme completely cut off from time."<sup>9</sup> This intellectual weakness of late Scholasticism is evident in the dearth of original theological writings prior to the Reformation. According to Erwin Iserloth, "the dogmatic vagueness and lack of religious depth and force in late scholastic theology" was one of the major causes of the Reformation.<sup>10</sup> Thus, there was lacking in late scholastic theology that sense of the basic coherence of the truth as existed in the works of Aquinas, for example, which recognised a unifying centre uniting everything else and to which new ideas and insights had to be related and integrated time and again.

Another intellectual weakness of the scholastic synthesis was its "lack of a historical sense."<sup>11</sup> Scholasticism, with its interest in objectivity gave to the human intellect a "kind of knowing endowed with perfect certitude."<sup>12</sup> It failed to see, however, the text of Scripture in the proper context of each fact, only viewing it from one's "personal intellectual perspective" or according to one's "present personal context." This approach, according to Congar, constituted a "false method" for it ignored the original and proper



context of the text and the words of Scripture, explaining them in terms of categories from Aristotle or medieval theologians.<sup>13</sup>

De Lubac again concurs with Congar in criticizing Scholasticism for not developing a sense of history in theology. "The theology of history," according to de Lubac, "which occupied so large a place in the Fathers' thought never found ... its essential groundwork" in medieval thought. "The overriding anxiety for rationality" which in Scholasticism was "one of the causes of its greatness" was, according to de Lubac, "inevitably bound to disregard one aspect of a teaching which at that time appeared so obscurely."<sup>14</sup> Thus Scholasticism, by ignoring historical reason, degenerated into a theology that was bogged down by the weight of its own literary tradition and failed to establish a credible link with original sources and the current world of ideas. As Congar has also observed, Scholasticism lost that vital contact with the life of the Church and the Scriptures, and it developed into a theology that became crystallized into "competing schools" and "petrified systems."<sup>15</sup> Nowhere was this more evident than in the negative polemics and rivalry which existed between various schools of scholastic theology under the domination of religious orders such as the Dominicans and Franciscans.<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology failed to develop adequately in late Scholasticism because of its own internal weaknesses. These internal weaknesses, which have been discussed briefly, can be summarized under the four



principal headings given by Yves Marie Congar in A History of Theology.<sup>17</sup> The reasons offered by Congar for the disintegration of Scholasticism and the resultant breakdown of the old unity between liberal education and Catholic theology are as follows:

1. Scholastic theology was dominated by a method that was "too exclusively rational and logical."
2. Scholastic theology failed to offer a sense of history.
3. Scholastic theology tended to indulge in "useless subtlety."
4. Scholastic theology inclined toward "crystallization into petrified systems."

The intellectual shortcomings of late Scholasticism, therefore, led to its demise as an original and cohesive theological system. As an intellectual construct which purported to unite reason and faith, late Scholasticism lacked flexibility and freshness and was ill prepared to embrace new ideas. Although it brought the great authorities--Aristotle, Peter Abelard and Aquinas to the forefront, late Scholasticism did not engage in original study of the sources. The impact of this development on the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology was particularly acute during the Reformation when Martin Luther rejected outright the application of Greek liberal education to theology.

## 2. Humanism

The new intellectual needs ushered in by Humanism in the mid-fifteenth century called into question traditional scholastic education. According to Erwin Iserloth, the term "Humanism" was coined in 1808 by F. J. Niethammer to describe the educational reforms that followed after the decline of Scholasticism in the sixteenth century.<sup>18</sup>

In Italy, Florence became the intellectual centre of Humanism. The philosophy of Plato provided the rational basis of Humanism, thus questioning scholastic methodology which adopted the philosophy of Aristotle as the rational basis for the superstructure of Revelation. John Pico della Mirandola (1469-94) was the most important representative of Platonic humanism at the Florentine Academy. The new education of humanism was characterized more by a style or "manner of speaking" rather than by the "fixed doctrines" of the scholastic schools.<sup>19</sup> In his book, De Hominis Dignitate, Mirandola applied his humanist outlook and learning to theology in order "to combine the religious traditions of all peoples and to use them for an understanding of the Christian religion."<sup>20</sup> Thus, the new Italian Humanism of the fifteenth century not only questioned the rational basis of Scholasticism, it also offered a new literary method which was characterized by a non-dogmatic outlook, which frequently rejected the Church's teaching authority, and by a syncretist approach that drew on the findings of various traditions.<sup>21</sup>

In Germany, the new humanist education had its centre, not in the universities which were still dominated by Scholasticism, but in the princely courts, the monasteries and the city schools. German humanists extolled national greatness and culture, and were often critical of the influence of the Catholic Church in Rome. In 1510, a German diocesan priest, James Wimpheling (1450-1528), published, at the request of the Emperor, Grievances of the German Nation.<sup>22</sup> This work is significant for the new spirit of criticism of the Church and for the style of thought and scholarship which it offered.

The conflict between Humanism and Scholasticism was brought to a head in Germany with the publication of Rudimenta Linguae Hebraicae by John Reuchlin (1455-1522).<sup>23</sup> Reuchlin, who was professor of Greek and Hebrew at Ingolstadt (1520-21) and Tübingen (1521-22), got embroiled in a major controversy with Rome over Biblical literature which he considered anti-Christian.<sup>24</sup> More important than the controversy over Biblical literature, however, was the humanist reaction to the Church's censorship of Reuchlin's scholarship. The Church's condemnation of Reuchlin was viewed by humanists as a rejection of the academic standards of scholarship of the day, especially Biblical scholarship. Reuchlin responded to Rome's censorship by publishing Clarorum Virorum Epistolae (Letters of Illustrious Men) in 1514, followed by Epistolae Obscurorum Virorum (Letters of Obscure Men) 1515-17, which ridiculed scholastic theology.



Reuchlin, Wimpheling and Mirandola remained loyal to the Church and even defended its teaching and "doctrinal structure." Still the intellectual confrontation between Humanism and Scholasticism called into question the traditional synthesis between liberal education and Catholic theology.

#### Desiderius Erasmus

The most famous figure among the humanists of the early sixteenth century was Desiderius Erasmus (1466?-1536). In his theological writings, Erasmus endeavoured to apply the new liberal learning of Humanism to Catholic theology. The early humanist writings of Erasmus--Adagia (1500), Colloquia (1518), and Antibarbari (1520) attest to his distaste for Scholasticism and medieval Latin which he regarded as "barbarous."<sup>25</sup> The theology of Erasmus clearly demonstrated the influence of Humanism, especially Platonic philosophy and the new science of philology.

In 1503, Erasmus published Enchiridion Militis Christiani which attempted to present a Christian philosophy for all Christians, lay and clerical, from "the purest sources of Scripture, Fathers and scholarly research of exegetes."<sup>26</sup> Erasmus' Platonic philosophy, which contributed to a sense of "inwardness" in his writings, was largely responsible for his underestimating the "external form and the corporeal" in the Enchiridion. In accord with the prevailing Platonic tendency of Humanism, Erasmus also failed to do justice to

the theology of the "incarnation," "the mystery of the Church," and the "sacraments."<sup>27</sup> According to Yves Marie Congar, Erasmus was untheological because his method left no room for "the intellectual construction of Christian doctrine under a scientific form."<sup>28</sup> The method of "juxtaposition" which Erasmus created between the Scriptures and pagan philosophical thought did not, according to Congar, create a proper theology that united faith and reason.<sup>29</sup> Erasmus, however, defended his theological position in Hyperaspistes Diatribae (1526-27), and in 1528 he wrote Ciceronianus against a form of "pagan humanism" derived from Christianity. Notwithstanding Erasmus' defence of his theological method, there is a manifest unwillingness in his writings to confront real issues of doctrine. According to Erwin Iserloth, the theological writings of Erasmus lacked depth of insight due to his "reserve in discussing theological issues."<sup>30</sup> This reserve in discussing the Church's theological doctrine is evident in Liber de Sarcianda Ecclesiae Concordia which he wrote in 1533 and which set out to restore the unity of the Church by contemplating the "simplicity" of the early Apostolic Church.<sup>31</sup> This was followed in the same year by Explanatio Symboli or Catechismus which attempted to provide a simple answer to issues of the faith by confining the attention to the "basic truths of the Apostles' Creed."<sup>32</sup>

In his Catechismus, Erasmus dodged the theological issue of the Sacraments which were only alluded to in passing. His treatment of the Eucharist in the Catechismus was vague and he avoided any discussion of the real presence. Continuing this trend of avoiding theological



debates, Erasmus wrote De Puritate Ecclesiae Christianae in 1536 in an attempt to discover the "original spiritual purity" of the Church.<sup>33</sup>

Thus, it appears that the chief negative characteristic of Erasmus' theological writings, which attempted to combine humanistic learning with Catholic theology, was his effort to limit "the area of obligatory doctrine" and his "dogmatic vagueness."<sup>34</sup> Following the prevailing humanist mood of the time, Erasmus' Platonism blinded him to serious theological issues. Rather than debate theological doctrine, Erasmus was content to emphasize piety and good morals.

The most lasting positive contribution of Erasmus' humanist scholarship to Catholic theology was in the area of philology. The new science of philology gave rise to a "critical historical sense, which turned away from the traditional scholastic theology" and brought about a return to the writings of St. Paul, the Church fathers and the New Testament.<sup>35</sup> In 1505, Erasmus published Annotationes which influenced the course of biblical criticism for a long time.<sup>36</sup> Later, in 1516, he edited the Greek New Testament. In this scholarly work, Erasmus demonstrated that the new science of philology belonged to the history of Catholic doctrine. As Jaroslav Pelikan observed, Erasmus applied "to the text of the New Testament the same standards of philological precision and the same methods of textual criticism that were being applied to the classics of ancient Greece and Rome."<sup>37</sup>



Erasmus applied a critical historical sense, not only to the text of Scripture, but also to the study of the Fathers of the Church. In 1517, Erasmus published the works of St. Jerome whom he described as "by far the first and most learned of the Church Fathers."<sup>38</sup> He continued to devote much of his life to publishing critical editions of the writings of the Fathers: Cyprian (1521), Arnobius (1522), Hilary (1523), Irenaeus (1526), Ambrose (1527), Origen (1527), Augustine (1527-29), and Chrysostom (1530). By means of humanistic scholarship and education, Erasmus revitalized the study of Scripture and the Fathers of the Church. With his edition of the New Testament, and the publications of the works of the Fathers of the Church, Erasmus moved into the front rank of theologians of his day on account of his biblical and Patristic scholarship.

Thus, Erasmus made a positive, on-going contribution to liberal education and Catholic theology by applying, especially, the standards of philological science to the texts of Scripture and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. Needless to say, Erasmus, like other humanists, was critical of Scholasticism because of its "dryly intellectual attitude" and the tendency to discuss doctrine on a "philosophical level."<sup>39</sup> By his criticism of Scholasticism, Erasmus contributed, on the one hand, to the disintegration of the scholastic synthesis of liberal education and Catholic theology. On the other hand, he increased the output of reason in Catholic theology by giving back to theology a sense of history and by applying to the sources of Revelation the academic standards of philological science.

### Nicholas of Cusa

Another remarkable figure who stands out in the mid-fifteenth century for his positive efforts to create a bridge connecting scholastic and humanistic learning in an age of transition was the Cardinal legate, Nicholas of Cusa (1401-1464). As Cardinal legate, Nicholas was entrusted with reforming the German church of the Empire. He struggled to abolish abuses in the Church over "indulgences," "pilgrimages," "simony," and "clerical concubinage."<sup>40</sup> Nicholas was a humanist, and he was well versed in studies of "mathematics, physics and astronomy."<sup>41</sup> He wrote De Concordantia Catholica in 1433, in which he tried to create a unified whole of all the diverse aspects of the Church. In this work, Nicholas displays the influence of Platonic humanism in his ecclesiology (that is, theology of Church). Thus, he claimed that "the one Church of all believers in Christ" exhibits "a harmonious accord of the divine Spirit, the priestly soul, and the body of believers."<sup>42</sup> Later in 1440, Nicholas revised some of the ideas of the Concordantia which seemed to downplay the corporate structure and physical unity of the Church under the Pope. Thus, he wrote Docta Ignorantia (1440) which stressed that the unity of the Church was guaranteed in her single head--"the one shepherd of the one Cathedra Petri ... constitutes the one church, just as man is one because all his members are united to one head."<sup>43</sup> Nicholas offered as a justification of the corporate unity of the Church under one head; namely, the Pope, the "complicatio of all powers requisite for the maintenance and guidance of the Church."<sup>44</sup>



Perhaps the most prophetic and far-seeing publication by Nicholas was his ecumenical work On Peace and Unity in the Faith, published in 1453. This book was remarkable for its time and it outlined the principles of unity and peace in the Church which Nicholas claimed were to be found "in faith and in the commandment of love."<sup>45</sup> In this work, Nicholas outlined the differences and similarities of seventeen representatives of the various religions and nations. He advocated diversity of "various customs" since to strive for "exact uniformity in everything would be rather to disturb peace."<sup>46</sup>

The views of Nicholas of Cusa on justification, a topic that was to become a major issue during the Reformation, were set forth in De Pace Fidei (1453). In this work, Nicholas stressed the "inwardness" of justification rather than the traditional, objective emphasis on good works. Thus, Nicholas states in Chapter 17 of De Pace Fidei: "For man's justification consists in this--that he obtains the promise on the sole ground that he believes God and hopes for the fulfillment of God's word."<sup>47</sup> According to Erwin Iserloth, "justification by faith" which later was taken up by the Reformers, could hardly be "more clearly formulated."<sup>48</sup> It seems that Nicholas' subjective analysis of justification was influenced more by his humanism, especially Platonism, rather than by the practices of the Church.



The theological writings of Nicholas of Cusa, therefore, demonstrate the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology. Nicholas' theology, invigorated by the liberal learning of humanism, was able to re-establish the vital "connection with antiquity."<sup>49</sup> Nicholas helped to create a bridge between Scholasticism and Humanism by building on the foundation laid by Scholasticism. In the words of Iserloth, he took the "initial steps towards mathematical and scientific thought in late Scholasticism and carried them forward creatively."<sup>50</sup> The philosophical outlook of Nicholas was undoubtedly influenced by Platonism and he sought to present a "speculative grasp of being in its unity and totality."<sup>51</sup> Nicholas developed a theory of consciousness from this speculative grasp of being whereby the personal mind was capable of "seizing hold of and touching upon everything."<sup>52</sup> Unlike the tendency in late scholastic theology, the theological writings of Nicholas were not encumbered by the endless crust of questions, objections and responses of the Scholastics.

According to Erwin Iserloth, Nicholas of Cusa proved that it could have been possible to avoid the Protestant Reformation which "as yet was not an unconditional historical necessity."<sup>53</sup> Pope Pius II appointed Nicholas to his "reform commission" in 1458 which set out to "determine and report on what needed changing and reforming at the Curia."<sup>54</sup> Nicholas wrote Reformatio Generalis which formed the basis of Pius II's bull, Pastor Aeternus.<sup>55</sup> Due to the

untimely death of the Pope, the Bull was never published. After the pontificate of Pope Pius II, according to Iserloth, began "the series of Renaissance Popes in the bad sense and the papacy long refused to have anything to do with the reform that was so urgently demanded."<sup>56</sup>

The advent of Humanism, therefore, contributed to the disintegration of the traditional synthesis of liberal education and Catholic theology and to the development of a more mature correspondence between each. The old synthesis of liberal learning and Catholic theology was affected externally and structurally by Humanism.

Externally, Humanism offered a new cultural understanding of man. The new man was characterized by the subjective viewpoint which, in theology, stressed the spiritual and vital, religious needs of the individual. The deductive and speculative outlook of Scholasticism was replaced by the intuitive or Platonic outlook of Humanism. This new anthropological orientation manifested itself in a tendency towards "inwardness" in Catholic theology. A distinction also developed between the realm of "truths of faith" and the realm of "truths of reason." According to Yves Marie Congar, these new emphases developed particularly in Germanic and Anglo-Saxon countries and returned at the end of the nineteenth century under "pragmatism" and "modernism" to wrestle with Catholic theology.<sup>57</sup>

Structurally, Humanism influenced the development of Catholic theology through the introduction of exegetical method, especially.<sup>58</sup>

The dialectical method of Scholasticism was inclined to separate the intellectual from the religious by conducting theological discussions on a philosophical level. Humanism, as was noted, reacted against the "dryly intellectual attitude" of Scholasticism by cultivating a critical and historical understanding of the Bible and the writings of the Fathers of the Church. This was, perhaps, the most positive intellectual contribution of Humanism to Catholic theology. From a philosophical standpoint, however, the influence of Humanism on Catholic theology was rather negative. The unfortunate 'juxtaposition' which humanists, like Erasmus, created between the "Scriptures" and "pagan philosophical thought" did not create, it appears, a unified Catholic theology that united faith and reason.<sup>59</sup>

The task of recreating an organic Catholic theology that would integrate the new liberal learning with the legacy of the past required skills other than those of humanists.



### 3. Nominalism

A school of thought known as Nominalism captivated the universities of Europe after the middle of the fourteenth century. Nominalism was highly critical of the "universalism and objectivism" that found expression in the summae of High Scholasticism.<sup>60</sup> The spirit of inquiry ushered in by Nominalism was directed away from "universals" towards a critical investigation of "the concrete thing."<sup>61</sup> In Nominalism, the "individual" was emphasized more, the "perceiving subject" became an object of thought to a greater extent than in Scholasticism, and precedence was given to individual "reasoning" as opposed to the authority of doctrine and tradition.<sup>62</sup>

Nominalism threatened to undermine the traditional harmony that existed between Greek liberal thought and Catholic theology. Nowhere was this more profoundly evident than in the area of epistemology wherein occurred a "shift from metaphysics to logic."<sup>63</sup> This intellectual shift more than any other implied "the dissolution of the middle ages" according to Erwin Iserloth.<sup>64</sup> The epistemological starting point of Nominalism, according to Iserloth, "implied a separation of thought and essence."<sup>65</sup> Hence, the type of intellectual inquiry associated with Nominalism focused on ideas rather than on essences. Thus, the more ideas lost their "ontological significance" the more they could be manipulated endlessly according to the laws of logic, and the more they lost contact with reality. This epistemological outlook wherein ideas were separated from essences had radical implications for Catholic theology.

The separation of human thought and essence created in Catholic theology a "neglect of the way of salvation" as was indeed binding in Revelation, and it led to "a preference for the investigation of all imaginable possibilities."<sup>66</sup> By separating human thought and substance, Nominalism left no place in Catholic theology for the Church's doctrine on "symbols."<sup>67</sup>

This new epistemological orientation in Catholic theology received its impetus and form in the writings of William of Ockham (1285-1347). According to Ockham, statements are the result of "ideas which our mind forms." Thus, "no universality in things, no universal nature corresponds to universal concepts" because ideas or concepts were based on the reality of particular things and not on the reality of universal substances.<sup>68</sup> The particular thing, according to Ockham, produced "an image similar to itself" in the "passive intellect." Ockham rejected the Thomistic doctrine of the active intellect, asserting instead that "it is precisely in the fact of the passivity of the intellect that the objectivity of knowing is assured."<sup>69</sup> Ockham devalued rational knowledge in theology, asserting that the distinctions and affirmations of reason "have no validity beyond our concepts and our words and apply in no way to the Divine Reality."<sup>70</sup> Thus, he rejected the traditional correspondence between liberal learning and Catholic theology which he viewed as exterior to each other.

The consequences of Ockham's Nominalist epistemology for Catholic theology can best be appreciated by examining some of his theological conclusions.



In his teaching on God, Ockham stressed the 'potentia dei absoluta' (the absolute power of God). Since God was entirely free and omnipotent and His will was bound "neither externally nor internally," He can do "whatever does not involve a contradiction."<sup>71</sup> Thus, Ockham logically concluded that God could annul the commandments since "His action is subject to no necessity."<sup>72</sup>

Ockham distinguished between God's absolute power (potentia dei absoluta) and God's consequent power (potentia dei ordinata). Thus, what God could do in the abstract, He would not do "in consequence of the order decreed by Him."<sup>73</sup> In spite of this distinction between absolute and consequent power, however, Ockham developed a theology of the "as if" which deduced incredible possibilities based on the 'potentia dei absoluta.' This new type of logical speculation in theology lost contact with the Scriptures and the order of salvation in the Church's tradition.

Ockham's epistemology also had devastating consequences for the Sacraments. Based on his doctrine and interpretation of the 'potentia dei absoluta,' Ockham called into question the Church's traditional teaching on causality. Since God's absolute power did not need secondary causes to produce an effect, it could not be proved, according to Ockham, that any of the sacraments; that is, secondary causes, could have produced a divine effect. Thus, Ockham maintained that the sacramental signs were "established quite arbitrarily," and that God could have used other signs or interchanged the signs in use.<sup>74</sup>



Ockham's teaching on the Eucharist is found in his work entitled De Sacramento Altaris. In this work, Ockham's discussion on the Eucharist is restricted to his logical analysis of the relationship between substance and accident in the doctrine of transubstantiation. From the doctrine of transubstantiation (which held that the substance of bread and wine is consecrated into the body and blood of Christ) Ockham concluded that substance can be extended without the accident of quantity since God permits the accidents of bread to exist of themselves in the Eucharist. Clearly, Ockham's conclusion did not make scientific sense but in a theology which viewed scientific knowledge and faith as "exterior to each other," his conclusion was logical.

In moral theology also, Ockham's nominalism introduced a "radical separation of essence and duty."<sup>75</sup> For Ockham, there was no distinction in essence between natural and supernatural acts of virtue since he claimed that both acts were "eiusdem rationis" (that is, 'of the same nature'). Thus, in Ockham's moral theology, man could love God above all things by the "purely natural power." Sanctifying grace, therefore, was unnecessary for salvation. In this doctrine, Ockham inclined towards Pelagianism but he claimed to be free of Pelagianism since, in virtue of the 'potentia dei absoluta,' God was independent of everything created and nothing in man, natural or supernatural, could compel God to save or damn him.<sup>76</sup> Ockham also held that traditional acts of virtue were meritorious only on "the

basis of divine acceptance" ("solum (actus) est meritorius per potentiam dei absolutam acceptantem").<sup>77</sup> God, according to Ockham, was not bound in any way "by man's being and conduct." Hence, God could "save a man in sin and condemn a person in the state of grace."<sup>79</sup>

Only a form of logic that could manipulate moral concepts separated from the essence of salvation, could regard as possible the simultaneous existence of the state of sin and grace. For Ockham, grace was not a divine salvific power which is communicated to man, but "God's indulgence whereby he accepts man or not, as he pleases."<sup>79</sup> Thus, Ockham conducted his discussion on grace on a logical level based on the 'potentia dei absoluta' rather than on an understanding of the way of salvation in the Scriptures and Tradition.

The theological speculations of William of Ockham contributed to the disintegration of the scholastic synthesis of liberal education and Catholic theology. Ockham's nominalist-influenced theology was too exclusively logical and it lacked the organic and vital connection with the mysteries of faith that we find in the theology of Aquinas. Instead of putting logic at the service of theology, as Aquinas' theology had done, Nominalism provided the occasion for endless "acrobatics in logic."<sup>80</sup> What was lacking in nominalist-influenced theology was an inner relationship with Revelation and the way of salvation. Catholic theology can only function in and through the faith in order to bring the truths of Revelation to reasoned fullness.

With Nominalism, theology no longer consisted of the doctrine of salvation but concentrated on endless speculations and useless subtleties about individual problems and concepts detached from the essence of salvation. According to W. Dettloff, the Nominalism of William of Ockham had a negative influence on theology. Dettloff has described Ockham's theology as displaying "a marked preference for daring theses but hardly any grasp of the subjects of his speculations, neither of God nor of grace nor of the divine economy of salvation."<sup>81</sup>

The nominalist method in theology became very influential in the Catholic universities of Europe after the middle of the fourteenth century, and continued to exert a strong influence throughout the fifteenth century. Although the Church had directed a papal bull against the excesses of theological disputations in formal logic, the method of Nominalism had established itself at the University of Paris.<sup>82</sup> The new school of nominalist thought was called the 'via moderna' in contradistinction to the 'via antiqua,' which upheld the method of Scholasticism.<sup>83</sup> The debate over the 'via moderna' and the 'via antiqua' which raged in the Catholic universities of Europe after the mid-fourteenth century centred on the conflict between the method of Nominalism and the method of Scholasticism in Catholic theology. This had the effect of undermining the old equilibrium that existed between liberal learning and Catholic



theology. The universities of Vienna and Erfurt, for example, were exclusively nominalist. The statutes of the University of Cologne, founded in 1388, allowed both ways--the 'via antiqua' and the 'via moderna,' to be practised. The universities of Cracow, Leipzig, Ingolstadt, Tübingen, and Wittenberg also gave equality to both ways. It was into this insecure and disturbing intellectual atmosphere that Martin Luther, the father of the Protestant Reformation, was thrust.

#### 4. 'Devotio Moderna'

Another important factor which contributed to the disregard for the scholastic union of liberal learning and speculative theology was the 'Devotio Moderna.' The 'Devotio Moderna' was a term which described the form of piety that began at the end of the fourteenth century and which was "modern" in its "orientation to practical experience, in its activation of the affective powers, and in its instruction for self-control."<sup>84</sup> This form of devotional spirituality took its place alongside the 'via moderna' of Nominalism in so far as it possessed a strongly "empirical trait," and was opposed to the speculative orientation of the scholastics.<sup>85</sup> Among the adherents of this form of devotional spirituality were The Brothers of the Common Life: Gerald Groote, Thomas a Kempis, and John Busch. The 'Devotio Moderna,' which was equally put-off by nominalist theology as it was by scholastic theology, advocated an "estrangement from theology in favor of virtue made good in humdrum day-to-day living."<sup>86</sup>

This pietistic movement produced no great theologians since it held intellectual inquiry in no esteem and avoided theological questions and disputations. The aim of the 'Devotio Moderna' was to nourish oneself by meditation centred on the life of Jesus. Thus, the Epistola attributed to John Vos Van Huseden declares "the life of our Lord Jesus Christ, which he has held up as an example to us, is the source of all virtues and the model of all sanctity."<sup>87</sup>

The literature of the devoti consisted of "letters," "diaries," "rules of life," and "rapiaria" (that is, idealized biographies and sayings of their masters). The sources of the spirituality of the 'Devotio Moderna' included, in addition to the Scriptures, the contemplative works of certain fathers of the Church, especially St. Augustine, and the mystical writings of Saint Bernard, Saint Bonaventure and other mystics.

By far, the classic spiritual manual of the 'Devotio Moderna' is the Imitation of Christ, which has been passed down by Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471).<sup>88</sup> In the preface to this work, Thomas a Kempis designates himself as the scribe. All scholars, however, are in agreement that the author or authors of the Imitation belonged to the spiritual movement known as 'Devotio Moderna.' The Imitation offers no systematic doctrine of piety but consists rather of a collection of pithy sayings or maxims about the spiritual life. The themes running through the Imitation are indicative of the disdain with which liberal learning and any engagement with the world were held.

Book I, for example, promotes contempt for the world. Knowledge is considered "vain" and should be forsaken for humility and peace.

Book II praises suffering and cheerlessness which must be embraced because we "must enter the Kingdom of God through much affliction."<sup>89</sup>

Book III deals with grace, emphasizing man's unworthiness and helplessness.

Book IV offers pious exhortations for holy communion.



The negative view of liberal knowledge and education is unmistakable in the various statements throughout this devotional work. For example, the writer asserts that he "would rather feel compunction than know its definition."<sup>90</sup> Concerning the doctrine of the Trinity, the writer claims: "Of what use is it to discourse loftily on the Trinity if you lack the humility and hence displease the Trinity? Truly, lofty words do not make one holy and righteous, but a virtuous life makes one dear to God."<sup>91</sup>

By its one-sided emphasis on virtue and moral behavior, the Imitation has a strongly ethical orientation. Not only does the Imitation disparage liberal education, it also downplays the spiritual and material aspects of man. Thus, the writer states: "Whoever follows his senses stains his conscience and loses God's grace."<sup>92</sup> The spirit of the Imitation is akin to many of the sentiments and ideas of the Reformation by virtue of its criticism of scholastic speculation in matters of faith, its negative view of human nature and good works, and its devaluation of the material world and externals in Catholic piety. According to Erwin Iserloth, the Imitation of Christ, by downplaying the natural world, disregards "the mystery of creation as well as the Incarnation."<sup>93</sup>

Thus, the disintegration of the medieval synthesis of liberal learning and Catholic theology is evident in the type of pietism advocated by the 'Devotio Moderna.' This devotional spirituality opened up a chasm between the world of nature and the world of grace,

between the resources of reason and the truths of faith. It encouraged a false sense of dualism by failing to offer a synthesis of personal sanctification and the Church's apostolate in the world. The sense of mystical withdrawal and escape from the world, which the Imitation propounded, disregarded the Church's doctrine of the Incarnation which offered the power to inspire and transform the temporal order. Thus, by its 'fideism' the Imitation devalued liberal education and speculative theology; and by its 'pietism' and escape from the world it fostered, according to Erwin Iserloth, "the process of secularization."<sup>94</sup>

## 5. The Reformation

Commenting on the complexity of the Protestant Reformation, John Dolan, writing in History of the Church, claims that a proper understanding of the Reformation cannot be achieved until the atmosphere is cleared of "the accumulated bias and misconceptions that have continued to cloud both Catholic and Protestant interpretations of the event."<sup>95</sup> According to Erwin Iserloth, the cause of the Reformation in the "broad sense" was "the dissolution of the medieval order and of the fundamental attitudes proper to it."<sup>96</sup> The areas most affected by this dissolution, he claimed, were "political, intellectual and religious."<sup>97</sup> The intellectual and religious ramifications of the Reformation are of greatest interest in this study, however, concerning the on-going relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology. Hence, this discussion will focus on the intellectual and religious aspects of the Reformation. An inquiry into these two major causes of the Reformation will reveal more clearly the reasons for the disintegration of scholastic education, and the impact that these intellectual and religious factors have had on the development of Catholic theology.

The Protestant Reformation of the sixteenth century has been described by Yves Marie Congar as "enraged Augustinianism shorn of its Catholic ties."<sup>98</sup> Jaroslav Pelikan concurs with Congar's assessment of the Reformation as a return to Augustinianism which



set up an "antinomy" between liberal education and theology.<sup>99</sup> Thus, Pelikan declares that the debates over "God and the ways of knowing" during the period of the Reformation had manifold "philosophical" and "doctrinal" consequences. There occurred, according to Pelikan, a shift of emphasis from the primacy of the intellect (as had been expounded by Aquinas) to the primacy of the will (as had been claimed by Augustine). This intellectual disparagement led to a related shift of emphasis from a form of theology that "seeks, through reasons based on the true faith, to understand the nature of God" to a theological method that "holds principally to the love of God ... without lofty inquiry."<sup>100</sup> The nominalist-influenced theology of late Scholasticism, which offered logical abstractions of Church doctrine detached from Scripture and the life of the Church, also lent weight to the objections of the Reformers. The doctrine of Transubstantiation, for example, was seen as a "rationalistic explanation" which lost its hold as terms like 'substance' and 'accident' acquired a more technical significance in the language of science. Thus, the Reformers brought to the foreground again the old tension between the method of Augustine which was summed up in the motto: 'Crede ut intelligas'; and the method of Aquinas which has been described as: 'Intellige ut credas.'

The theology of the Reformation, therefore, emphasized the experience of God as found in the Scriptures and downplayed the knowledge of God developed in the doctrinal explanations of the

Scholastics. The reaction of the Reformers to the dryly intellectual theology of late Scholasticism contributed, not only, to the disintegration of the medieval synthesis of liberal education and Catholic theology; it also led, in the final analysis to a disparagement of the total Catholic enterprise of relating faith and reason.<sup>101</sup>

Yves Marie Congar has offered a threefold assessment of Lutheran theology vis-a-vis liberal education: (1) Liberal knowledge has no validity in Lutheran theology; (2) Lutheran theology posits a radical discontinuity between the orders of grace and nature; (3) Lutheran theology offers a theology of pietism based on the Scriptures only.<sup>102</sup> It will be helpful to study these three characteristics of Lutheran theology further in order to appreciate the intellectual and religious ramifications of the Reformation and their impact on the Catholic enterprise of uniting faith and reason.

#### A. Lutheran Theology and Liberal Knowledge

The theology of the Reformation was opposed to any collaboration with the liberal arts and the liberal sciences. This disparagement of liberal education was due, it appears, to Luther's rejection of "any theological norm other than the Scriptures,"<sup>103</sup> and to "the one-sided doctrine of Nominalism."<sup>104</sup>

Martin Luther's (1483-1546) early intellectual formation at the University of Erfurt belonged entirely to the 'via moderna' which was dominated by the philosophy of Nominalism. Luther himself admitted his intellectual kinship with Nominalism when he stated:



"Sum enim Occamicae factionis."<sup>105</sup> After his conversion in 1505, Luther's "Ockamist bent" (which he acquired at the arts faculty at Erfurt) received "an organic continuation" in the monastery of the hermits of Saint Augustine of the Observance at Erfurt.<sup>106</sup> Luther studied theology at the Orders 'studium generale' in Erfurt where he came under the influence of Nominalism communicated through Gabriel Biel's commentaries on the sentences of Peter Lombard.<sup>107</sup>

In 1517, Luther published Disputatio Contra Scholasticam Theologiam in which he officially confronted the "Ockamist school of theology" rather than mature Scholasticism.<sup>108</sup> Luther's theology, however, not only rejected the excesses of Nominalism, it also opposed any form of collaboration with liberal learning. Concepts in the Scriptures were divested of their normal interpretation according to the laws of liberal knowledge. Thus, Luther wrote: "If one wishes to understand wisely the Apostles and the other Scriptures, one must explain tropologically all these concepts: truth, wisdom, virtue, salvation, justice, as that whereby he makes us strong, saved, just, wise and so forth."<sup>109</sup>

Luther maintained that he discovered a "wonderful new definition of justice" in the Scriptures (Romans 1:17: "the just man shall live by faith") which he placed in opposition to the opinions of the "highly esteemed doctors" who followed human traditions of scholarship.<sup>110</sup> According to Jaroslav Pelikan, Luther's "new definition of justice" which found expression in "justification by faith" is the "chief



doctrine of Christianity" separating Protestantism from Catholicism.<sup>111</sup> In his doctrine of Justification, Luther rejected the liberal understanding of justice as formal and active. Thus, he wrote that he had "conceived a hatred of this phrase, 'justice of God,' because, in conformity with the custom of all theologians, I had been taught to understand it philosophically as formal or active justice, whereby God is just and punishes sinners and the unjust."<sup>112</sup>

Through meditation on the Scriptures, Luther redefined justice independently of the concepts and understanding provided by liberal education. Thus, he stated: "I began to understand the justice of God as that by which the just man lives, thanks to the gift of God, that is, by faith."<sup>113</sup> Luther's interpretation of justice, which rejected the formal and intellectual appreciation of the term, also denigrated the practical efforts of the individual to be justified. The justice of God, for Luther, was to be understood in the "passive sense; that God in his mercy justifies us by faith."<sup>114</sup>

Luther, it appears, understood the Church's formal and traditional notion of justice "in the sense of punitive justice" which put responsibility for justification on the meritorious actions of the individual. Augustine, however, was viewed as an exception by Luther: "Sic omnes Doctores hunc locum interpretaetati fuerunt, excepto Augustino."<sup>115</sup> Luther's interpretation of the Church's formal teaching on justification, however, is contested by scholars. Catholic teaching on justification did, in fact, recognise the gratuitous nature of

justification by faith, but it was also interested in preserving the harmony of the intellectual and human element with the divine gift.<sup>116</sup>

Luther's understanding of justification dissolved the interdependence of liberal knowledge and theology. Philip Melancton, however, the most important follower of Luther, introduced the notion of a twofold justice--a "justice of the spirit" (Luther's justification) and a "civil justice."<sup>117</sup> With Melancton there emerged a juxtaposition or co-existence of liberal education and Protestant theology. Thus, liberal education was allowed to co-exist alongside Protestant theology but independent of it.

The lack of collaboration between liberal knowledge and Reformation theology is evident in the Lutheran approach to education. For Luther and many of his disciples, education was basically secular in character, and was only spiritual in so far as it was "in the service of the word."<sup>118</sup> Thus, Erasmus complained about the ill effects of the Reformation on scholarship: "Wherever Lutheran teaching prevails, there is the collapse of scholarship."<sup>119</sup>

Luther, however, was not entirely negative about education. He perceived education as the right of the secular power whose duty it was to set up and maintain the school system. He tried to make a positive case for education and instruction in secular subjects in order to maintain a civilised and cultural society. Thus, he wrote: "If right now there was no soul and no need of schools and languages for the sake of Scripture and God, still this reason alone would be



sufficient for setting up the very best schools for both boys and girls everywhere--that the world, in order to maintain externally its worldly condition, needs cultured and capable men and women."<sup>120</sup> Luther's justification of secular education must also be viewed in the context of his doctrine of the two kingdoms--the spiritual kingdom and the secular kingdom which, like Melancthon's twofold justice, functioned independently and separately.<sup>121</sup>

Thus, liberal knowledge, in principle, played no part in the development of Reformation theology. Theology and liberal knowledge were viewed as exterior to each other. There arose, consequently, the concept of double truth whereby reason could maintain something that was contrary to faith and faith could make claims that were opposed to reason. The old sense of harmony and interdependence between reason and faith, between liberal knowledge and theology was undermined.

#### B. Discontinuity in the Orders of Grace and Nature

In his lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (1515-1516), Luther criticised scholastic theology for its positive view of human nature and for "imagining that the totality of original sin as well as actual sin is taken away" by grace.<sup>122</sup> Luther's interpretation of Romans, therefore, posited "radical sin" which he viewed as part of human nature and could not be removed. Original sin or radical sin was seen by Luther as the "substance of human nature" and was not viewed simply as "an accident that adhered to man but did not change his essential nature."<sup>123</sup> Catholic doctrine, on the other hand,



held that original sin was not the positive "acquisition of evil" but that it was a negative condition inherited through the loss of grace and was removable through the acquisition of habitual or sanctifying grace.

Thus, the Lutheran doctrine, by rejecting the Catholic teaching of the harmony of nature and grace (whereby grace builds on nature), created a radical discontinuity between both. Luther, according to Jaroslav Pelikan, advocated "divine monergism," attributing conversion to the word of God and the action of the Holy Spirit.<sup>124</sup> The human element and the liberal understanding that the 'substance of human nature' resided in man's intellect and free will, was ignored. Luther's rejection of the traditional, intellectual interpretation of justice which resulted from "righteous acting" contributed to this sense of discontinuity. Justice was identified as man's act of faith by which, according to Luther, "he permits God to act and himself keeps still."<sup>125</sup> Salvation or conversion "by grace through faith" was opposed to human collaboration by means of "good works." This, according to Pelikan, was the antithesis of the doctrine of justification of Luther; namely, that all good works, "even those of God's most holy law obscured the grace of Christ and the doctrine of faith."<sup>126</sup> The great problem and, indeed, the internal contradiction in Luther's doctrine, was that he was unable to harmonize the words of Romans 3:28 about justification by faith, with the words of James 2:24 about justification by works and not by faith alone.

Luther's response to this dilemma was to extrapolate the Epistle of St. James from the canon of Scripture.

In his lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to Galatians (1516-1517), Luther found further justification for discontinuity in the orders of grace and nature. For Luther, a person "is just because he believes," not because his actions or works make him just.<sup>127</sup> Here, Luther created a conflict between rational ethics and faith, thus lessening moral responsibility and human co-operation for our actions.

Grace was defined by Luther as "God's favour, or the good will which in himself he bears towards us."<sup>128</sup> He was critical of Scholasticism for positing the movement of grace in man "separated from the Holy Spirit."<sup>129</sup> The Church's teaching, however, did not assert an independent and interior activity of grace in human nature; rather it emphasized "divine intervention" in this inward movement.<sup>130</sup> In his attempt to avoid Pelagianism and to safeguard dependence on the grace of Christ, Luther was unable to offer a theology that preserved grace and nature in erudite fashion. On the other hand, Luther viewed the life of grace positively as a continuing, self-actualising process that would be completed with death. His vision of grace, as a conversion process in the life of the Christian which could be appropriated personally through the merits of Christ, led him, however, to challenge the Church's practice of indulgences.

In his lectures on St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews (1517-1518), which fall into the period of the indulgence controversy, Luther's theme of justification was given a "sharper christological tone."<sup>131</sup>



Luther criticised the Church's doctrine of mediation, questioning the need for the Sacraments.<sup>132</sup> If faith justified, Luther argued, why do we need the sacraments? Luther questioned the traditional distinction in the Church's theology of the sacraments between 'opus operatum'--the objective status and value of the sacraments; and 'opus operantis'--the subjective faith of the individual. Luther retained the concept of 'opus operantis' but rejected 'opus operatum.' Thus, the traditional doctrine of the Church whereby grace was mediated through the sacraments was called into question. The Sacrament of Confession, for example, was attacked by Luther because he believed it fostered a pelagian attitude that cut across the absolute forgiveness of God. Human satisfaction was unnecessary in Luther's doctrine of justification because God's justice was absolute. As Luther's ideas grew, he questioned all aspects of the Church's doctrine of mediation. In 1530 he wrote Disavowal of Purgatory in which he viewed purgatory as a trivialization of divine justice.

The issue of man's free will offers, perhaps, the most forceful example in Lutheran theology of discontinuity in the orders of grace and nature. The Humanism of the sixteenth century ran counter to the Reformation because of its "ethical optimism" which conflicted with the basic Protestant principle of justification by faith alone. In 1525, Luther wrote De Servo Arbitrio in response to Erasmus' De Libero Arbitrio. Erasmus held to the Church's teaching of prevenient or



concurring grace which respected man's freedom and preserved God's independence. Luther's view of man's will came solely from his interpretation of Scripture. According to Jaroslav Pelikan, Luther denied free will in De Servo Arbitrio. Thus, Luther wrote: "We do everything by necessity and nothing by our own free will, since the power of the free will is nothing and neither does the good nor is capable of it in the absence of grace."<sup>133</sup> Luther, however, created two spheres of human activity--"intelligamus hominem in duo regna distribui," and he conceded freedom of choice in "natural matters, such as eating, drinking, procreating, governing."<sup>134</sup> Yet, he was emphatic about the dependence of the human will on grace and the inability of man to do anything to save himself which, he claimed, "depends entirely on the free judgment, the resolve, will and work of another--namely, God."<sup>135</sup> Free will, therefore, was "powerless" for Luther, and it could not "will the good." In Disputatio Contra Scholasticam Theologiam, Luther also rejected the notion of free will, stating that it was "nevertheless innately and inevitably evil and corrupt" and was, therefore, "not free to strive toward whatever is declared good."<sup>136</sup> Thus, Luther's theology offered no place for man's free action in the work of Salvation.

The severance between grace and nature in Luther's theology had the effect of banishing the supernatural from the material world. According to Henri de Lubac, the world of nature lost that vital support of grace. It "shut itself up" in a "corresponding isolation" and, separated from the life of grace, it created the added secular problem that it "claimed to be complete."<sup>137</sup>

### C. Luther's Theology of Pietism

The heart and centre of Luther's theology was the gospel. "The true treasure of the Church," wrote Luther, "is the holy gospel of the glory and grace of God."<sup>138</sup> The gospel, however, was not learned from scholastic theologians, according to Luther. The one gospel of Jesus Christ was the source of righteousness effecting justification by faith alone in the merits of Christ. Thus, the gospel was preached by Luther as the one source of Salvation. It was opposed to all forms of mediation--such as "good works," "philosophy," and "the human traditions of learning." Catholic theology, on the other hand, emphasized the need to integrate the gospel with the best available cultural understanding of man in order to meet the needs of Christianity itself. Thus, De Lubac explains the traditional approach of uniting faith and reason: "For in whatever degree a philosophical basis was necessary to the Fathers, were it Platonist or Stoic, their speculation was conditioned less by considerations of philosophy than by a keen realization of the needs of Christianity."<sup>139</sup>

Luther's break with the Catholic Church was based on the charge that it represented a fundamental confusion between the gospel and human traditions. Thus, in his treatise entitled Babylonian Captivity (1520) Luther attacked the pagan infiltrations into Catholicism, criticising the four marks of the Church and questioning the Church's sacramental theology. Cardinal Newman justified these "infiltrations" when he answered the objection that "these things are



in heathenism, therefore they are not Christian," by declaring, "these things are in Christianity, therefore they are not heathen."<sup>140</sup> A fundamental difference between Catholic and Protestant theology is the willingness of Catholic theology to absorb into its teaching all that is good and true in the order of nature. This is perceived as the divine plan of salvation in virtue of the doctrines of Creation and the Incarnation. Hence, in principle, there is nothing good and true which Catholicism cannot claim for its own. Lutheran theology, on the other hand, was opposed to a rational investigation of the truths of faith and to any collaboration, in theology, with liberal education. In his writings, Luther ridiculed scholastic theologians for their rational inquiry into the mysteries of the faith. Thus, writing with reference to the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union (the union of two natures in Christ), Luther stated: "What difference does that make to me? That he is a man and God by nature, ... but that he has exercised his office and poured out his love, becoming my Saviour and Redeemer--that happens for my consolation and benefit."<sup>141</sup> Luther did not reject the formal correctness of the doctrine of the Hypostatic Union, he merely considered it of no value in his theology of pietism.

Luther's theology emphasized the pious dispositions of the individual in which "to know Christ is to know his benefits." He proposed, therefore, a "theology of the cross" which "comprehends the visible and manifest things of God seen through suffering and the cross" as against a "theology of glory" which "looks upon the



invisible things of God as though they were clearly perceptible in those things that have actually happened."<sup>142</sup> Luther's criticism of late scholastic theology for treating "the truths of the Christian faith as objects of intellectual curiosity without reference to the cross and benefits of Christ" was, indeed, well founded.<sup>143</sup> As Jaroslav Pelikan observed, Luther did not destroy "the old dogmatic Christianity" so much as raise a new issue which the medieval "doctrine of redemption" failed to address; namely, how to appropriate the benefits of redemption, personally.<sup>144</sup> Yet, Luther's dogmatic vagueness is clearly a consequence of his rejection of the "direct ways of knowing by reason or experience."<sup>145</sup> He promoted a pious understanding of the faith, divested of any rational content. Thus, he wrote: "It is the nature of faith that it presumes on the grace of God. Faith does not require information, knowledge, or certainty, but a free surrender and a joyful bet on his unfelt, untried, and unknown goodness."<sup>146</sup> Luther also questioned Aquinas' five rational approaches to the existence of God, and he saw no correspondence between the God of reason and God, the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Speculative questions about God posed by philosophy led at best, according to Luther, to a knowledge that was "merely objective" and could not know whether or not "God cares." Rational assent in the area of theology was, Luther believed, "dangerous" and caused "despair" since it could only discover God's "magnitude," "power," "wisdom," and "justice."<sup>147</sup> Thus, in Luther's theology of pietism, "God strictly forbade the speculative investigation of

his divinity which would remain hidden except in Christ, the word of God," through whom "the unrevealed God" became "the revealed God" while yet "remaining hidden."<sup>148</sup> Thus, the basis of this doctrinal teaching, according to Hans Urs Von Balthasar, is "the divorce between the natural world and community, on the one hand, and the invisible personal interiority and decision of faith on the other."<sup>149</sup> Luther's theology of pietism was unable to maintain a dialectic with the natural world and with liberal learning. The irony about Luther's theology of pietism is that he, nonetheless, accepted certain key teachings which are not explicitly stated in the Scriptures but were developed as doctrines by the Church. Examples of such key teachings are the doctrines of the Trinity, the Hypostatic Union, and Original Sin.

Thus, the Protestant Reformation contributed to the disintegration of the scholastic synthesis of liberal education and Catholic theology. The effects of the Reformation on developments in Catholic theology were profound. Catholic theology was obliged to re-investigate its theological method, to re-examine the sources of Revelation, to take into account the discoveries of philology and biblical studies, and to reformulate its teaching on major issues like justification and grace.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### TOWARD A POSITIVE CATHOLIC THEOLOGY

Catholic theology, after the Reformation, had to deal with two major issues. It was called upon to address: (1) the new liberal learning of Humanism; and (2) the teaching of the Reformers about Revelation and its sources.

Humanism introduced a new awareness of the resources of historical reason into liberal studies. This was to have a profound impact on future developments in Catholic theology. The old approach to Catholic theology as a "speculative activity" which used the resources of philosophical reasoning only was criticised for being too abstract and too "exclusively rational." Late Scholastic theology, therefore, was not only on the defensive; it suffered, according to W. Koehler, from "intellectual poverty" in the battle for the "world of ideas."<sup>1</sup>

Thus, the prevailing Scholastic theology was ill-prepared to deal with the new intellectual and theological issues of the day. Scholastic theology, under the influence of Nominalism, was unhistorical, unscriptural, and bogged down in problems of form. It suffered from "extensive theological vagueness" due to the weakness of current liberal studies in the area of theology, and it provided a poor basis for the defence and explanation of Catholic doctrines.<sup>2</sup>

Reformation theology, on the other hand, drew its strength from its predominately scriptural base, an essential source which had been overlooked in Catholic theological practice. Luther's theological method of proclamation whereby he advanced his "personal experience of salvation" based on the Scriptures appealed to the spirit of the age and was more successful than the prevailing Scholastic methodology. The theological method of late Scholasticism which attempted to offer a "systematic analysis of Revelation by philosophical means" suffered from two main limitations; it lacked a sense of history, and it did not possess a proper understanding of the Scriptures.

Thus, the Protestant reformers challenged the traditional methodology and doctrines of Scholasticism asserting, for example, that the Mass, as sacrifice, developed from the ancient Christian practice of offering gifts; that private Masses were unknown before Gregory the Great, and that Transubstantiation was an unheard-of concept in the Church for twelve centuries.<sup>3</sup> Catholic theologians adopted a defensive posture to explain the Church's traditions and practices and offered proofs and arguments for their positions. The more peripheral question of indulgences, which commanded attention during the early period of the Reformation, was superseded by fundamental questions concerning the "doctrine of the church," "the papal primacy," the issues of "authority," "justification" and the "mass."<sup>4</sup> Rather than develop cogent arguments that would meet the Reformers on

their own ground, Catholic theologians paid more attention to the defence of the Church's traditional practices. This task was well nigh impossible since the Church's doctrine was usually defended from the standpoint of tradition only. Instead of answering the main problems from their source, Catholic theologians tended to concentrate on superficial details which proved useless since the opposition had long since taken up new positions.

Johannes Eck (1486-1543), for example, was one of the early controversial theologians who set out to refute the objections of Protestant theologians rather than answer the main problems of the Reformers from their source. His writings are characterised by a defensive approach to theological issues. Thus, he wrote De Primatu Petri Adversus Ludderum in 1520; De Poenitentia et Confessione in 1522; De Purgatorio in 1523; De Satisfactione et Aliis Poenitentiae Annexis in 1523; and Enchiridion Locorum Communium Adversus Ludderamos in 1525.<sup>5</sup> This last work was written in answer to Melancthon's Loci Communes, 1521, which questioned the Catholic interpretation of the sources of Revelation. All of Eck's theological writings were defensive writings written in answer to the objections of the Reformers. Although Eck's use of Scripture was frequent in his writings, he nevertheless failed, according to Erwin Iserloth, to make Scripture sufficiently useful in the "theological sense."<sup>6</sup>

Hieronimus Emser (1478-1527) was another theologian who concentrated his efforts on revealing the superficial errors of Martin



Luther. Emser published a translation of the New Testament to counteract Luther's translation. He attributed as many as 1400 heretical errors to Luther's translation of the New Testament. Emser, however, was not sufficiently theological to be able to offer a positive and effective exposition of the Church's doctrine.<sup>7</sup> Johannes Dietenberger (1475-1537), however, was more successful than Emser with his publication of the Catholic German bible which appeared in 1534.<sup>8</sup> Dietenberger's bible became the most popular Catholic translation of the bible into German.

Johannes Cochlaus (1479-1552) was another controversial theologian whom the Church called upon to defend its cause. The majority of Cochlaus' writings, however, were burdened with such "an excess of scholarship" that they were ineffective among the people.<sup>9</sup> Cochlaus' most famous work is the Commentaria de Actis et Scriptis Martini Lutheri, 1549. This was the first extensive biography of Martin Luther by a Catholic author. It did little credit to the Catholic cause since it contains such an amount of malicious polemics as to be harmfully partial.

Johann Fabri (1478-1541) published his main work, entitled Opus in 1521. This work was written according to the method of late Scholasticism and was directed against the new doctrines of Martin Luther. In 1526, Fabri published another polemical work, entitled Summarium which defended the Church's teaching and pointed out the "pernicious results" of Lutheran doctrine.<sup>10</sup>

The controversial approach of these Catholic theologians had the effect of drawing attention away from the central issues to

dwell on superficial details. This approach was ridiculed by Martin Luther in 'De Captivitate Babylonica' when he declared: "I am always ahead of them, and hence, while they, like illustrious victors, are celebrating over one of my alleged heresies, I meanwhile usher in a new one."<sup>11</sup> For the most part, the writings of late Scholastic theologians were "mere counter writings."<sup>12</sup> They were limited, largely because of the methodology employed, both in intellectual content and in their knowledge of Scripture. The approach to new questions was dictated more by the objections and criticisms of the adversary rather than by a positive re-appraisal of the intellectual and theological issues involved.

There were, however, exceptions to the trend in late Scholastic counter writings. Johannes Driedo (1480-1535) was one of the few Catholic theologians after the Reformation and before the Council of Trent who openly faced the new intellectual and theological questions and sought "new solutions without rancour and in loyalty to tradition."<sup>13</sup> Driedo published De Ecclesiasticis Scripturis et Dogmatibus Libri IV in 1533. In this work he discussed openly the methods and sources of Catholic theology. In 1534, Driedo published De Captivitate et Redemptione Humani Generis. This work was influential in a positive way on Catholic discussions over the grace controversy.

Albert Pigge (1490-1542) was another Catholic theologian who had a positive effect on developments in Catholic theology, especially the Church's understanding of Tradition. Pigge published Hierarchiae Ecclesiasticae Assertio in 1538.<sup>14</sup> This work influenced the Church's



understanding of tradition. Pige's views on tradition were adopted at the Council of Trent. His theological views on justification, however, were unacceptable to the Church and were put on the Index in 1624.

Cardinal (Cajetan) Thomas de Vio (1469-1534) was the most important Catholic theologian during this period. In his writings, Cajetan strove for an "objective solution to the difficulties."<sup>15</sup> He published De Indulgentiis in 1517; and De Indulgentia Plenaria Concessa Defunctis in 1519. In 1521, Cajetan published De Divina Institutione Pontificatus Romani which was written without the usual violent polemical tone to explain the papal primacy. The most important work of Cajetan was his Opuscula on the Eucharist, 1525-31, which offered a theological answer to Luther's objections to the Mass. In 1532, Cajetan published De Fide et Operibus which dealt with the central issue of the Reformation in a theological and non-polemical manner.

Jakob von Hoogstraeten (1460-1527) is significant for meeting Luther's objections to Catholic doctrine on his own ground. He published Cum Divino Augustino Colloquia Contra Enormes et Perversos Lutheri Errores, 1521-1522.<sup>16</sup> This work made an important contribution for it traced the ideas of Luther to their source, and answered them by appealing to the writings of St. Augustine himself.

Kaspar Schatzgeyer (1463-1527) was another exception to the list of controversial theologians prior to Trent. He wrote Scrutinium



Divinae Scripturae which approached the theological issues of the Reformation on the plane of method. Schatzgeyer pointed out what was legitimate in Protestant teaching, but he placed these issues within the "whole context of truth."<sup>17</sup>

On the whole, however, a biased polemical attitude characterized most of Catholic theological writings after the Reformation and prior to the Council of Trent. This theology, which has been described as "controversial," suffered from two main limitations: (1) the theological method was too abstract and it lacked a sense of history; (2) the theological content overlooked the importance of the Scriptures. It would take time for a development to take place away from controversial theology towards a positive and intellectually consistent presentation of the faith. This development could only occur after the Magisterium (the Church's teaching authority) had addressed the issues of the Reformation at the Council of Trent.

### 1. The Council of Trent (1545-1563)

The Council of Trent, according to Jaroslav Pelikan, addressed the "formal" and "material" principles of the Reformation.<sup>18</sup> The formal principle of the Reformation focussed on the sources of Revelation. The material principles of the Reformation concerned the various Protestant doctrines, such as Justification, Original Sin, Grace and Free Will, and the Certitude of Salvation.

In the Bull of Convocation, issued by Pope Paul III on May 22, 1542, three subjects were prescribed for the council agenda:

1. "whatever pertains to the purity and truth of the Christian religion."

2. "whatever pertains to the restoration of good morals and the correction of evil morals."

3. "whatever pertains to the peace, unity and harmony of Christians among themselves."<sup>19</sup>

These three subjects reflected the concern of the council to deal with the theological issues of the Reformation both in their formal and material aspects.

On April 8, 1546, during the fourth session, the Council of Trent published the important decree on the sources of Revelation which addressed the formal principle of the Reformation.<sup>20</sup> In this decree, Trent established that the sources of Christian Revelation were to be found in "written books and unwritten tradition"

as opposed to the Lutheran doctrine of "sola scriptura." Trent further clarified the Catholic teaching on the sources of Revelation declaring that the Church's doctrine was drawn "from Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic traditions, the holy and approved councils, the constitutions and authorities of the supreme pontiffs and holy fathers, and the consensus of the Catholic Church."<sup>21</sup> The council also accepted unanimously the canon of the Bible approved by the Council of Florence on February 4, 1441. Thus, the Council of Trent defined and clarified for Catholic theologians and laity the nature and locus of Christian Revelation. The remaining sessions of the Council addressed the material principles or doctrines of the Reformation. Thus, the fifth session of the Council was devoted to the doctrine of Original Sin.

#### A. Original Sin

The decree on original sin was published after the fifth session of the Council of Trent on June 17, 1546. The Bible did not mention this doctrine explicitly. The fathers of the Church, especially St. Augustine, wrote about it and various councils of the Church issued decrees dealing with it. The doctrine of original sin, therefore, was taught by the Church as a part of its Apostolic tradition. Even the Reformers had to claim an "apostolic tradition" in support of the doctrine of original sin.<sup>22</sup>

Trent clearly specified that baptism removed original sin totally. "Totum id, quod veram et propriam peccati rationem habet."<sup>23</sup>



Concupiscence was regarded as an effect of original sin which could lure one into evil, but it was not sinful in itself. Concupiscence was, therefore, a spark--"fomes" that issued from original sin but was itself not sin. The Catholic doctrine of original sin preserved the innate goodness of human nature which was not subject to "total depravity" and whose "natural drives" were not sinful. This doctrine overcame the sense of dualism and the awful antagonism between nature and grace in Lutheran teaching. The Catholic doctrine promoted harmony between nature and grace, thus offering a doctrine of integral humanism whereby grace built on nature. According to Paul Tillich, the Catholic doctrine of original sin could admit "more expressions of the vital forces in man than Protestantism."<sup>24</sup> The Protestant doctrine, according to Tillich, put a "greater burden" on the person requiring a fundamental "transformation of being" in order to be regenerated.<sup>25</sup> The Catholic doctrine, on the other hand, affirmed human nature, the freedom of the individual and the "vital elements of life."<sup>26</sup>

The Council of Trent issued five important directives concerning original sin.<sup>27</sup>

1. Original sin consists in the loss of the original "holiness and righteousness" of Adam.
2. Original sin is transmitted by "propagation," not "imitation" and is "universal."

3. The remedy for original sin is "the merit of the one mediator"--Jesus Christ.

4. The practice of infant baptism which imparted sanctifying grace and removed the inherited sin of Adam was defended.

5. Baptism removed the guilt of original sin; concupiscence was a "spark," but it was not sinful in itself.

These directives, along with their unfortunate harsh anathemas, were issued at the fifth session of the Council of Trent, thus clarifying one of the Church's most fundamental doctrines of faith.

#### B. Justification

The Church's doctrine of justification was promulgated on January 13, 1547 after the sixth session of the Council of Trent. During the discussions on justification the views of the three great Catholic theological schools - Dominican, Franciscan and Augustinian, and the Lutheran view were debated. The Council approached the subject of justification comprehensively, by defining "the responsibility of grace for justification in all its stages; its nature as sanctification and renewal of the inner man; the necessity of a preparation, and the importance of faith in the process of justification; the increase of justification, its restoration, and the possibility of merit; the eternal life as grace and reward."<sup>28</sup> Trent discussed the causes of justification according to the liberal classification of "the four traditional Aristotelian causes."<sup>29</sup> This liberal approach was questioned by Seripando, the Superior General of the Augustinian

order, who reminded his colleagues that neither "the Scriptures" nor "the ancient fathers of the Catholic Church" had so much as mentioned "this system of causes" and that it was "philosophy that creates these difficulties for us when we seek to talk about divine mysteries on the basis of its rules."<sup>30</sup> Notwithstanding these objections or reservations by Seripando, the council fathers upheld the traditional Catholic theological approach of accepting philosophy as the 'ancilla theologiae.' In this they were intellectually consistent. Thus, the definition of the causes of justification according to concepts drawn from Aristotelian philosophy received official approval at the Council of Trent.

The council went beyond the Lutheran view of justification by faith alone, which emphasized only the effects of justification, and discussed several meanings of faith and different types of grace. Thus, Trent distinguished three meanings of faith: (1) historical faith; (2) miraculous faith; and (3) Christian evangelical faith. Christian evangelical faith, according to Trent, was "not only trust as the Lutherans say," but "comprehended all other virtues" and was "inseparable from them."<sup>31</sup> Hence, the council rejected the Lutheran doctrine of justification by "faith alone." The Council did attribute justification to faith in the sense that faith "disposed" one toward justification. Thus, the council stated: "Faith is the beginning of human salvation, the foundation and the root of all justification," but it held that "justifying faith was faith active in love and works."<sup>32</sup> In defining the faith, however, the council emphasized



the cognitive dimensions as 'an assent of the mind to revealed doctrines.' The cognitive approach to faith by Trent shows the influence on Catholic theology of categories of understanding drawn from Greek liberal education. Paul Tillich criticised Trent's emphasis on faith as "intellectual acknowledgement" since it appeared to downplay the role of personal experience, the Scriptures and trust in God.<sup>33</sup> It was not until Vatican Council II that the understanding of the mystery of faith was explored in greater depth and with greater vision. This was not possible at the Council of Trent.

The Council of Trent also distinguished, in addition to the different kinds of faith, two types of grace that justified:

(1) prevenient grace; namely, the preparation for the grace of justification in which a person co-operates with God; and (2) justifying grace; namely, the grace that is given according to the degree of human co-operation. The Catholic doctrine of justification, therefore, emphasized the collaboration of the human faculties with grace. The individual must act and prepare for grace (*gratia praeveniens*), and the individual must co-operate with God (*gratia data*).

### C. Grace and Free Will

Concerning the relationship between grace and free will the Council of Trent adopted a middle view respecting both human freedom and the gratuitousness of the gift of grace. Thus, Trent declared that "man himself neither does absolutely nothing while receiving the inspiration [of the Holy Spirit], since he can also reject it; nor

yet is he able by his own free will and without the grace of God to move himself to righteousness in [God's] sight."<sup>34</sup> The council did not define the precise relationship between divine grace and man's free will. The mystery of this relationship was to become the subject of one of the greatest dogmatic controversies ever to have broken out within Catholic theology.

In 1588, Louis de Molina published Liberi Arbitrii cum Gratiae Donis, Divina Praescientia, Providentia, Praedestinatione et Reprobatione Concordia.<sup>35</sup> This work undertook "to explain the compatibility of the universal efficacy of grace with the free will of man by virtue of God's foreknowledge, and which was expressly directed against the Thomistic teaching in the commentary on Saint Thomas published just previously (1584) by the Dominican, Banez."<sup>36</sup> Fr. Banez maintained the view that physical predestination-- praemotio physica was necessary on the part of God in order that the human will respond to grace. This view, however, seemed to downplay human freedom. The dispute led to the rivalry of two great orders-- Jesuits and Dominicans. The debate raged on through the Pontificates of two Popes--Clement VIII and Paul V, but nothing was decided. In the final analysis, it was not possible to fully unravel, by means of human reason, the mystery of how the efficacy of grace on the free will is to be understood. The collaboration between liberal education and Catholic theology in understanding the mysteries of the faith could only go so far. This controversy over the relationship between grace and free will in the sixteenth century (commonly



known as the Molinist-Bolinist controversy) is an important dimension of the much wider issue of the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology.

#### D. Certitude of Salvation

The Council of Trent rejected the Protestant view that it was possible to have certitude regarding one's salvation. Catholic theology operated on the premise that reason and faith were complementary. It did not hold, however, that reason could verify divine truths. The function of reason was to provide understanding of the divine mysteries. Thus, the council condemned "the error by which it is asserted that the justified not only conjecture, but know for certain, that they are predestined and are in God's grace."<sup>37</sup>

The council distinguished three types of certitude: (1) "certainty of knowledge"; (2) "certainty of faith"; (3) "moral certainty."<sup>38</sup> Certainty of knowledge, the council claimed, is only possible according to the human mode of knowing. Human knowledge enters into theology in order to provide greater understanding but it does not provide certitude in matters of faith. Thus, the council declared that certainty of knowledge was impossible in the realm of faith. Moral certainty, on the other hand, in matters of the faith was deemed possible, according to the council, on "the basis of signs." Thus, the salutary effects of prayer, the Scriptures and the Sacraments on the life of the individual could bestow moral certainty of Salvation.

It was with certainty of faith, however, that the council primarily addressed its attention. In the debates over the certainty



of Salvation, the council recognised the autonomy of reason and of faith in their respective orders. Although reason and faith were complementary, it was important to preserve their different functions. Reason was concerned with the knowledge of natural phenomena; faith dealt with the truths of Revelation. The task of Catholic theology was the human elaboration of the mysteries of the faith. While proceeding "in and through the faith," Catholic theology progressed by using the light of natural reason to penetrate the truths of Revelation. The natural light of reason could increase our understanding of the datum of Revelation and provide explanations for doctrine that were intellectually consistent. It could not provide, however, rational certitude in matters of faith. Thus, the council declared that: "no one can know with the certitude of faith, which cannot be subject to error, that he has obtained the grace of God."<sup>39</sup>

In dealing with the major theological issues raised by the Reformation, the Council of Trent, therefore, asserted the autonomy of reason and of faith in their respective domains. During the important discussions concerning the Sources of Revelation, Original Sin, Justification, Grace, and Salvation, the council defended the Church's tradition of maintaining an erudite connection between liberal education and Catholic theology.

## 2. The Development of Positive Theology

The Council of Trent is an important landmark in the history of Catholic theology. Trent set out to provide a Catholic answer to the intellectual and theological issues that were ushered in by the humanist movement and the Reformation. One of the most important consequences of the council's reaction to Humanism and the Reformation was the development of a new form in Catholic theology known as positive theology. It will be important to review briefly our understanding of Catholic theology vis-a-vis human knowledge in order to appreciate the development of positive theology and the new role that liberal education played in that development.

Catholic theology is situated in the general economy of our knowledge of God. Knowledge of God, however, is divisible into three types: divine, natural and theandric knowledge.

Divine knowledge is the knowledge we have of God imperfectly through Revelation. This mode of knowledge is possible through the light of faith and has for its "connatural object" the datum of Revelation. Divine knowledge, therefore, is always imperfect for creatures because it deals with objects (that is, divine mysteries) which are only "connatural to God himself."<sup>40</sup>

Natural knowledge is the knowledge we have of physical objects or the things of nature through sense experience and the light of reason. Hence, natural theology is the term given to that indirect knowledge of God we have starting from our knowledge of created things.

Theandric knowledge is the knowledge we have of God by way of religious experience. It is, as Yves Marie Congar observed, "a knowledge, which starting from faith and completely exploiting this gift, tends by an effort in which man gives God's grace an active response, to perceive better the divine object already made present by grace and the propositions of faith."<sup>41</sup> Theandric knowledge always held an important place in Catholic theology. It belongs to the area of supernatural contemplation or mystical theology whereby the mystery of God works on the soul interiorly, conforming it to its nature. St. Augustine advocated the method of supernatural contemplation in Catholic theology based on an affective union with God. Martin Luther was later to invoke the authority of Augustine in support of his own theological method which rejected the role of natural theology and the resources of liberal education in the general economy of our knowledge of God. Luther's theological method, therefore, was opposed to the concept of Catholic theology that was based on the rational activity of knowledge. The theology of proclamation of Luther, based on the principle of sola scriptura and personal inspiration, advocated theandric knowledge and rejected any collaboration with liberal education. This method was radically different to Catholic theological method which, while proceeding in and through the faith and having for its object the datum of Revelation, was a "properly rational" activity which profited from the laws and methods of liberal education.<sup>42</sup>



After the Reformation, Catholic theology continued to maintain its rational character but it found it necessary also to turn inward to an investigation of the sources of Revelation and its own datum in order to answer the objections of the reformers. Thus, the Reformation contributed to the creation of a new thrust in Catholic theology whereby it took possession of its own datum more positively.

The humanist movement of the fifteenth century gave rise to new intellectual orientations in liberal education. These intellectual discoveries also influenced the development of positive theology. Under the influence of Humanism an intellectual shift occurred within Catholic theology whereby it was viewed as more than a speculative "body of reasoning." The new resources of historical reasoning such as philology, biblical criticism, editing, and patristic scholarship changed the direction of Catholic theology just as Humanism changed the direction of liberal education. According to Christopher Dawson, the humanist revival of classical literature and scholarship which had been lost in the West for a thousand years "enlarged the scope of liberal education" but "did not change its nature."<sup>43</sup> Thus, Dawson asserts that Humanism brought back into liberal education "the aesthetic and moral elements which had been lost in the scientific disputations of the schoolmen," creating the realization that "education was an art which should aim at the harmonious development of every side of human nature, physical, moral and intellectual," and offering "an awareness of the unlimited possibilities of the

enrichment of personal life by art and literature and social intercourse."<sup>44</sup> The great humanist educators like Nicholas of Cusa, Erasmus, John Picco della Mirandola, Marsilio Ficino, Leonardo Bruni, and Vittorino da Feltre were men who wished to integrate the Greek intellectual and aesthetic culture with the spiritual ideas of Christianity. We have discussed the early attempts of humanists like Nicholas of Cusa and Erasmus to unite Humanism with Christianity. It was only after the Council of Trent, however, that the new theological form known as positive theology came into being to address the new liberal education of Humanism.

Positive theology has been defined by Yves Marie Congar as "that activity by which theology establishes the agreement of ecclesiastical teaching with the sources of which Revelation is presented and transmitted to us."<sup>45</sup> Together with speculative theology, positive theology constitutes, according to Congar, "the total development of faith in reason."<sup>46</sup> The subject matter of positive theology is the written and unwritten tradition of the Church; that is, "the doctrine transmitted by the Church from the time of Christ and the Apostles to our day."<sup>47</sup> Hubert Jedin also concurs with Congar's assessment of the origin of positive theology. Thus, Jedin asserts that positive theology was a "return to the positive data of Revelation contained in Scripture and Tradition."<sup>48</sup> Positive theology, however, did not constitute a break with the Scholastic tradition as such. Rather, positive theology constituted an intellectual and practical



development of the Church's theological tradition that led to the establishment of an "autonomous domain" of historical reason in Catholic theology.<sup>49</sup>

This revival of Catholic theology after the Council of Trent was associated with the formation of new centres of theological activity in "the development of European universities."<sup>50</sup> Spain was particularly influential in the development of positive theology, and the theological schools of Salamanca, Alcala, Valladolid, and Zaragoza became famous. Rome became the stronghold of the new theological activity, drawing most of its scholars from Spain.

The influence of the liberal learning of Humanism on positive theology is evident in the new theological method. Positive theology applied the resources of historical reason to the study of its immediate datum (that is, ecclesiastical teaching), just as speculative theology applied the resources of philosophical reason to the study of its datum (that is, God). Thus, Congar asserts that method in positive theology demands "the service of a loyal historical reason and of different historical techniques."<sup>51</sup> The progress of theology, according to Congar, follows "the laws of all progress made by specialization."<sup>52</sup> Positive theology, therefore, developed in order to keep abreast of the new liberal learning of Humanism which it made auxiliary to its work. Thus, positive theology complemented speculative theology by integrating the new liberal learning of Humanism into its method.



Melchior Cano of the school of Salamanca is, perhaps, the best known theologian of the sixteenth century to integrate the modern exigencies of Humanism into Catholic theology. Cano wrote De Locis Theologicis in 1563 which changed the direction of method in Catholic theology. He abandoned the traditional 'quaestio' of the Scholastics and replaced it with "a process of pedagogy and discussion."<sup>53</sup> In defining and classifying his concept of sources, Cano also borrowed from the liberal categories of the humanist, Rudolf Agricola, rather than from the philosophy of Aristotle.<sup>54</sup> Thus, Cano distinguished ten sources from which theological arguments are drawn: Holy Scripture, Apostolic tradition, the Magisterium, the Councils, the ordinary magisterium, and Fathers of the Church, Scholastics and Canonists, natural reason, the philosophers, and history. The efforts of Melchior Cano in the area of positive theology have earned him the title of "father of theological methodology."<sup>55</sup> Melchior Cano was the first to develop a new form in Catholic theology by taking hold of the datum of Revelation in a positive and practical manner and by applying scientifically the new liberal learning and scholarly techniques of Humanism to theology.

According to Christopher Dawson, the Jesuits were the prime movers behind the new Catholic theological revival after Trent. The Jesuits, Dawson claims, adapted "the new classical education of the Humanists of the Renaissance to the religious ideals of the Counter-Reformation."<sup>56</sup> The role the Jesuits played in the sixteenth and

seventeenth centuries was similar to that of the Dominicans and Franciscans in the thirteenth century. The Jesuit 'Ratio Studiorum' found its place among the great works of "the humanist treatises on education."<sup>57</sup> The originality of the 'Ratio Studiorum' lay, not in its subject matter, but in its new method; that is, its humanist "technique and organization."<sup>58</sup> Thus, the Jesuit 'Ratio Studiorum,' according to Dawson, did more "than anything else to establish a common international standard of higher education, so that even in Protestant Europe the Jesuit schools met with the approval of such a revolutionary critic of education as Francis Bacon."<sup>59</sup>

The on-going influence of positive historical method in Catholic theology is clearly evident in the development of patrology, Church history, the history of doctrine, and the study of Christian antiquity. Many editions of the works of the Latin and Greek Fathers of the Church began to appear in the sixteenth century. Among the most celebrated works of patristic scholarship were those of Erasmus (already cited) and the Bibliotheca Sanctorum Patrum, published by Marguerin de la Bigne (d. 1589). Caesar Baronius (1578-1607) helped to develop the study of Church history as a new theological discipline. He published an important work entitled, Annales Ecclesiastici in twelve volumes. Baronius' work stopped at 1198, and was continued by Raynald and Laderch after his death. The Annales still remains a standard work in Church history today.



The Council of Trent renewed interest in the Magisterium of the Church and in the history of Church doctrine. This led to the publication by Merlin and Crabbe of important editions of ancient councils of the Church.<sup>60</sup> Sforza Pallavicino (d. 1667) published a standard history of the Council of Trent which lasted well into the nineteenth century.<sup>61</sup>

Interest in Christian antiquity was further reawakened by the new science of Archeology. Catacombs, hitherto unknown, such as the catacomb of the Giordani on the Via Salaria, were discovered and valuable paintings and inscriptions were catalogued.<sup>62</sup> The remains of early saints were discovered, such as the remains of Saint Cecelia which were unearthed by Cardinal Sfondrato in 1599, and these discoveries cast valuable light on the Church's early history.

Thus, the new liberal education of Humanism influenced the development of positive theology after the Council of Trent. Although historico-critical method had not yet asserted itself as strongly in Catholic theology as it did after the nineteenth century, the new auxiliary techniques and disciplines ushered in by Humanism began to exert themselves in various new theological disciplines. The progress of historical theology in the Catholic Church was limited, it appears, to the writings of a few scholars who did not exercise a widespread influence on the life of the Church.<sup>63</sup> The profound impact of historical method on the development of Catholic theology and the life of the Church, however, had to await the arrival of Vatican Council II in order to be realised more fully.



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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### DISCONTINUITY IN LIBERAL EDUCATION

#### Introduction

The most striking feature in the development of the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology from the apologetic period to the seventeenth century is its extraordinary consistency. Throughout this whole period, liberal education was dominated by two great traditions, namely, Christianity and classical culture. As Christopher Dawson observes: "though there were great changes in emphasis and in method and in content, the two basic elements (Christianity and classical culture) remained constant."<sup>1</sup> The apologists of the early Church drew on the sources of the classical tradition as had the scholars of the Carolingian period, the Scholastics of the middle ages, and the humanists of the Renaissance. The Lutheran Reformation, undoubtedly, created a discontinuity in the theological tradition by denigrating liberal studies; yet, the continuity with the Christian aspect of the tradition was unbroken.

The nature of liberal education was changed radically, however, by the new learning of the Enlightenment. The combination of the rationalism of Descartes, the scientific discoveries of Newton and British empiricism, produced the sort of intellectual amalgamation that undermined traditional liberal education based on the alliance between Christianity and classical culture.

The origin of the Enlightenment, ironically, is "inconceivable," according to Oskar Kohler, "without the philosophy of Scholasticism."<sup>2</sup> Scholasticism defended the autonomy of human reason, and so did the philosophers of the Enlightenment. There was this difference, however. Rationality in scholastic education was "combined with the belief in revealed religion," but in the philosophy of the Enlightenment, rationality "sought its reason within itself."<sup>3</sup> Thus, the Enlightenment was conceived as a radicalization of human reason, and has been defined as "man's self-illumination in the light of autonomous reason."<sup>4</sup> Immanuel Kant, the greatest figure of German Enlightenment, set out to demonstrate the birth from history of the Enlightenment in his work: 'IDEE ZU EINER ALLGEMEINEN GESCHICHTE IN WELTBURGERLICHER ABSICHT,' 1784. In this work, Kant offered his famous definition of the Enlightenment as "the emergence of man from a state of minority of his own making."<sup>5</sup>

The emergence of the Enlightenment, as Christopher Dawson also points out, can be partly traced to two great medieval institutions--the Universities of Padua and Oxford. According to Dawson, the dominant intellectual influence at Padua throughout the later middle ages had been the Averroists.<sup>6</sup> This intellectual influence resulted in the separation of "scientific" Aristotelianism from "theological issues." The "intellectual dogmatism of the Averroists" according to Dawson created an atmosphere of rationalism and scepticism which became widespread in Italy in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and gradually extended to the rest of Western Europe.<sup>7</sup> The main tradition of western



humanism, despite its pagan characteristics, viewed theology as part of liberal knowledge and the contributions of humanism remained part of the "criticism and reform within the church."<sup>8</sup> This earlier humanist tradition was platonic and spiritual. The new scientific Aristotelianism, however, which developed at the University of Padua, was rationalistic and sceptical, and tended to avoid the theological realm. This spirit of rationalism severed Aristotelian thought from the beliefs of Revelation.

The medieval tradition of the University of Oxford created another rationalistic thrust, based on "the mathematical ideal of natural science."<sup>9</sup> This intellectual orientation was responsible for the greatest achievements of Renaissance Science as represented by Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo. According to Dawson, this second scientific movement, emanating from Oxford, was ultimately derived from "Plato and Pythagoras rather than from Aristotle and Averroes."<sup>10</sup> This scientific trend exhibited the same tendency to shun or ignore the theological realm of inquiry.

The new scientific thinking, therefore, emanating from the universities of Padua and Oxford, emphasized the value of the experimental method and inductive reasoning. Both trends led eventually to a distrust in "the abstract speculations of the philosophers, orthodox and unorthodox alike," and thus contributed to the separation of theology from liberal education.<sup>11</sup>

This new rationalistic thrust, which separated theology from liberal education, captivated the greatest minds of the Enlightenment



and spread throughout the entire continent of Europe, reaching eventually into every part of the Western world. In some parts of Europe, the effects of the new thinking were more radical than in others. For example, in England and Germany, the relationship between liberal education and theology was generally one of peaceful accommodation rather than outright conflict whereas, in France, the Encyclopedists set out to eradicate theology entirely from any program of liberal studies. It will be helpful, therefore, to examine various manifestations of the rift between liberal studies and theology in England, France and Germany (three major centers of European Enlightenment) in order to understand the challenges and problems created for Catholic theology by the discontinuity in the Western tradition of liberal thought.

### 1. British Empiricism

The main intellectual trait that had taken root in England causing a major rift with traditional liberal education was Empiricism. Francis Bacon (1561-1626) formulated a new "theory of empiric inductive science" which differed radically from classical methodology.<sup>12</sup> Bacon published the 'NOVUM ORGANON' in 1620 seeking a "more perfect use of human reason" and criticising the shortcomings of traditional logic, formulated in Aristotle's logical treatises known as the 'ORGANON.'<sup>13</sup> In 'The Proficiency and Advancement of Learning' (1603-5), Bacon proffered a notional defence of traditional education as "promoting a wise judgement of ends to accompany the scientific improvement of means."<sup>14</sup> Still, the intellectual revolution which he initiated produced far-reaching effects for the relationship between liberal education and theology.

Bacon was the first to propose a new philosophy of science and to organize all studies on this foundation. Thus, he stated: "Man, being the servant and interpreter of Nature, can do and understand so much, and so much only, as he had observed, in fact or in thought, of the course of Nature; beyond this he neither knows anything nor can he do anything."<sup>15</sup> He opposed the method of deductive reasoning, asserting that "we must put behind us all those majestic deductive systems of philosophy which proposed to draw a thousand eternal verities out of a few axioms and principles."<sup>16</sup> In the place of "deductive systems of philosophy," Bacon proposed the re-organization of all learning through an inductive scientific method which he described

as "a due process of exclusion and rejection" that should arrive at the "form" of a phenomenon.<sup>17</sup>

It is generally admitted that Bacon was neither a great scientist nor a great philosopher. He failed to appreciate the importance of mathematics, the role of deductive reasoning in philosophy and in science, and the nature of the scientific revolution ushered in by Galileo.<sup>18</sup> Yet, his influence on the future course and development of liberal education was immense. At the practical level, according to Dawson, Bacon understood the "instrumental character of science" and its "power to transform the conditions of human life."<sup>19</sup> On the intellectual level, Bacon's exclusive emphasis on inductive method gave rise to the tendency to view all knowledge in scientific and materialistic terms.<sup>20</sup>

In general, Bacon saw no conflict between science and theology since both disciplines tended to the same end; namely, the service and glory of God. Nevertheless, Bacon's distrust of metaphysics and revealed doctrine caused him to create an unsurmountable dichotomy between science and theology which ultimately led to a complete divorce between them.<sup>21</sup> Thus, the theoretical and practical consequences of Bacon's exclusively inductive methodology initiated a discontinuity in liberal education which tended to avoid theological inquiry.

The intellectual revolution initiated by Bacon in British education gave the impetus to the materialistic psychology propounded by his secretary, Thomas Hobbes, 1588-1679. Like Bacon, Hobbes belonged



to the nominalist tradition of William of Ockham which regarded abstract ideas as unrepresentative of objects.<sup>22</sup> Hobbes, however, differed from Bacon by appealing to 'deduction' as a means of promoting proper reasoning which he claimed he had freed from "metaphysics and prejudice."<sup>23</sup>

Hobbes published his most famous work, 'Leviathan,' or 'The Matter, Form, and Power of a Commonwealth, Ecclesiastical and Civil,' in 1651.<sup>24</sup> This work became a landmark in the history of philosophy. In it, Hobbes claimed that all knowledge is sensory and that ideas are imaginations produced by sensation. The world and man, according to Hobbes, are "machines of matter in motion according to law."<sup>25</sup> Hobbes rejected "free will," the immateriality of the "soul" and the "mind," and he propounded a system of ethical relativism.<sup>26</sup> In Part IV of Leviathan, Hobbes attacked the Catholic church and its theology which he viewed as the most powerful opponents of his materialistic psychology. He rejected the claims of revealed theology, asserting that "the nature of God is incomprehensible."<sup>27</sup> Thus, the new empirical way of thinking begun by Bacon and developed in the materialistic psychology of Thomas Hobbes led to a radical discontinuity in liberal education that rejected the traditional collaboration between reason and faith.

British Empiricism underwent a more subtle development, with respect to theology, in the writings of John Locke (1632-1704). Locke was the most influential thinker of French as well as British Enlightenment. Locke published an 'Essay concerning Human Understanding' in

1690 propounding a rationalistic empiricism that altered the traditional relationship between liberal education and theology. Locke disagreed with Descartes that the idea of God was innate. The idea of God, according to Locke, is derived from experience; that is, "the works of creation" which are "the visible marks of extraordinary wisdom and power."<sup>28</sup> All knowledge, including the knowledge of faith, is derived from experience, according to Locke, for "experience" is that in which "all our knowledge is founded, and from that it ultimately derives itself."<sup>29</sup>

In chapter eighteen, Book IV of the 'Essay concerning Human Understanding,' Locke laid down "the measures and boundaries between faith and reason" asserting that reason is the "last judge and guide in everything."<sup>30</sup> Locke summed up his rationalistic empiricism by stating that: "Nothing that is contrary to, and inconsistent with, the clear and self-evident dictates of reason, has a right to be urged or asserted as a matter of faith wherein reason hath nothing to do."<sup>31</sup>

Locke's view of theology, therefore, proceeded 'in and through' reason to an understanding of the Deity. His natural theological method showed little sympathy for revealed religion or the kind of theological inquiry that proceeded 'in and through' the faith, and, by the faithful application of reason, is able to bring that faith to reasoned fullness. Locke published his theological views in 'The Reasonableness of Christianity' in 1695 wherein, according to Oskar



"Köhler, he attempted to locate "historical revelation and the proof of its reasonableness in the general system of rationality."<sup>32</sup> In this work, Locke focused on what he considered the essentials in the life and example of Christ, which he described as "a plain and intelligible religion" that was "independent of all learning."<sup>33</sup> Needless to say, it is difficult to understand how one could have an "intelligible religion" that is "independent of all learning." When confronted with the objection, however, that he ignored "vital doctrines" of Christianity in 'The Reasonableness of Christianity,' Locke argued that "in accepting Christ he accepted Christ's teachings, in which those doctrines were included."<sup>34</sup> Thus, the natural theological approach of Locke rejected any serious collaboration between liberal education and Christianity.

The publication of 'Principia' by Isaac Newton in 1687, explaining the relationships that gravitation created among the heavenly bodies, tended also to undermine confidence in Christian theology as part of liberal education. Newton's mathematical laws of the universe appeared to create a self-subsistent world, independent of the action of God. Mechanism so pervaded Newton's cosmology that there seemed no place in it for Christian theology. Newton declared, for example, that "gravity must be caused by an agent acting constantly according to certain laws; but whether this agent be material or immaterial I have left to the consideration of my readers."<sup>35</sup> Newton did not consider it his function to attempt to explain the mysterious nature or cause of gravitation. His later attempts, however, to introduce God into



his scheme appear more like a comforting afterthought than a convincing argument. Thus, the scientific discoveries of Newton tended to identify the laws of nature with God. Some intellectuals of the Enlightenment, such as Voltaire, interpreted Newton's laws theistically or deistically while others, like d'Holbach, derived from them a theory of mechanistic atheism. All this had the effect of undermining the traditional harmony between reason and faith in Christian theology and contributed to a discontinuity of tradition in liberal education.

The writings of John Locke, particularly, were instrumental in the development of the scepticism of David Hume (1711-1776). After reading the writings of Locke and Clarke Hume lost belief in religion.<sup>36</sup>

Hume published 'A Treatise of Human Nature,' 1739-40, in three volumes. He accepted the rational Empiricism of Locke, which claimed that all knowledge is derived from experience through impressions, but he went further by denying the existence of the mind as a separate entity. Mind, for Hume, was a collection of different perceptions. Thus, he wrote: "That which we call a mind is nothing but a heap or collection of different perceptions, united together by different relations."<sup>37</sup> The implications of Hume's epistemology for theology were totally negative. He rejected the world of spirit in favor of impressions. He repudiated the notion of immortality because he claimed there was no mind. He opposed the doctrine of free will, asserting that will is merely a succession of perceptions. He rejected the notion of cause and effect, substituting the perception of a

sequence of events. Science, according to Hume, was "an accumulation of probabilities subject to change without notice."<sup>38</sup> He rejected metaphysics outright as impossible since he claimed we cannot know the causes of things.

Hume published 'An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding,' in 1748, in which he outlined his views concerning theology. In this work, he offered his analysis of miracles which he regarded as presumptions that "abound among ignorant and barbarous nations."<sup>39</sup> He characterized the agreement between religion and philosophy during the Hellenistic period of civilization as a false harmony since religion, according to Hume, was synonymous with superstition. Hume also published, the following year, 'An Enquiry concerning the Principles of Morals,' in which he offered a utilitarian ethic. He defined virtue in this work as "every quality of the mind which is useful or agreeable to the person himself or to others."<sup>40</sup> He further justified a double standard of morality as useful to society. In 1757, Hume published 'Four Dissertations' dealing mainly with theological issues such as the origin of religion which he explained away as an aberration.

Three years after Hume's death, the 'Dialogues concerning Natural Religion' appeared in print. This work, especially, repudiated any notion of religion, natural or supernatural. The dialogues are conducted among three imaginary people--a Deist, an Orthodox and Reason. Throughout the dialogues, reason confronts and repudiates Deism and Orthodoxy by questioning the capacity of reason to defend even the most basic theological doctrines.

Thus, the epistemology of David Hume rejected any habit of correspondence between liberal education and theology. More than any of the British Empiricists, David Hume forced, not only a separation between theology and liberal studies, but the exclusion of theology altogether from liberal education.



### Natural Theology Revisited

The radicalization of human reason in British Empiricism resulted, necessarily, in a correspondingly radical shift in the perceived relationship between reason and faith among leading intellectuals of the Enlightenment. Perhaps the most significant development in theology during and after this era was the rise of natural theology and Deism.

The world of the Enlightenment generated widespread scepticism in revealed religion. The rejection of ancient authorities; namely, classical epistemology and Divine Revelation, did not, however, necessarily entail abandonment of theology altogether. It resulted in a revival of natural theology appealing only to natural reason and the world of nature. The new advocates of natural theology propounded a faith in God, grounded in reason, which they thought to be universal and preferable to supernatural faith. This belief in God was generally depersonalized into a synonym for Nature as the prime mover of the universe. Thus, Deism which rejected the notion of revealed religion originated during the Enlightenment, narrowing theological inquiry to speculations about God according to the mode of natural reason only.

The word deist was first used by Archdeacon Edward Stillingfleet in his 'Letter to a Deist' in 1677. It was Charles Blount, however, who is credited with the spread of deistic literature during the early stages of the Enlightenment.<sup>41</sup> In 'A Summary Account of the Deist's Religion,' 1686, Blount propounded a religion free from all

religious practices and consisting only in the worship of God by a moral life. In a later work, 'The Oracles of Reason,' 1693, Blount attacked Christianity for fostering superstition and he ridiculed various Christian beliefs and doctrines as irrational and repugnant to the nature of things. In another work, 'Miracles No Violations of the Laws of Nature,' 1683, which was written anonymously but attributed to Blount, it was stated, as a matter of deistic principle, that "whatever is against reason is absurd, and should be rejected."<sup>42</sup>

John Toland created a strong impact on the development of deism with the publication of 'Christianity Not Mysterious,' 1696.<sup>43</sup> In this work, Toland propounded a thoroughgoing rationalization of revealed religion. He wrote: "We hold that Reason is the only foundation of all our certitude, and that nothing revealed ... is more exempted from its disquisitions than the ordinary phenomena of Nature... To believe in divinity of Scripture, or the sense of any passage thereof, without rational proof and an evident consistency, is a blamable credulity ... ordinarily grounded upon an ignorant and willful disposition, but more generally maintained out of a gainful prospect."<sup>44</sup> Thus, Toland's rationalism grounded faith in reason, claiming that faith did not contain anything beyond reason.

Anthony Collins was another who took up the cause of natural theology in his work 'Discourse of Free-thinking,' 1713.<sup>45</sup> Collins defended freethinking in theology which he defined as "the use of the understanding in endeavoring to find out the meaning of any proposition



whatsoever, in considering the nature of the evidence for or against it, and in judging of it according to the seeming force or weakness of the evidence... There is no other way to discover the truth."<sup>46</sup> Freethinking in theological speculations spilled over into deistic literature everywhere, calling for a radical re-interpretation of Revelation that made individual reason, not faith and the guidance of the Church, the final arbiter in interpreting doctrine. In 1724, Collins also published 'Discourse on the Grounds and Reason of the Christian Religion' in which he argued against the divine origins of Christianity.

William Whiston, who succeeded Newton as Lucasian professor of mathematics at Cambridge, wrote 'Primitive Christianity Revived,' 1712. In this work he set out to demonstrate that the Old Testament prophecies had no reference to Christ. Another English deist, Thomas Woolston, published 'Six Discourses on the Miracles of Our Saviour,' 1727-30. Woolston argued that some of the miracles of Christ were incredible while others were absurd. His style of argumentation was so satirical, not only with reference to Christianity itself but also with respect to different contemporary bishops, that he was indicted for libel and blasphemy in 1729. Matthew Tindal was one of the most influential deists of the eighteenth century. With the publication of 'Christianity as old as the Creation,' in 1730, he tried to explain away the uniqueness of Christian revelation. The real God, according to Tindal, was the God that Newton revealed; that is, the God of Nature and men's God-given reason. Tindal proposed a totally rational religion which



rejected revealed doctrine. Thus, he wrote: "Whoever so regulates his natural appetites as will conduce most to the exercise of his reason, the health of his body, and the pleasures of his senses taken and considered together (since herein his happiness consists) may be certain he can never offend his maker, who, as he governs all things according to their natures can't but expect his rational creatures should act according to their natures."<sup>47</sup> Conyers Middleton went even further and applied Tindal's method of rational criticism and free-thinking to the whole structure of christian belief. In 'Letters from Rome,' 1729, he criticised Catholicism for its adoption of supposed pagan infiltrations into ritual religion such as incense, holy water and votive offerings. He also castigated the role of the Pope as continuing the pagan role of Pontifex Maximus. Middleton published 'A Free Inquiry into the Miraculous Powers which are Supposed to have existed in the Christian Church through successive ages' in 1748. In this work, Middleton rejected, not only the miracles recorded in the early church, but the whole system of christian belief through "successive ages."

The rationalistic arguments of the deists in religious matters were rebutted by some of the finest minds of the period. For example, Charles Leslie wrote 'A Short and Easy Method with the Deists' in 1697. Bentley published 'Remarks on a late discourse of Free-thinking' in 1713. Jonathan Swift parodied the arguments of Collins in a tract, entitled: 'Mr. Collins' Discourse of Freethinking, Put into Plain English for the use of the Poor.' Perhaps the most serious rebuttal

of deism and the underlying doctrine of rationalistic empiricism came from George Berkeley (1685-1753). Berkeley published 'A Treatise concerning the Principles of Human Knowledge' in 1710, in which he developed a unique theory in order to refute Locke's empiricism and Hobbes' materialism. Locke argued that all knowledge comes from the senses. Since nothing had reality, according to Locke, unless perceived, perceptions are derived from external objects. Locke distinguished primary and secondary qualities of objects, maintaining that the secondary qualities were subjective, but that the primary qualities (extension, solidity, figure, number, motion and rest) were objective. Locke claimed that the primary qualities subsisted mysteriously but he professed ignorance about the nature of this mysterious substratum. Berkeley claimed that the perception of primary qualities was also subjective just like the perception of secondary qualities. Earlier, in 'An Essay towards a New Theory of Vision,' 1709, Berkeley established that space was a mental construct; that it was a system of relationships built up in our minds to co-ordinate our perceptions of sight and touch. Thus, Berkeley drew Locke's analysis of the primary and secondary qualities of objects to its logical conclusion, asserting that the visible world is for us a bundle of perceptions.<sup>48</sup> Berkeley also argued that since perceptions were subjective, materialism was untenable. Mind, according to Berkeley, is the only reality directly known. Matter is known only indirectly through the mind. Hence, Berkeley concluded that mind cannot be reduced to matter since you cannot reduce the directly to the indirectly known.<sup>49</sup> In 'The



Minute Philosopher,' 1733, Berkeley exposed the weaknesses and inconsistencies of the scientific religion of the Deists.<sup>50</sup> Berkeley pointed out that the sceptics of Christianity should be sceptics of science also since many scientific statements are quite beyond the evidence of the senses. The doctrine of the Trinity, according to Berkeley, is no less incomprehensible than the square root of minus one.

Joseph Butler published 'The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature,' 1736, in answer to the Deists.<sup>51</sup> In this work, Butler set out to show that there is no contradiction between the God of Nature (the God of the Deists) and the God of Revelation (the God of the Christians). He also argued that those who accepted the first should logically accept the second. Butler's argument for revealed religion was based on probability since the human mind is imperfect and can never have certainty in matters of faith. Butler's 'Analogy' opened up a new line of theological argument which helped to bring about the intellectual rehabilitation of Christian belief. Butler's approach to theological reasoning influenced Cardinal Newman who developed the concept of probability further in 'A Grammar of Assent.'<sup>52</sup>

The radicalization of reason, therefore, by British Empiricists weakened, not only the structure of the faith, but influenced the theological outlook of British divines, like Joseph Butler, who strove to unite rationalism and revelation. According to Heribert Raab, faith, after the Enlightenment, was given a new foundation which was viewed as



"exclusively anthropological"; that is, faith was grounded on a natural foundation solely and not on the doctrine of Revelation.<sup>53</sup>

The theological climate in England was affected by the extreme rationalism of the British Empiricists, giving rise to liberal theology in Protestantism and to the Modernist Movement in Catholicism.

The implications, for Catholic theology, of the discontinuity in liberal education, brought about by British Empiricists, are extremely important. Reason, under British Empiricism, was elevated above faith, and the claims of faith could be rejected by reason as from a superior source. Thus, the traditional relationship of correspondence and co-operation in Catholic theology between reason and faith, both autonomous in their separate domains, was undermined. The struggle to regain the historical harmony and to restore the partnership between reason and faith continues to engage the best efforts of Catholic theologians and scholars to this day.

## 2. French Enlightenment

Just as empiricism was the main intellectual trait of British Enlightenment, rationalism became the dominant intellectual characteristic of French Enlightenment. The success of the philosophy of René Descartes (1596-1650) provided another reason for the decline of theology as part of liberal studies and contributed, in a profound way, to the problem of discontinuity in Western education.

Descartes did not oppose theology for he maintained that it was by means of "the theological implications of the truth of God" that the "res extensa of divisible matter of physical things" could be called certain.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, we must distinguish between the intentions of Descartes and the implicit logic of his method and principles. Descartes' method and philosophical principles undermined faith in Revelation and the theological speculations of the Scholastics by its emphasis on subjectivity, and the new confidence which they imparted to the intrinsic resources of the human mind.<sup>55</sup>

Descartes wrote 'Discours de la Méthode' 1629 (published in 1637) in which he re-directed the quest for meaning inward, to the resources of his own mind, rather than outward, to the external world, immediately perceived by the senses, and to divine Revelation, immediately given in the Scriptures and in the Church's tradition. In the 'Discours,' Descartes took the "conscious self" as the starting point of his philosophy, not external nature or divine Revelation. His system of methodic doubt, which began by questioning everything, led him to one

certain and indisputable principle, one "clear and distinct idea" that was irrefutable: "Cogito ergo sum" (I think, therefore, I am)--the most famous axiom in philosophy.<sup>56</sup>

Descartes attempted to reconcile his philosophy with theology in 'The Meditations of Renè Descartes on First Philosophy, in which the Existence of God and the Immortality of the Soul are demonstrated,' 1641. The application of Descartes' philosophical method to theology in this work met with disapproval by the Church. In 1662 'The Meditations' was placed on the index of prohibited books.

The implications of Descartes' philosophical method for Catholic theology, therefore, were viewed negatively by the Church. Descartes' system of methodic doubt was perceived as a threat to the authority of the Church. His confidence in the intrinsic resources of human reason served to downplay the importance of faith. The primacy of Descartes' "Cogito" appeared to replace the primacy of the "transcendent God."<sup>57</sup> Descartes also envisioned the whole world of nature, with the exception of God and the soul, as mechanical and as subject to mechanical laws. This theory of "universal mechanism," as affecting matter in Descartes' philosophy, called into question the existence of miracles and free will.<sup>58</sup> Descartes' dualism, affecting the soul and the body, created also a radical sense of disharmony and, by implication, caused a rift between the orders of nature and grace.

Like Bacon, the father of British Empiricism, Descartes believed in the necessity of a complete instauration of liberal education on a new,



non-scholastic basis. Descartes also accepted the ideal of science as the instrument of human progress by which men could become "the masters and possessors of nature."<sup>59</sup> Unlike Bacon, however, Descartes propounded a method of deduction rather than the inductive method. It was the bringing together of these two traditions--British Empiricism and French rationalism, according to Dawson, that ushered in the age of Enlightenment and changed radically the nature and direction of liberal education in the western world.<sup>60</sup>

### The Encyclopedists

Descartes' rationalism imparted a new confidence to individual reason which appealed to the group of "philosophes" in France who became the leaders of a new movement in liberal education that led to the Encyclopedia. The philosophes also adopted the scientific philosophy of Bacon and, with full confidence in the power of individual reason, they set out to institute a reformed system of rational education, exclusive of theology. Until the nineteenth century, it should be remarked, Science was part of philosophy and was termed "natural philosophy." Thus, the dictionary of the French academy in 1694 defined a philosopher as "one who devotes himself to research work in connection with the various sciences, and who seeks from their efforts to trace their causes and principles."<sup>61</sup>

The new liberal thought of the Encyclopedists, free from theological influence, flourished, not in the universities, but in the academies. All over France, for example, academies sprang up in provincial towns and cities such as Paris, Orleàns, Bordeaux, Toulouse, Dijon, Lyons, Angers, and Nancy. The Encyclopedists set out to break the power of the Church, the teaching orders, and the universities which preserved the old tradition of liberal education. By the end of the eighteenth century in France, the old bastions of traditional liberal education--the Jesuits, the twenty-two universities, the colleges, and the secondary schools were suppressed. This cleared the way for the organization of "a unified, rationalized system of national education under secular control."<sup>62</sup> This public divorce between theology and liberal studies

reached a climax in the eighteenth century with the development of two systems of education--a rationalized secular system under the control of the state; and a church system under the control of the teaching orders and diocesan institutions. According to Christopher Dawson, "there has never been an age in which the religious and the secular worlds were more completely divorced from one another than they were in the eighteenth century. We see this most sharply in France, in the contrast between the educational ideals of the founders of the new orders, like St. John Baptist de la Salle and St. Louis Grignon de Montfort, and those of the Encyclopaedists, and it is hardly less evident in England, where William Law and the Wesleys and the leaders of the Evangelical revival seem to belong to a different culture and a different race of men from those represented by Chesterfield and Gibbon and Horace Walpole."<sup>63</sup> Thus, Catholics and Protestants alike suffered from the same sense of cultural alienation in their attempts to set up schools and institutions of learning that would provide a liberal education.

The discontinuity in liberal education in France during the eighteenth century was brought about by a powerful and aggressive band of French intellectuals who propagated their ideas in journals and periodicals, but especially in the Encyclopedia, edited by Diderot and D'Alembert.

According to Brunetière, a Catholic scholar and critic, the Encyclopedia "is the great affair of its time, the goal to which everything preceding it was tending, the origin of everything that has



followed it, and consequently the true centre for any history of ideas in the eighteenth century."<sup>64</sup> The Encyclopedia, which means learning, gathered in a circle, attempted to replace the old summae of Scholasticism by providing a new order and methodology for the many branches of knowledge and speculation that had been accumulating. Information on all branches of knowledge was treated in articles arranged alphabetically with cross references, often by subject. The speculations of Bacon, Descartes, Hobbes, Locke, Berkeley, Hume, Spinoza, Boyle and Leibnitz in philosophy; the advances of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo, Huggins, Pascal and Newton in science; the explorations of the earth by navigators, missionaries and travellers; the rediscovery of the past by scholars and historians; all found their way into the Encyclopedia for public consumption. The Encyclopedia departed from traditional education in which liberal thought was combined with belief in Revelation. In the Encyclopedia, the controlling idea was the new-found faith in scientific reasoning and scientific methodology.

Chambers published the first 'Cyclopedia, or an Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences' in 1728. At first it was proposed that this work might be translated into French, but it proved unsatisfactory to Diderot who was appointed editor-in-chief of the French version in 1747. The first volume of the French 'Encyclopédie' was published on June 28, 1751. In the 'Discours préliminaire, D'Alembert acknowledged the influence of Bacon's scientific philosophy on the new order of knowledge. He was publicly critical of Scholasticism and recognised the influence of Locke's epistemology. The first volume of the

Encyclopedia, however, was not visibly anti-religious.<sup>65</sup> The later volumes of the Encyclopedia contained attacks upon Christianity. For example, the article on 'Sacred Chronology' in Volume III criticized the accuracy of biblical texts. Another article, entitled 'Chaos' listed difficulties in the idea of creation and offered arguments for the "eternity of matter."<sup>66</sup> Volume VII of the Encyclopedia in 1757 created the greatest crisis with the publication of an article on 'Geneva' in which the Calvinists were represented as "discarding the divinity of Christ," and wherein Catholicism was misrepresented.<sup>67</sup> The State issued an Edict on March 8, 1758 banning the Encyclopedia. While praising the advantages and contributions of the Encyclopedia in "respect to progress in the arts and sciences," the Edict outlawed the Encyclopedia for "the irreparable damage that results from it in regard to morality and religion."<sup>68</sup> The conflict over the Encyclopedia centred on the issue of theology and the attacks by the "philosophes" against theology in the name of liberal education. A later article published in the Encyclopedia entitled, 'École,' ridiculed the Scholastics who, supposedly, abandoned "the search for knowledge, had surrendered to theology, and had lost themselves safely in logical cobwebs and metaphysical clouds."<sup>69</sup> Another article by Diderot on philosophy elevated it into a religion, declaring that "reason is for the philosopher what grace is for the christian."<sup>70</sup> The full seventeen volumes of the Encyclopedia with 'Supplément' and 'Table générale' were completed by 1780. Later editions of the Encyclopedia went into twenty-eight volumes.



The Encyclopedia contained many serious intellectual shortcomings. It offered "a view of human nature" that was too simplistic, and did not take sufficient account of human weakness and the reality of sin. It displayed an over-abundance of confidence in the power of individual reason and showed an all too obvious naivety regarding reason's frailty. It was altogether too optimistic with respect to "the knowledge that science was giving" and it lowered the intellectual possibilities of reason by elevating natural science into a philosophy, if not a religion. The Encyclopedia also lacked a sense of history by failing to situate beliefs in their proper context with reference to human and spiritual needs. The anti-religious bias of the Encyclopedia blinded it to the historical and practical contributions of Christianity.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, the Encyclopedia is the outstanding achievement of French Enlightenment. It holds an important place in the intellectual panorama of eighteenth century France and contributed to breaking the link and correspondence between liberal thought and Catholic theology. The Encyclopedia contributed to discontinuity in liberal education. It rejected liberal education, as known, and its proponents achieved this by attacking Christianity and substituting, in its place, a secular and rational form of faith.

The leading proponent of the new education of the Encyclopedia was Voltaire, whose personality and thought embodied the ideas of eighteenth century French Enlightenment.

Voltaire (1694-1778) used his prodigious literary talents to spread the new liberal thought of the Encyclopedists, free from Christian theology, through his voluminous writings--plays, poetry,



novels, letters, sermons and articles. The writings of Voltaire alone fill thirty-seven volumes. Voltaire's fanatical opposition to all forms of institutionalized and revealed religion, especially the Catholic Church, is evident in 'Épître à Uranie,' 1722; 'La Henriade,' 1724; 'Sermon des Cinquantes,' 1761; 'Le Philosophe Ignorant,' 1766; 'Profession de foi des Theistes,' 1768; 'Dieu et les hommes,' 1769.

Voltaire's first serious contribution to the new liberal education of the Enlightenment appeared in the form of 'Lettres Philosophiques' or "Letters concerning the English Nation," published in 1733. Philosophy for Voltaire, as defined by him in 'Eléments de la philosophie de Newton,' 1738, was identified with "a summary of science."<sup>72</sup> The publication of these 'Letters' created a link between British and French Enlightenment, and they covered a wide range of topics, such as the philosophy of John Locke (Letter XIII), Newton's physics (Letter XIV) and the *Penseés* of Pascal (Letter XV). The 'Letters' constituted a milestone in the development of the new liberal thought in France by adopting scientific reason and method as the over-riding principles of education.

Although Voltaire's concept of liberal education was grounded on "natural philosophy," which was synonymous with "a summary of science," he did not exclude theology entirely from liberal studies. Like the Deists in England, Voltaire propounded the notion of natural religion as part of liberal education. His concept of natural religion,

however, took the form of Theism which emphasized the existence of "a conscious intelligence designing and ruling the world" rather than the deistic notion of an "impersonal force more or less identical with nature."<sup>73</sup>

Voltaire's concept of liberal education, therefore, included natural religion but not revealed religion. This view resulted in a strained and often contradictory relationship between reason and faith. Voltaire accepted Locke's repudiation of innate ideas--natural and supernatural. Yet, in the Article 'Theism' which he wrote in the 'Dictionnaire Philosophique Portatif,' 1763, he stated that he "submits himself" to the ideas of a God who is "good," "powerful," and "just"; and that he "submits himself to that Providence" which "pervades all places and all ages." He also stated, in the same work, that "he believes that religion consists ... in adoration and justice."<sup>74</sup>

In 'Le Philosophe Ignorant,' 1766, Voltaire claimed that God is known to us "in his existence," but "not in his nature" since reason can only know sense phenomena and has no knowledge outside of matter.<sup>75</sup> Yet, in 'The Atheist and the Sage,' he defended the concepts of Heaven and Hell and Forgiveness, claiming that faith in a God "who rewards good actions, punishes the bad, and forgives lesser faults, is most useful to mankind."<sup>76</sup> The contradiction in Voltaire's thinking seems to rest in the fact that, although he confined the knowledge of reason to material phenomena (and correctly so), he nevertheless asserted that there was no knowledge above reason while, at the same time, he assented to beliefs above reason, such as the doctrines of Heaven and



Hell; Divine Providence and Divine Retribution; Divine Forgiveness and Divine Justice. Voltaire seriously occupied himself with the burning issues--knowledge, life, God and immortality, but he did not offer an integral philosophical system of consistent thought about the world and man. He was the most original writer of the Encyclopedists, and he gave form to the ideas of French Enlightenment. His liberal thought and view of education are important for they illustrate the break in the tradition of liberal education in France where christian theology was rejected as an integral part of that tradition.

Many other Encyclopedists--Diderot, D'Alembert, Helvétius, d'Holbach, Mably and Turgot--showed less restraint than Voltaire and argued for "a morality that would be independent of theology" entirely.<sup>77</sup> The atheistic argument of Pierre Bayle, who determined the "intellectual climate" of the Encyclopedists, claiming that morality is "the habit of conformity with reason" assumed too much.<sup>78</sup> The argument in favour of an exclusively rational morality assumed that man can always act reasonably; and that reason is self-defining. Experience shows that this is not even true of the cultured few. Christianity has had a long history and its morality has been incorporated, almost naturally, into the cultural history and education of the Western World. Many opponents of the Encyclopedists criticized them for making moral claims, thought to be original, which in reality were borrowed from Christianity. The Encyclopedists also failed to deal with the more central issue of character in their discussions about



morality. Character determined actions rather than reason, and character was formed "before reason developed."<sup>79</sup> The Encyclopedists were unwilling to acknowledge the benefits of Christianity in developing character in the young and in fostering good habits of behaviour before the individual faculty of reasoning developed. The weakness of the argument of the Encyclopedists lay in the fact that they rested natural morality on the principle of "self-interest."<sup>80</sup> This argument skirted the issue of character and the development of attitudes whereby one could make rational, moral choices. The moral doctrine of most Encyclopedists depended also on a belief--a belief in an innate sense of enlightened judgement which could "see the results of the ego's choice in a perspective large enough to reconcile the selfishness of the individual with the good of the group."<sup>81</sup> Voltaire, on the other hand, based his ethics on "a sense of justice infused into men by God" and he was condemned by other Encyclopedists for surrendering to theology.<sup>82</sup> The Encyclopedists, as a whole, whether they were Deists, Theists or Atheists, contributed to the secularization of ethics and to the separation of ethics from Christianity. Even the practical ethics of Christianity passed from a theological to a secular basis, achieving justification and importance in the field of philanthropy.<sup>83</sup> A whole new catalogue of secular virtues was introduced by the Encyclopedists into the new moral vocabulary of the Enlightenment. The new secular virtues such as "benevolence," "toleration," "philanthropy"

and "humanitarianism" began to replace the Christian moral code in schools and society.<sup>84</sup>

Thus, by the end of the eighteenth century Catholic theology was, for all practical purposes, extrapolated from the tradition of liberal education in France. The Avocat Général, Séguier, reported in 1770 that "public opinion on civil and religious institutions" was radically affected, and that "incredulity" in religious matters had spread "into workshops and cottages."<sup>85</sup> De Tocqueville, writing in 1856, commented upon "the universal discredit into which all religious belief fell at the end of the eighteenth century."<sup>86</sup> Among the educated classes, the new thinking of the Encyclopedists found universal and unopposed expression in the intellectual atmosphere of the salons. Lecky's observation may be taken as an accurate judgement of the intellectual climate that prevailed among the upper classes. Thus, he observed that "the anti-christian literature represented the opinions, and met the demands, of the great body of the educated classes; and crowds of administrators in all departments [of the government] connived at, or favoured, its circulation."<sup>87</sup>

The liberal educational theory of the Encyclopedists had become the dominant force in European thought by the end of the eighteenth century. The Jesuits were suppressed, the universities were reformed and the Academy was in the hands of the Encyclopedists. Nine of the Encyclopedists were chosen to membership of the French Academy between 1760 and 1770, and in 1772 D'Alembert was made permanent secretary. The Encyclopedists achieved what they set out to do. They created an

intellectual revolution that separated liberal education from theology, and theology from ethics. According to Condorcet, it was the Encyclopedists who embraced in their thought "the entire interests of mankind."<sup>88</sup> This was too ambitious a task since individual reason alone, which the Encyclopedists made the measure of all things, could not deal with the entire interests of mankind. Catholic theologians, likewise, overstated their claims, and tried to make theology the measure of all things without due regard for the independence and autonomy of the different sciences in their own fields.

The Encyclopedists put too much weight on the power of the individual intellect to discover the whole truth which, at best, is the product of a limited experience. They closed their minds to the strengths of the historical tradition of liberal education which was the outcome of centuries of trial and error, and concentrated their criticisms on the shortcomings and failings of that tradition. They were blind, particularly, to the demands of "imagination," "sentiment" and "belief."<sup>89</sup> The inherent weaknesses of the Encyclopedists' liberal theory began to show when Rousseau offered a different view of nature and a different theory of education, and when Kant strove to reconcile philosophy and theology again.



## Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778)

The unbounded confidence imparted to individual reason, which was set in motion by Descartes' philosophy, was carried to the extreme by the Encyclopedists of the eighteenth century. Rousseau, the most significant figure of French Enlightenment, reacted against this singular exaltation of reason, which robbed the soul of imagination and feeling, with a compelling enlightenment of the heart.

Rousseau wrote 'Discours sur les arts et les sciences,' 1750, in which he challenged the predominant enlightenment view exalting reason and progress. While acknowledging the achievements of reason, Rousseau advanced the theory that the arts, the sciences, and progress in knowledge crushed the human spirit rather than liberated it. He criticized the Enlightenment for the "deceitful veil of politeness" which masked "jealousy," "suspicion," "fear," "coldness," "reserve," "hate" and "fraud."<sup>90</sup> Rousseau maintained, in this work, that the only real progress is moral progress, and that the "true philosophy" is to "listen to the voice of conscience" which is "the sublime science of simple minds."<sup>91</sup> Thus, Rousseau pointed out a problem in the liberal theory of the Encyclopedists; namely, that science and individual reasoning can lead to disillusionment and even destruction. In the 'Discours sur l'origine et les fondements de l'inégalité parmi les hommes,' published in 1755, Rousseau repudiated inequalities in the economic, political, social and moral orders as unnatural, and proposed a return to religious faith to cleanse "evil impulses by practising the ethics of Christianity."<sup>92</sup>

In the *Confessions*, published in 1770, Rousseau viewed himself as the one who would unite the two detached parts of traditional liberal education; namely, Christianity and philosophy, which had been separated by the 'philosophes' and the theologians. Thus, he wrote that he set out to reconcile the warring factions: "Christians and philosophers who had a reciprocal wish to enlighten and convince each other and lead their brethren to the way of truth."<sup>93</sup> He claimed in his *Confessions* that he first offered "severe truths to each" but to no avail; then he tried another expedient to destroy "their prejudices" and to show to each "the virtue and merit which in the other deserved esteem and respect."<sup>94</sup>

In '*La Nouvelle Héloïse*,' published in 1761; and in *Émile*, published in 1762; Rousseau propounded his educational theory which purported to bring together the best features of the two dimensions of traditional liberal education. *Héloïse* tried to combine the positive aspects of the Christian tradition and the advances made by the "philosophes." Rousseau's vision of education in *Héloïse* praised faith as an instrument of growth and for bringing about a sense of purification and dedication in his heroine. He proclaimed the primacy of feeling to reason, in education, especially before puberty. Thus, education, according to Rousseau, should begin "first of the body to health"; then proceed from "the character to a stoic discipline," and finally from an education of the "intellect to reason."<sup>95</sup>

The educational ideals of Rousseau in '*La Nouvelle Héloïse*' were further developed in *Émile*, perhaps the most influential book ever



written on education.<sup>96</sup> In this work, Rousseau rejected the old methodology of education--the imposition of ideas, memorization, and a classical curriculum. A natural method of instilling creativity was forwarded, based on nature and experience. As in 'Héloïse,' a free development of the individual was advocated but with clearer insight and greater attention to detail. An educational process was advanced from body to health, from character to morality, from mind to intelligence, and from right feelings to religion. The educational process was divided into three periods: childhood, youth, and adult preparation. During the period of childhood, which lasted twelve years, Rousseau advocated a physical and moral education. He discountenanced a rational education and a religious education at this stage. During the stage of youth, he promoted an intellectual education and a practical education in some useful trade. A religious education should begin, according to Rousseau, at the age of eighteen. Needless to say, Rousseau's educational chronology, which deferred religious education until the age of eighteen, did not meet with the approval of the Church. The Archbishop of Paris issued a "mandemant" against Rousseau's *Émile*, and the Parlement of Paris had the book "torn and burned" on June 11, 1762.<sup>97</sup>

Notwithstanding the criticisms and condemnations by the church of his educational pedagogy and tolerance of other religious denominations, Rousseau's educational theory helped to rehabilitate theology as an integral part of liberal education. Rousseau's ideas made a



forcible and compelling case for the place of religion in the educational scheme. He argued against atheism and materialism, maintaining that the mind cannot be interpreted as a form of matter since there is no evidence of a material process in the act of thought. Hence, he argued, one must accept that something may be true even if one cannot understand it; namely, that an immaterial mind can act upon a material body. The reality of God, for Rousseau, is unknowable, a mystery; but the existence of God, like the existence of the immaterial mind behind voluntary actions, is felt everywhere. Thus, Rousseau re-asserted the need for theology in liberal education. In *Emile*, he offered a profession of faith through the persona of the 'Vicaire Savoyard.' He recommended adherence to the religion of one's upbringing as the 'Vicaire' had counselled, and he proclaimed tolerance of all religions that promote good conduct. Although Rousseau disagreed with some specific doctrines of Christianity, his general principles, unlike the principles of the Encyclopedists, habilitated theology as part of liberal education. Rousseau's reclamation of religion and feeling gave rise to a new intellectual thrust in liberal education that counteracted the coldly rational approach of the Encyclopedists. Rousseau's Romanticism resisted the excesses of rationalism. His educational ideas stimulated pioneers such as Pestalozzi in Switzerland, Maria Montessori in Italy and Friedrich Froebel in Germany.

Rousseau's romantic inspiration was responsible for a renewal of Catholic theology in France and Germany during the early part of the nineteenth century. His ideas found a voice in the writings of

Chateaubriand and Lamartine in France, and in the writings of Anton Günther in Germany. Although the educational ideals of Rousseau did not mend the rift that had taken place between liberal studies and Catholic theology, they nevertheless helped to reclaim faith and revelation as part of the western heritage of liberal education.

### 3. German Enlightenment

The intellectual climate in Germany after the second half of the eighteenth century was influenced by English deism, French rationalism and Rousseau's romanticism. Progressive education, inspired by Rousseau's ideals, found a strong voice in the work of Johann Basedow who published 'Elementarwerke' in 1774, comprising four volumes.<sup>98</sup> Friedrich Nicolai, perhaps the most prominent propagandist of German Enlightenment, edited from 1765 the journal 'Allgemeine deutsche Bibliothek' in 106 volumes.<sup>99</sup> The German intellectual scene, however, showed a different development to that of England and France. As Christopher Dawson pointed out, the German intellectual movement recognised the importance of "popular culture as source of creative activity."<sup>100</sup> In Germany, the intellectual leaders were generally men of humble origin. Wilkleman was the son of an artisan, Kant was the son of a sadler, Herder's father was a parish clerk, and Gauss' father was a gardener. Being born with different ideals to the Enlightenment ideals in France and England, the German intellectuals gave rise to a popular system of education which diverged from the rationalistic spirit of British and French Enlightenment and discovered the importance of the "non-rational element in culture."<sup>101</sup> Thus, German Enlightenment did not take on the extreme forms that it had assumed in British empiricism and French rationalism. Durant offers three distinguishing characteristics of German Enlightenment.<sup>102</sup> 1. It sought, not to destroy



orthodox theology as the British deists and French Encyclopedists, especially, set out to do, but to free it from myths and superstition. Thus, the excesses of unorthodox theologians, such as Semler, Bahrtdt, Eberhard, Teller and Schulz, did not gain support in Germany. 2. It followed the educational ideals of Rousseau rather than Voltaire, recognising the profound appeal of religion and faith--the "non-rational element in culture." 3. The Romantic movement in Germany (inspired by Rousseau's thinking) checked the advance of rationalism and sought a compromise between rationalism and religion. The important intellectual centres of German Enlightenment were the universities of Halle, Brandenburg, Göttingen, and the Academies of Berlin and Göttingen.<sup>103</sup>

Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz (1646-1716) has been described by Köhler as the "most important philosopher of the pre-Kantian period" at the University of Halle. Leibniz, a scientist and mathematician, published 'Nouveaux essais sur l'entendement humain' in 1765, exposing the anti-Cartesian empiricism of Locke. The philosophy of Leibniz favoured theology, and in his 'Essai de Théodiceé sur la bonté de Dieu, la liberté de l'homme et l'origine de mal' he addressed, according to Köhler, the major problem of the Enlightenment; namely, "the question of the origin of evil in the world."<sup>104</sup> Leibniz tried to reconcile the rationalism of his philosophy with theology by differentiating between "vérités de fait" and "vérités de raison."<sup>105</sup> The "vérités de fait" were, for Leibniz, actual truths, part of which are the doctrinal truths of Revelation. The "vérités de raison"

were truths discovered by natural reason only. By means of this distinction, Leibniz's philosophy left room for theology and opened the way for a re-investigation of Scholasticism which combined rationalism with belief in Revelation. Christian Wolff (1679-1754), a protégé of Leibniz at the University of Halle, developed even further elements of "Scholasticism which had until then been pushed into the background."<sup>106</sup> According to Congar, the philosophy of Wolff, which combined Leibniz's philosophy with Scholasticism, influenced Catholic theology in the eighteenth century, and was most evident in the tendency to construct itself into a "system" by following the "methodus scientifica" of Wolff's school of thought.<sup>107</sup>

Notwithstanding the positive relationship established by the philosophy of Leibniz and Wolff with theology, the general trend of Enlightenment thought in Germany was towards the separation of theology from other branches of knowledge. Thus, Samuel Pufendorf (1632-94), professor of natural and international law at the University of Heidelberg, wrote 'De jure Naturae et Gentium' as early as 1672 separating theology from natural and international law. Pufendorf acknowledged that the divine will constituted the "primum principium," but in practice he supported "the totality of the powers of the state."<sup>108</sup> Christian Thomasius (1655-1728), a pupil of Pufendorf, continued the process of rationalization by "separating the legal duties from the inner moral ones."<sup>109</sup>

Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-81), regarded by many as the father of German Enlightenment, was a man who laboured at "the intersection



of differing intellectual current."<sup>110</sup> He was opposed to the indifference of much of Enlightenment thinking, and, in his famous 'Apologia,' he justified the pursuit of truth rather than its possession as characteristic of a liberally educated person. Thus, he wrote:

Not the truth of which a man is--or believes himself to be--possessed, but the sincere effort he has made to reach it, makes the worth of a man. For not through the possession, but through the investigation, of truth does he develop those energies in which alone consists his ever-growing perfection. Possession makes the mind stagnant, indolent, proud. If God held enclosed in His right hand all truth, and in His left hand simply the ever-moving impulse toward truth, although with the condition that I should eternally err, and said to me, "Choose!" I should humbly bow before His left hand, and say, "Father, give! Pure truth is for Thee alone."<sup>111</sup>

Lessing published 'Erziehung des Menschengeschlechts' (The Education of the Human Race), 1780, in which he clearly expressed his "specific relationship with Christianity."<sup>112</sup> In this work, Lessing tried to create a bridge between reason and faith, between liberal thought and Christianity. He rejected the notion that Christianity was "a matter of finding an abstract rational concept for the truth of Revelation."<sup>113</sup> He justified the Old and New Testaments of the Bible, but his views regarding these books were unorthodox. Lessing's approach to liberal education and theology was original. He traced "the education of mankind," describing the



process "as an analogy of Christian salvation through the stages of revelation," eventually culminating in the "God-given ratio" which he described as "a category of the future."<sup>114</sup>

Lessing's theory of the relationship between liberal thought and theology rejected, as futile, the intellectual effort to find an "abstract rational concept for the truth of revelation." He shared this view in common with most proponents of Enlightenment thought. He avoided, however, establishing a method of authentic correspondence and mutual enrichment accruing from the findings of reason and faith as autonomous sources of insight in their separate domains. This somewhat one-sided rationalistic thrust in Lessing's theology is unmistakable in his unorthodox views and in the manner in which he elevated reason above faith as the "category of the future." Thus, the new shift of emphasis in the relationship between reason and faith in Lessing's writings contributed also to discontinuity in traditional liberal thought in Germany. Lessing, undoubtedly, endeavoured to rehabilitate theology as part of liberal studies, but the manner in which he viewed the relationship between reason and faith contributed also to discontinuity in liberal education in Germany.

The greatest figure of German Enlightenment was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804). Kant was a product of the Enlightenment and the Romantic movements, and he devoted his intellectual efforts to reconciling both. Religious themes such as 'soul,' 'immortality' and 'God,' were, according to Kohler, "the guiding ideas in the great works of Kant."<sup>115</sup> Durant concurs with Kohler in his estimation of Kant, maintaining that

Kant's intellectual labours to the end consisted in the reconciliation of "scientific method with religious belief."<sup>116</sup> The epistemology of Kant represents a turning point in the history of Western thought. Kant's theory of truth, his perception of how the mind works, raise important questions that continue to puzzle and preoccupy theologians and philosophers today.

Kant published an important preliminary work in 1770 (eleven years before he published his first Critique), entitled 'On the form and principles of the sensible and intelligible world.'<sup>117</sup> This work is significant for it offers an explanation of terms which Kant used in his epistemology. The sensible world was understood by Kant as the world perceived by the senses or the "phenomenal world."<sup>118</sup> The intelligible world signified the world perceived by the intellect or the "noumenal world."<sup>119</sup> Kant stated that we understand the sensible world by applying "subjective concepts of space and time through mathematics and the sciences."<sup>120</sup> He also held that the intelligible world is understood by "going beyond the senses, through intellect and metaphysics, to the supersensual sources and causes of the sensible world."<sup>121</sup> In this preliminary work, Kant established the basic principles of his epistemology. Space and time were described as "forms of perception inherent in the nature and structure of the mind" and were not to be identified with sensible objects.<sup>122</sup> The mind itself, according to Kant, was not a "passive recipient and product of sensations" but an "active agent" with inherent powers and laws of operation for transforming sensations into ideas.<sup>123</sup>



This earlier work of Kant showed the influence of Hume, whom Kant praised for awakening him from his "dogmatic slumber." In all his works after 1770, Kant was opposed to all forms of dogmatism, seen as "all systems of thought, orthodox or heretical, evolved by an unscrutinized reason."<sup>124</sup> Hume's 'Enquiry concerning Human Understanding' pointed out that all reasoning depended upon the notion of cause which is an intellectual supposition rather than a perception drawn from experience since actual experience only perceived a sequence of events. Thus, all science depended on the idea of cause which was 'a priori'; that is, it was part of the "inherent structure of the mind."<sup>125</sup> 'A priori' concepts in Kant's philosophy are not to be confused with the innate ideas of Descartes' philosophy.

Kant published 'The Critique of Pure Reason,' in 1781, which offered a perceptive analysis of human reason and its capabilities.<sup>126</sup> In this work, Kant developed the ideas of his earlier work more fully. Knowledge, for Kant, was divisible into two types: empirical knowledge that depended upon experience, and transcendental knowledge that transcended experience. "All our knowledge," according to Kant, "begins with experience," but "it does not follow that it arises from experience."<sup>127</sup> Human knowledge, according to Kant, is moulded by the structure of the mind; that is, by inherent forms of mental perception and conception. Kant lists the inherent forms of perception or intuition as 'Space' and 'Time' which enable experience to take in outward sensation (as with Space) and inward sensibility (as with



Time).<sup>128</sup> He enumerates twelve categories of conception: three dealing with quantity--unity, plurality and totality; three concerned with quality--reality, negation, limitation; three about relation--substance/accident, cause/effect, activity/passivity; three having to do with modality--possibility/impossibility, existence/non-existence, necessity/contingency.<sup>129</sup> Experience, for Kant, was not simply the perception of a sequence of events but rather the product of the active mind working on the materials of sensation. Kant's theory of knowledge, which emphasized the inherent forms of mental perception and conception, avoided the materialism of Hume by agreeing with Berkeley that it is logically impossible to reduce mind (directly known) to matter (indirectly known). This theory also avoided Berkeley's idealism for it stressed that all knowledge "begins with experience" even though the inherent forms of perception and conception were independent of experience.

Kant's epistemology, however, created problems for theology and undermined the traditional function of theology within liberal studies. Although Kant defended the active and autonomous power of the mind, independent of experience, he, nevertheless, insisted that all knowledge is limited to natural phenomena. Hence, the human mind, according to Kant, cannot know the ultimate reality of the external world, it cannot know "the objective nature of that external cause" or "the thing-in-itself."<sup>130</sup> In his latest writings, entitled 'Opus Postumum,' Kant used the term 'Gedankending' to describe the thing-in-itself.<sup>131</sup> The 'Gedankending,' according to Kant, was "not a real

thing ... not an existing reality, but merely a principle of the synthetic a priori knowledge of the manifold sense--intuition."<sup>132</sup>

Kant did not deny the existence of the thing-in-itself, he merely asserted that its nature cannot be known by the human mind.

Kant published his 'Critique of Practical Reason' in 1788, in which he set out to provide a rational justification for morality and to deduce from this a practical argument for the existence of God.<sup>133</sup> In this work, Kant appealed to the moral consciousness. The influence of Rousseau on Kant's thinking is evident in this work, just as the influence of Hume was noticeable in the 'Critique of Pure Reason.'<sup>134</sup> The force of one's moral consciousness was called the "categorical imperative" by Kant and it took two forms:

1. The good must be upheld as "a principle of universal legislation."
2. Everyone must be treated "as an end, never only as a means."<sup>135</sup>

From this inborn sense of morality or 'categorical imperative,' Kant, like Rousseau, derived the practical notion of the existence of God. This argument signalled a departure from traditional theological reasoning which deduced morality from the existence of God rather than vice versa. Kant, however, applied the same scepticism to the idea of God as he did to the concept of the thing-in-itself. Thus, he wrote: "God is not a substance existing outside of me, but merely a moral relation within me... The categorical imperative does not assume a substance issuing its commands from on high, conceived therefore



as outside me, but is a commandment or a prohibition of my reason... The categorical imperative represents human duties as divine commandments not in the historical sense, as if (a divine being) had given commands to men, but in the sense that reason ... has power to command with the authority and in the guise of a divine person... The idea of such a being, before whom all bend the knee, etc., arises out of the categorical imperative, and not vice versa... The *Ens Summum* (Supreme Being) is an *ens rationis* (a creation of reason), ... not a substance outside of me."<sup>136</sup>

The theological implications of Kant's liberal thought are extremely important. Reason and the categories of the mind, according to Kant, can only deal with the phenomena of nature, and cannot be applied to the 'thing-in-itself,' the other reality behind sensations. The 'thing-in-itself,' the ultimate reality of the external world, is identified with 'noumenon' and hence is "unknowable."<sup>137</sup> Thus, the soul and God, which belong to the noumenal world and refer to realities behind the individual self and the external world, are unknowable. In 1791, Kant published 'On the failure of all philosophical attempts at Theodicy' claiming that the limitations of human reason prevented it from giving insights into "highest Wisdom."<sup>138</sup> In 1793, he published 'Religion within the limits of reason alone' offering a "pure religion of reason" based, not on divine revelation, but upon the "pursuit of the moral life," the divinest element in man.<sup>139</sup> In this work, Kant distinguished between "Ecclesiastical



Faith" and "Pure Religious Faith."<sup>140</sup> For Kant, ecclesiastical faith included elements of history which he maintained were not necessary for belief. Thus, Kant rejected traditional church doctrines such as "original sin," "miracles," "the divinity of Christ" and "atonement," claiming that they belonged to ecclesiastical rather than pure religious faith.<sup>141</sup>

Theology, according to Kant, was bounded by reason. He rejected the traditional rational arguments for the existence of God; namely, "ontological," "cosmological" and "physico-theological" proofs.<sup>142</sup> The affirmation of God's existence, he claimed, was achieved through reflection upon reason in its moral use. Thus, he wrote: "that all attempts at a purely speculative use of reason, with reference to theology, are entirely useless and intrinsically null and void, while the principles of their natural use can never lead to any theology, so that unless we depend on moral laws, or are guided by them, there cannot be any theology of reason."<sup>143</sup>

Kant's concept of theology, which was based not on divine revelation but on "moral laws," created a discontinuity in traditional liberal education. He did not offer any method of relating reason and faith for he rejected the objective datum of Revelation, including any knowledge of the objective reality of God which he claimed was unknowable. Kant's theology of reason shunned any collaboration between liberal thought and revealed doctrine.

Thus, the new liberal thought of the Enlightenment in England, France and Germany created, according to Köhler, "a crisis of the

European intellect."<sup>144</sup> Scepticism became "the innermost element of man's reason" and was turned not only on reason itself but on "the dogmas of the Christian faith."<sup>145</sup> Although natural theology continued as part of liberal studies, the intellectual atmosphere of the Enlightenment was critical of Christian theology and revealed doctrine. The doctrines of the Christian faith such as the Incarnation, the Resurrection and the Trinity, which the opponents of Christianity objected to during the Hellenistic period, were again subjected to ridicule and criticism. The proponents of the new rationalism of the Enlightenment, however, were more radical than the classical opponents of Christianity in their criticism. The concept of the soul posed a problem for the representatives of radical materialism, the notion of Divine Providence conflicted with a mechanical world-view, and the doctrine of creation became an issue vis-à-vis the new scientific knowledge of nature.

The Enlightenment brought about "an epochal turn of events" making "all of nature including men the object of empirical research."<sup>146</sup> The new rationalism, which sought its reason within itself, misunderstood, according to Köhler, "the secret which man will always be."<sup>147</sup> Thus, the effects of discontinuity in liberal education during the Enlightenment are summarized by Köhler as follows:

1. The Enlightenment misunderstood the secret of human nature through its "radicalization of Western rationality."
2. The new form of "naturalism" of the Enlightenment, while leading to a greater "discovery of the world" lost that sense of the "total dimension in the abbreviation of materialistic interpretation."

3. By detheologizing the "natural law," the Enlightenment laid "the foundation of the tolerant state" but led to the state "becoming an absolute concept as the *primum principium* of political and social life."
4. The Enlightenment "idea of progress" replaced the notion of "promise represented by the traditional belief in salvation."<sup>148</sup>

The Enlightenment, therefore, broke with traditional liberal education by initiating secularization and avoiding the theological realm. It was just as critical of the liberal thought and heritage of the ancient philosophers as it was of the Christian tradition.<sup>149</sup> It changed the relationship between liberal education and theology by making individual reason the measure and judge of all truth.



CHAPTER SEVEN  
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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### CATHOLIC REACTION

#### Introduction

The major cause of the disintegration of Christianity in the modern and post-modern (contemporary) era can be traced, according to David Tracy, to the Enlightenment initially.<sup>1</sup> The critical problem of the Enlightenment for Catholic theology was "to preserve the continuity of tradition" while trying to incorporate and absorb "the true intellectual effort of this period."<sup>2</sup> The Catholic Church, according to Burkhart Schneider, was late in recognising the intellectual achievements of the Enlightenment. Thus, he states that the attention of the Holy See "was riveted too much upon the negative effects and especially upon the attack on the belief in revealed religion" by Enlightenment thinkers.<sup>3</sup> This negative reaction, he observes, "necessarily widened the gulf between the leadership of the Church, arrested in traditional ways of thinking, and the new intellectual current emanating from England and France and influencing the whole Western world."<sup>4</sup> John P. Dolan concurs with Schneider's assessment of the situation, asserting that "the church lost its role of intellectual leadership" in the age of the Enlightenment.<sup>5</sup>

Catholic systematic theology, according to Dolan, was "merely heir to previous achievements" and had lost "contact with the intellectual movements of its time."<sup>6</sup> Instead of being occupied with a renewal of theological methods, Catholic theological faculties, on the whole, protected their hegemony



as bastions of traditional theological learning. The theological faculty of the Sorbonne, for example, continued to offer mere commentaries on the Summa Theologica of Aquinas. According to Louis Cognet, the teachings offered at the Sorbonne were not "actually based upon a genuine Thomism" but were "frequently influenced by the deteriorating Scholasticism of the waning Middle Ages."<sup>7</sup> This approach to theology was reflected in the writings of Philippe de Gamaches, Professor at the Sorbonne, whose method and thought, according to Cognet, showed "vestiges of nominalism as well as a strong Augustinian influence."<sup>8</sup> Martin Grandin, another Sorbonne professor, wrote 'Opera Theologica' which Cognet described as a "mediocre commentary on a few articles of the Summa devoid of any originality."<sup>9</sup>

The Church's theological emphasis, during the Enlightenment, also favoured exemplary conduct over a genuine theological education. This type of development was occasioned, among other things, by the need to reform the clergy and to instruct confessors of the laity.<sup>10</sup> The emphasis on religious formation through conduct, to the detriment of theological education, lacked, however, the kind of intellectual apprehension and support that Catholic theology traditionally drew from liberal studies. In addition to this, a Catholic theological trend sprang up in France which purported to create a synthesis between scholastic theology and mysticism. For example, Louis Bail wrote, in four parts, 'Theologie affective ou Saint Thomas en Méditations,'

and Guillaume de Contenson authored 'Theologia mentis et cordis.'. These works were largely ineffective since they lacked "the necessary unity of thought and structure."<sup>11</sup> Perhaps, the most glaring example of the crisis into which Catholic theology was plunged in France was the mystical war that erupted between Bossuet and Fénelon. Bossuet (1627-88) was the leader of the French Church in the seventeenth century. He wrote 'Discours sur l'histoire universelle,' 1679, and 'Histoire des variations des églises protestantes,' 1688. These works of Bossuet, though noted for "painstaking scholarship" appealed to "force and the suppression of error" rather than to "reason."<sup>12</sup> Fénelon, on the other hand, adopted a mystical approach uniting spirituality with dogma. He published 'Instruction on the States of Prayer,' 1696, and 'Explanation of the Maxims of the Saints on the Internal life,' 1697, opposing Bossuet's views. The public battle between these two upholders of orthodoxy was brought to a close by Pope Innocent XII when he issued a mild condemnation of Fénelon's mysticism in 1699.<sup>13</sup>

The rise of Jansenism likewise contributed to the denigration of liberal studies and scholarly research in Catholic theology. Cornelius Jansen wrote 'Augustinus' (published, 1640) defending Predestination, and asserting that the will is not free and that human nature is corrupt. The followers of Jansen, called Jansenists, adopted a posture of mystical withdrawal from the world and downplayed the Catholic tradition of collaboration between theology and the world of ideas. This theology of Jansenism was condemned in the Papal Bull, 'Cum Occasione,' on May 31, 1653.



Catholic speculative theology, therefore, suffered from intellectual stagnation, on the whole, after the Enlightenment. Catholic moral theology also possessed intellectual shortcomings which were no less evident than the defects in speculative theology. In moral theology, the approach to problems was developed according to the method of questions in the 'Summa Theologica' of Aquinas. These questions, however, were treated in a purely theoretical fashion without any serious attempt to provide a basis for "an individual theological moral philosophy."<sup>14</sup> Étienne Bauny, for example, published 'Somme des péchés qui se commettent en tous états,' (Paris, 1634). This work, which attempted to provide a summary of every possible type of sin, ignored "the fundamental problems of morality," emphasising "casuistry" which was nothing more "than a collection of guidelines for the treatment of specific cases."<sup>15</sup> The curriculum of clerical education in seminaries included casuistry as the main kind of instruction in moral theology. This type of moral instruction in seminaries led, according to Heribert Raab, to a "depersonalization" of the Christian faith as a result of the "moral dispute over probabilism."<sup>16</sup>

Probabilism in Catholic moral theology developed from the need to provide a "free decision" whenever there was "serious doubt concerning the existence of a moral law."<sup>17</sup> Bartholomaeus de Medina is regarded as the one responsible for providing the systematic



foundation of probabilism. Catholic moral theologians debated the merits of various shades of probabilism. A stricter view demanded more probable reasons (probabiliorism) before a decision could be judged safely moral. A milder view advocated weaker reasons (laxism) in order to justify a moral action. In 1665 and in 1667, Pope Alexander VII condemned the moral theory of laxism. In 1679, Pope Innocent XI reiterated Pope Alexander's condemnation of laxism.<sup>18</sup> The moral dispute over probabilism continued to preoccupy theologians for more than two centuries. Antonio Diana (1629-1659) wrote 'Resolutiones Morales' which offered "approximately six thousand cases of law or conscience."<sup>19</sup> A century later, Alphonsus Ligouri (1696-1787) wrote 'Theologia Moralis,' 1748. This work also adopted the method of casuistry, but it offered a more compassionate and Christian understanding of morality. St. Alphonsus has been described as an "equiprobabilist" on issues of morality.<sup>20</sup> His approach to moral decisions avoided the extremes of 'probabiliorism' and 'laxism.'

The method of casuistry which was applied to Catholic moral theology, after the Enlightenment, had serious intellectual defects. Casuistry may be defined as a method of resolving specific cases of conscience through specious argument and interpretation. Thus, according to Louis Cognet, casuistry ignored the fundamental problems of morality. Probabilism was adopted as the basic principle of morality "without any theoretical justification," and it "crossed over into the field of controversialism" in ethics.<sup>21</sup>

The practical requirements of the Church's ministry, therefore, strongly influenced both speculative and moral theology. Rational analysis in speculative matters decreased as the Church resisted the intellectual currents of the period. In moral theology, confessional handbooks for confessors were deemed necessary in order to facilitate practical decisions in actual cases.

On the positive side, however, the Enlightenment stimulated the development of "new branches of theological science, such as scriptural science, religious science, and pastoral theology."<sup>22</sup> There resulted, therefore, an increase in new theological studies that were strong in scientific investigation. For example, the Benedictines of Saint-Maur published many works of scholarship in patristic studies. These editorial works of patristic literature contributed to a renewal of method in speculative theology. Denis Petau S.J. published 'Dogmata theologia' (1644-50). This work, according to Louis Cognet, represented an "unsurpassed monument of patristic work of extraordinary informational and analytical exactness."<sup>23</sup> Richard Simon (1638-1712) is regarded as the founder of scriptural science. Simon set out to apply the scholarly methods of modern historical criticism to the Scriptures. He published 'Histoire critique du Veux Testament,' 1678; and 'Histoire critique du texte du Nouveau Testament,' 1689.<sup>24</sup> These works by Simon were too advanced for their time and were confiscated and destroyed by Bossuet. Historiography also developed into a "genuine science" in Catholic theology.<sup>25</sup> Charles Lecointe

published 'Annales Ecclesiastici Francorum,' 1665-83, in eight volumes. This work was noted for its genuine historical scholarship, evident in the analysis of the historical truth of the lives of ecclesiastical figures and saints. Jean de Lannoy, Professor of the Sorbonne, took a critical look at the legends concerning Saints Lazarus, Magdalen, Dionysius and Simon Stock.<sup>26</sup> De Lannoy's works did much to uncover the historical truth of the lives of the local saints and to separate the facts from legend. In 1681, Marbillon wrote 'De Re Diplomatica,' an important work which laid down "the basic rules applying to works in the field of historiography."<sup>27</sup> Jacques Le Long published 'Bibliothèque historique de la France,' 1719. This work brought together much of the historical research of scholars up to that time, and it remains "an indispensable source even today."<sup>28</sup>

Thus, in the era of the Enlightenment, despite intellectual deficiencies in speculative and moral theology, the actual life of the church was "more decisively included in theological cognition."<sup>29</sup> The Enlightenment also opened up for Catholic scholars possibilities for theological discussion and development which were not limited to scholasticism or traditional methods. These new theological possibilities came to the fore, especially, when some of the brightest Catholic minds confronted the most challenging problems of the era.



### 1. Latitudinarianism

A mode of thought that has been characterized as "broad and liberal" in its "standards of religious belief and conduct" became widespread among the educated classes of the seventeenth century and came back again in the eighteenth century.<sup>30</sup> This mode of thought is known as Latitudinarianism. Francois de la Mothe le Vayer published 'De la vertu des paiens,' 1640, which espoused the view that "Christianity is superfluous if not pernicious, since pagans can possess the same virtues as Christians."<sup>31</sup> The philosophical orientation and scepticism of Latitudinarianism was bolstered by Descartes' systematic application of doubt and by the empiric outlook of modern science. The great Catholic apologist and defender of Christianity against the latitudinarians was Blaise Pascal (1623-62).

Pascal compiled a unique collection of his 'Penseés' after 1657 which defended Christianity against the excesses of latitudinarianism.<sup>32</sup> The 'Penseés' were only made "accessible to the readers" in the "precise and complete wording of Pascal's manuscripts" in 1844.<sup>33</sup> Pascal's method embraced a sincere and intelligent view of modern man and the world. He entered into a profound, intellectual analysis of the human condition without Christianity and of the human condition with Christianity. Pascal's approach remained faithful, throughout, to the insights and resources of liberal education but he complemented his rational analysis with a vision of faith that humbled "man's

intellect vis-à-vis a God unfathomable to the intellect but able to be experienced by the heart."<sup>34</sup> The 'Penseés' are considered the most profound defence of religious belief in an age of scientific reason. While endeavoring to reconcile reason and faith, Pascal confronted the positive intellectual developments of his age with insight and understanding.

Thus, Pascal addressed the perceived intellectual problem that Copernican-Galilean astronomy dealt to the faith by evoking a deeper, more penetrating sense of the divine in creation. He wrote:

Let man contemplate Nature entire in her full and lofty majesty; let him put far from his sight the lowly objects that surround him; let him regard that blazing light, placed like an eternal lamp to illuminate the world; let the earth appear to him but a point within the vast circuit which that star describes; and let him marvel that this immense circumference is itself but a speck from the viewpoint of the stars that move in the firmament. And if our vision is stopped there, let imagination pass beyond... All this visible world is but an imperceptible element in the great bosom of nature. No thought can go so far... It is an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere, and whose circumference is nowhere. This is the most perceivable feature of the almightiness of God, so that our imagination loses itself in this thought. <sup>35</sup>

Pascal turned his attention to the scientific problem of the endless theoretical divisibility of the atom, and the challenge which this presented to the believer. For Pascal, the infinitely small as well as the infinitely vast strengthened rather than undermined faith. He wrote:

He who sees himself thus will be frightened by himself, and, perceiving himself sustained ... between these two abysses of infinity and nothing, will tremble ... and will be more disposed to contemplate these marvels in silence than to explore them with presumption. For



in the end, what is man in nature? A nothing in respect to the infinite, everything in respect to the nothing, a halfway between nothing and all. Infinitely far from comprehending the extremes, both the end and the beginning or principle of things are invincibly hidden in an impenetrable secret; he is equally incapable of seeing the nothing whence he has been drawn, and the infinite in which he is engulfed.<sup>36</sup>

Pascal exposes the limitations of reason, asserting that reason, left to itself, cannot understand the real nature and order of the world. He wrote:

There are two kinds of wisdom: that of the simple and ignorant multitude, who live by the wisdom of tradition and imagination (ritual and myth); and that of the sage who has pierced through science and philosophy to realize his ignorance.<sup>37</sup>

For Pascal, faith provided answers to many mysteries of life-- the mystery of existence and the moral mystery of man. He wrote:

What a chimera is man! What a novelty, a monster, a chaos, a contradiction, a prodigy! Judge of all things, and imbecile norm of the earth; depository of truth, and sewer of error and doubt; the glory and refuse of the universe. Who shall unravel this confusion?<sup>38</sup>

Pascal viewed the human condition as a mystery which cannot be resolved by reason. He wrote:

Man is but a reed, the most feeble thing in nature; but he is a thinking reed. The entire universe need not arm itself to crush him; a vapor, a drop of water, suffice to kill him. But when the universe has crushed him man will still be nobler than that which kills him, because he knows that he is dying, and of its victory the universe knows nothing.<sup>39</sup>



For Pascal, these mysteries about the world and man found an answer in faith, not in reason. By trusting in reason to explain these mysteries, man would be condemned to scepticism--one of the excesses of latitudinarianism, and philosophy would be at best a rationalization of defeat and meaninglessness. Faith offered the meaning of life which, according to Pascal, must be experienced by the heart, rather than grasped by the intellect. Pascal's approach to faith was non-scholastic and appealed to feeling. He wrote: "The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know."<sup>40</sup> Thus, the experience of faith, the "will to believe" was profounder than the arguments of reason. Pascal claimed that it was more rational to wager in favour of faith than to opt for the uncertainties of reason. Living as he did in the burgeoning age of reason, Pascal was plagued by a profound uncertainty and genuine inability to see both sides--the side of reason because of his doubts regarding its limitations; and the side of faith because of human blindness and error. He wrote:

This is what I see, and what troubles me. I look on all sides, and everywhere I see nothing but obscurity. Nature offers me nothing that is not a matter of doubt and disquiet. If I saw no signs of a divinity, I would fix myself in denial. If I saw everywhere the marks of a Creator, I would repose peacefully in faith. But seeing too much to deny [Him], and too little to assure me, I am in a pitiful state, and I would wish a hundred times that if God sustains nature it would reveal Him without ambiguity.<sup>41</sup>

Given the nature of man, and the uncertainty of human knowledge for or against the existence of God, Pascal argued that faith

in God's existence was a more rational wager than denial. This was as far as Pascal went in offering a rational justification for belief in the existence of God. He wrote:

You must wager; it is not optional... Let us weigh the gain and the loss in wagering that God exists... If you gain, you gain all; if you lose, you lose nothing. Wager, then, without hesitation, that He exists.<sup>42</sup>

The *Penseés* of Pascal is the most eloquent book by a Catholic scholar against the excesses of Latitudinarianism. The genuine religious appeal of the *Penseés* helped to rehabilitate faith in the age of reason, and it was strong enough to survive the vitriolic attacks of the Encyclopedists against Christianity. Pascal's voice was heard by Rousseau in the eighteenth century, and also by Newman in the nineteenth century. The singular appeal of Pascal's intimate and personal experience of faith stands forever as a challenge to the claims and assertions of over-confident reason.

## 2. Encyclopedic Education

During the eighteenth century, from 1715-89, Catholic scholars published some nine hundred works defending Christianity and the historical tradition of liberal education against the Encyclopedists. In 1771, Catholic apologists, lay and clerical, published 'Encyclopédie Méthodique' in answer to the Secular Encyclopedia of Diderot and d'Alembert.

The Abbé Pluche published a very important work, entitled: 'Spectacle de la Nature,' 1739-46, in eight volumes.<sup>43</sup> This scholarly work displayed a profound knowledge of the wonders of science and argued that the evidences of design in nature manifested the existence of God. Within this scientific scheme of things, Pluche demonstrated the limitations of the human mind, and justified, rather than rejected, the role of faith. The Abbé Gauchat published, in fifteen volumes, 'Lettres Critiques,' 1755-63, which also exposed the weaknesses of the evolutionary hypotheses of the Encyclopedists, and justified belief in Christianity as part of liberal education.<sup>44</sup> The Abbé Signorgne attacked the inconsistencies of the new morality of the Encyclopedists. He published 'La Philosophie Chrétienne,' 1765, in which he argued that Christianity was necessary for morality.<sup>45</sup> Signorgne pointed out the many flaws in the new morality of "secular restraints" which merely made criminals more devious and clever in committing crimes. Signorgne emphasized the need for an "inner restraint"



grounded in the belief in a just God. This particular insight regarding the interior motivating principle of morality was acknowledged positively by Voltaire, and developed more fully in Kant's 'Critique of Practical Reason.'

Nicholas Sylvestre Bergier attacked the materialistic tenets of Encyclopedic education in his work, 'Apologie de la religion chrétienne contre l'auteur du christianisme dévoilé,' 1769.<sup>46</sup> Bergier used the same kind of logic to refute d'Holbach's materialism that Berkeley used against Hume; namely, that "mind is the only reality immediately known to us" and that it is illogical to reduce it "to something else known only through mind."<sup>47</sup>

In his 'Apologie,' Bergier exposed the inconsistencies of the materialistic doctrines of the Encyclopedists.

1. He pointed out that d'Holbach rejected "unintelligible" ideas of "infinity" and "eternity," asserting that God was "unknowable." At the same time, d'Holbach applied the same "unintelligible" ideas of "infinity" and "eternity" to matter.

2. Bergier exposed the contradictions in the secular morality of Encyclopedic education. Helvétius and d'Holbach, for example, exhorted people to "reform their conduct" while expounding a system of absolute determinism.

3. The Encyclopedists could not make up their minds as to the origin of religion which they attributed to any given prejudice--"the ignorance of primitive man," "the chicanery of

priests," "the cunning of lawmakers." In his 'Apologie,' Bergier offered detailed answers to the criticisms of the Encyclopedists regarding the Old Testament bible. He showed that the Bible cannot be always taken literally; that the Old Testament must be interpreted in the spirit of the New Testament which is "the essence of Christianity." He also explained that the authority of the Church rests on "the Apostolic succession" and not just on the Bible which, like any great book, can be interpreted to suit any prejudice.

Guillaume Francois Berthier was, perhaps, the ablest and most talented defender of liberal education, inclusive of Christianity, against Encyclopedic education. Berthier became editor of the Jesuit periodical 'Journal de Trévoux,' 1745. Under his leadership, the 'Journal de Trévoux' became "one of the most respected voices of educated France."<sup>48</sup> Berthier was noted for his objective, scholarly approach to the intellectual issues of the day and, in his writings, "he attacked ideas, not characters, and praised the talents of his opponents."<sup>49</sup> His ideas appeared mostly in the Journal itself.

Although Berthier commended the first volume of the Encyclopedia in 1751, he exposed the "inaccuracies" and "plagiarisms" of Encyclopedic education with "incontestable scholarship."<sup>50</sup> For example, he pointed out that the account in the Encyclopedia dealing with the article 'Agir' (to act) was taken "completely and word for word from Father Buffier's

'Traité des vérités premières,' " but it was attributed to someone else.<sup>51</sup> He revealed the prejudice evident in the article 'Athée' (Atheism) which gave great force to the arguments in favour of Atheism while casting serious doubt upon the existence of God. He examined, in great detail, Voltaire's article "Essai sur les mœurs.' Berthier highlighted the bias of Voltaire's article which prevented him from appreciating "the virtue and services of Christianity" and he demonstrated Voltaire's "passionate resolve to find every possible fault in its teachings."<sup>52</sup>

The writings of Berthier also confronted the philosophical bias of Encyclopedic education. He repudiated the concept of "the universal finality of reason," stating that "the true philosopher limits his search where he cannot reasonably penetrate."<sup>53</sup> Like Pascal, Berthier demonstrated that realities exist which are "mysteries to the human mind," and to seek to subject everything in the universe to the test of "individual reason" is a form of "intellectual pride."<sup>54</sup> He pointed out that beliefs are necessary and must be respected, since Christian beliefs improve the scope and possibilities of human reason by providing answers and pointers to life's more perplexing mysteries. With unusual perspicacity, Berthier exposed the excesses to which individual reason had gone, showing that unbelievers rejected Christianity, not for rational purposes, but because it interfered with their pleasures. The consequences of this, he predicted prophetically, was the collapse of the traditional "moral code," and the development



of a civilization given to "self-seeking, sensualism, deceit, and crime."<sup>55</sup> The deterministic philosophy of the Encyclopedists had an inherent and fatal weakness, according to Berthier. It did not "admit any law binding the conscience; the only guilty person," he concluded, "will be the one who does not succeed."<sup>56</sup>

Thus, the type of education which the Encyclopedists propounded created a discontinuity with the traditional concept of liberal education. Catholic scholars, like Berthier, Bergier, Signorgne, Gauchat and Pluche pointed out, in their writings, that the Encyclopedists undermined the unity and integrity of all knowledge. This was evident in the new type of Encyclopedic scholarship which was concerned with the pursuit of knowledge in detail, but which lacked that largeness and harmony of view which preserved the continuity of tradition with the genuine intellectual findings of the Enlightenment. The Encyclopedia was arranged, not according to a philosophic or theological principle (although many divergent philosophical outlooks were contained in the Encyclopedia), but according to the letters of the alphabet. The tendency of the Encyclopedia, therefore, was to break up the circle of knowledge into unrelated fragments. The most serious consequence of this fragmentation of human knowledge was the rejection, by the French Encyclopedists, of theology and its traditional place in liberal education.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge faced the problem for liberal education posed by the Encyclopedia in the nineteenth century. In his 'Treatise on Method,' Coleridge set out to reform the Encyclopedia.<sup>57</sup> He endeavored to arrange a new Encyclopedia "in agreement with a philosophical system, based on the nature of the subjects--a method which causes the entire work to become a rational exposition of the state of human knowledge, and the mutual dependence and relative importance of its different branches."<sup>58</sup> The 'Encyclopedia Metropolitana' (1818-45) emerged as the product of this kind of philosophic comprehensiveness. It signaled a departure from the usual Encyclopedia for it was arranged according to a philosophical master thought, and it endeavored to restore the unity and integrity of all knowledge by combining the ancient and the modern.

Notwithstanding the courageous efforts of various Catholic scholars and theologians of the eighteenth century to deal with the intellectual problems posed by the Enlightenment, the Church's official reaction was sadly lacking in intellectual leadership and insight. According to Professor Rogier, the Church systematically avoided participation in "the discussions of the burning issues" of the eighteenth century. Thus, he wrote:

In general, the actual influence of Rome on international happenings was extremely small; its

contributions to the development of thought exhausted themselves in stereotype and sterile protest. Surveying the cultural history of the eighteenth century, one repeatedly misses the participation of the Church and its supreme leadership in the discussions of the burning issues of the period. If Rome contributed at all, it did so only negatively: with an admonition, an anathema, or an exhortation to silence. Regretably, Rome not only failed to join in dialogue with a generation as strongly affected by the currents of the age as that of the eighteenth century. It systematically avoided it.<sup>59</sup>

The negative posture, adopted by the official Church to the world of contemporary ideas as it entered into the nineteenth century, led to the greatest crisis of the intellect for Catholic theology throughout its long history.<sup>60</sup> The nineteenth century gave rise to movements such as liberalism, rationalism and modernism which threatened the very foundations and doctrines of Christianity. These movements engaged the Church in a bitter controversy which lasted right up until the eve of Vatican Council II.



### 3. Liberalism

According to John P. Dolan, the Catholic Church's reaction to "all forms of Enlightenment-inspired liberalism" during the nineteenth century was no less vituperous than Voltaire's "écrasez l'infâme" in the eighteenth century.<sup>61</sup> Liberalism in the nineteenth century was identified with "freedom of thought, laissez-faire in economics, and representative and parliamentary government."<sup>62</sup> After 1830, a number of Catholic clergy and laity broached the possibility of "reconciling Catholicism with liberalism."<sup>63</sup> The liberal principles in question were: "personal freedom," "political freedoms," "self-determination," "primacy of principle of nationality," "freedom of the press," "freedom of religion," and "separation of church and state."<sup>64</sup> These liberal principles were viewed by some Catholic scholars as a realization of the message of Christianity in the social and political arena. Other liberal principles, which directly affected the authority of the Church, were included in the new agenda of liberal Catholics. These principles addressed the "authoritarian relations between bishops and flock," "greater autonomy of Catholic thinkers with respect to the official theological systems," and "greater leeway for the clergy in relation to traditional pastoral methods."<sup>65</sup> The official ecclesiastical authority viewed collaboration with the liberal principles and ideals of the Enlightenment as detrimental to the "established religious and political order."<sup>66</sup> The liberals, on the other hand, viewed the Church as the main obstacle to

"political freedom, intellectual liberation, and progress in general."<sup>67</sup> Thus, liberalism developed into one of the main problems affecting the Church during the nineteenth century.

In 1831, Gregory XVI was elected Pope. The pontificate of Pope Gregory XVI ushered in the ultramontane movement in the Catholic church which viewed with distrust the liberal aspirations of the new age. Gregory XVI wrote 'Trionfo della Santa Sede' (Triumph of the Holy See) advocating a strictly papalist monarchy in the Church, downplaying collegial aspects.<sup>68</sup> This work was to have a great influence on the development of the ultramontane movement which set the climate of the Church during the nineteenth century. The pontificate of Gregory XVI laid the foundation for the future development of the Catholic spirit which had a different view to the value of human reason than was customary in the Church's authentic tradition. According to Roger Aubert, Gregory XVI prepared the way for the excesses of ultramontaniam which "stifled pluralism and endangered the collegial nature of ecclesiastical authority."<sup>69</sup> Pope Gregory XVI and his successors, with the exception of Pope Leo XIII, created a trend during the nineteenth century that came down squarely on the side of the supernatural, but which tended to characterise as error whatever evaded "submission to the supernatural."<sup>70</sup>

The nineteenth century also began under unfavourable conditions, generally, for Catholic liberal studies. According to Roger Aubert, the Catholic centres of education were disorganized



"as a consequence of the French Revolution." In Italy and Spain, theologians were preoccupied with "sterile polemics" and theology "languished in mediocrity." The situation in France, where "style rather than substance predominated in theological writings" was no better. The writings of Chateaubriand and Lamartine were unable to conceal "the doctrinal poverty" of current theological thought in France. The German theological climate was influenced by the rationalism of Kant, and tended, by contrast, to empty Christianity of its "supernatural content."<sup>71</sup>

A reaction to the dearth of intellectual content in Catholic theology took place during the early part of the century. During this period (1810-1820), Catholic theology attempted to absorb influences from romantic thought by adopting concepts and mental orientations such as "a sensibility to the coldness of reason" or a "mystical understanding of the universe."<sup>72</sup> These initiatives, though inept, were an improvement on the sterile polemics of an outdated Scholasticism. The problem, however, with these concepts was that they were supported by an exaggerated philosophy, and they did not hold the conviction of established and proven ideas drawn from the development of the liberal arts and the understanding of the liberal knowledge of the period. The influence of romantic thought created a positive awareness that there were "internal connections and an organic unity between the various theological sciences."<sup>73</sup> Still, romantic thought was unable to explore and develop the relationship and correspondence between liberal education and Catholic theology in authentic



fashion. Thus, Catholic theology, according to Aubert, concerned itself with "a revaluation of the confession of faith, occasionally even sliding into fideism."<sup>74</sup>

In France, particularly, where liberalism became a controversial issue for the Church, the problem was compounded by the lack of "an institutional framework" for the revival of theological studies.<sup>75</sup> The entire intellectual training of the clergy was confined to the seminaries of the dioceses which left much to be desired. The curriculum of seminary studies suffered for two main reasons: (1) Competent professors were not available as a consequence of the disruption occasioned by the French Revolution. (2) The shortage of priests caused Bishops to be more concerned with rapid ordinations rather than with theological education. According to Aubert, in seventy-five out of eighty seminaries in France, Church history was not taught, exegesis was confined to devotional commentary without critical comment, moral theology was limited to casuistry, and dogma consisted in "the memorization of simple and antiquated texts."<sup>76</sup>

Catholic thought in France, during the first third of the nineteenth century, was also marked by a "counter-revolutionary apologetic" which sought to win back the faithless who had been lost to the Church by the Revolution. The writings of Lamennais gave this counter-revolutionary apologetic a strongly intellectual base by showing how it satisfied "the demands of spiritual and

intellectual freedom" which were threatened by the despotism of the Revolution and Napoleon.<sup>77</sup> Lamennais' theology did much to raise the consciousness of the Church in France to the intellectual and social needs of the day. In his book, 'Des progrès de la Révolution et de la guerre contre l'Église,' 1829, he espoused a sort of "political liberalism," offering a doctrine of social salvation in place of individualistic rationalism.<sup>78</sup> The Catholic, liberal paper, 'L'Avenir,' also propounded the political liberalism and social principles of Lamennais. The new philosophy of liberalism and invective of 'L'Avenir' caused a great deal of dissension in the Church and unsettled Catholic Bishops as well as the Pope. Thus, on 15 August, 1832, Pope Gregory XVI published the Encyclical, 'Mirari Vos' which condemned liberalism in its various manifestations. The words of the encyclical characterized as madness "that everyone should have and practice freedom of conscience," and it described freedom of the press as a "loathsome freedom which one cannot despise too strongly."<sup>79</sup> The encyclical also condemned the invitation to revolt against sovereigns, and the notion of the separation of Church and State. Neither Lamennais nor 'L'Avenir' was mentioned by name in 'Mirari Vos,' but the liberalism of Lamennais and his popular paper were, by implication, suspect. On 21 June, 1834, Pope Gregory XVI published another encyclical, 'Singulari Nos,' which condemned explicitly the "revolutionary doctrines" of Lamennais.<sup>80</sup>

It appears that Lamennais suffered from a "superficial understanding" of theology, a lack which was evident in his liberal brand of political Catholicism.<sup>81</sup> His program of political liberalism was ambitious but it was unrealistic. Lamennais' lack of theological education led him into avenues of political activity which threatened some basic principles of Catholicism. He is recognized as "a great initiator" but the kind of concepts which he outlined, and the way in which he presented them "did not have lasting value."<sup>82</sup>

Two opposing Catholic groups began to emerge in the Church as a result of the conflict with liberalism. One group wanted the Church to embrace the ideas of liberalism just as it had embraced the concepts of Greco-Roman civilization. Another group insisted on the condemnation of all forms of liberalism by the Church's magisterium. The conflict between these two factions surfaced over the 'Roman Question,' the question of academic freedom, and the liberal constitutions of modern democracies.

In England, Lord John Acton assumed the directorship of 'The Rambler,' a liberal, Catholic paper, in 1859. Acton embodied the new spirit of English, Catholic liberalism. In 'The Rambler,' he adopted positions on ecclesiastical authority and the 'Roman Question' which provoked strong reactions from Cardinals Wiseman and Manning in the 'Dublin Review.' The views expressed by John Henry Newman in his essay, "On consulting the faithful in



matters of doctrine,' were compromised by the controversial position of 'The Rambler' which did not do justice to his stance regarding liberalism.<sup>83</sup>

In Germany, the question of academic freedom became an issue between 'liberal' theologians and the Church's ecclesiastical magisterium. Ignaz von Dollinger, professor of Church history at Munich, was elected as a member of the Bavarian Academy of Sciences in 1837, and founded the 'Archive for Theological literature' in 1842. In 1861, Dollinger delivered two lectures at Munich critical of the government of the Papal States, though presenting "positive views regarding the importance of papal primacy."<sup>84</sup> In 1863, he arranged a meeting of German Catholic scholars in order to create a "common front against the increasingly radical attacks by secular academics."<sup>85</sup> This convention, which was not authorised officially by the Church's ecclesiastical authority, was viewed with suspicion by Rome. Dollinger's opening address at the convention, entitled: 'The Past and Present of Theology,' described "various methods of theology" and insisted on "complete freedom of movement whenever faith was not directly affected."<sup>86</sup> Dollinger also called for "purely scholarly weapons in the struggle against theological error, instead of ecclesiastical censures."<sup>87</sup> The problem for the Church was further compounded by Dollinger's criticism of Catholic theology in the Latin countries, thus creating the impression that he was demanding "the actual intellectual leadership of the Church by the German theologians."<sup>88</sup> On 21 December, 1863, Pope Pius IX published a

Papal brief 'Tuas Libenter,' sent to the Archbishop of Munich, denouncing Dollinger's attacks on Scholasticism" and deploring the fact that a gathering of theologians had taken place without explicit request from the hierarchy whose task, the brief asserted, "is to guide and supervise theology."<sup>89</sup> 'Tuas Libenter' also bound Catholic scholars by "solemn definitions," by the "decisions of the Roman congregations," by the "magisterial office" of the Church, and by the "common doctrines of theologians."<sup>90</sup> The issue of academic freedom raised by Dollinger and some German theologians saw only one side of the issue, and was opposed to "any intervention by the ecclesiastical magisterial office on principle."<sup>91</sup> This was a grave mistake since Dollinger was claiming for theologians an exaggerated power to mold theological thought independently of the Church's magisterium. Thus, the 'liberal' approach to academic freedom in theology during the nineteenth century minimized the need for active collaboration between theologians and the Church's magisterium.

Rome also reacted with suspicion, if not hostility, to the liberal, European democracies. The Belgian constitution of 1831 was the result of the reconciliation of Catholicism with liberalism in that country. Catholics obtained freedom of religious instruction in public schools, and the Catholic University of Louvain was opened in 1834. A strained relationship between Church and State, however, developed in the new democracies. This



was due to the Church's uneasy accommodation with political liberation and to the intransigence of anti-clerical liberals who wanted to deny the Church its liberties.<sup>92</sup> In Italy, the Church opposed the creation of a Catholic liberal party.<sup>93</sup> In France, the July Revolution of 1830 replaced the previous "alliance of throne and altar" with an "anti-clerical and liberal middle-class regime."<sup>94</sup>

The Church's opposition to the political liberalism of the nineteenth century was justified in that it tried to defend a twofold positive ideal. (1) The Church promoted the notion that religion was not just a private matter, but that it had a real impact on social life. (2) The Church demanded protection of the rights of the "actual state" compared to the "legal state" controlled by a small oligarchy.<sup>95</sup>

The confrontation between the Church and liberalism came to a head when Pope Pius IX published the Encyclical, 'Quanta Cura' and 'The Syllabus of Errors,' in December 1864. 'The Syllabus of Errors' was an appendix to the Encyclical, consisting of eighty unacceptable liberal propositions. The Syllabus condemned, for example, "indifferentism" which regarded "all religions as equal in value," "Socialism" which denied "the right to private property," "naturalism" which demanded "laicization of institutions," the "separation of church and state," and the "absolute freedom of press."<sup>96</sup> The Syllabus also condemned "the doctrinal errors and excesses of liberalism" in the nineteenth century which threatened



to undermine the positive value and impact of religion on the lives of the faithful.<sup>97</sup> The Encyclical 'Inter Multiples' of Pope Pius IX again reaffirmed the Church's teaching which was under attack by the liberalism of the day.<sup>98</sup>

#### 4. Rationalism

The Catholic Church rigorously defended traditional liberal education which combined confidence in reason with belief in Revelation. The nineteenth century gave rise to a movement, known as Rationalism, which made reason the sole source of all knowledge available to mankind. This movement undermined Christianity by repudiating Revelation and questioning the *raison d'être* of faith. The Holy See reacted to nineteenth century rationalism by resisting all forms of Enlightenment-inspired concepts which tended to undermine the faith. The challenge facing the Church, however, was to preserve the continuity of traditional liberal education while absorbing the new findings of liberal knowledge. In Germany, Catholic scholars faced the challenge and devoted their best efforts to guiding Catholic thought "into channels more suitable to the modern way of thinking."<sup>99</sup>

Georg Hermes, a priest and professor of dogma at Münster, tried to transcend, in his writings, "the apparent antagonism between modern philosophy and the teachings of the Church."<sup>100</sup> Hermes published 'Philosophische Einleitung in die Christ-Katholische,' 1819; 'Positive Einleitung,' 1829; and 'Christ-Katholische Dogmatik,' the latter posthumously. These works contain the essence of Hermes' philosophical and theological principles. In his writing, Hermes combined Kant's rationalism with Fichte's romanticism. He applied, for example, Kant's

"categorical imperative" to "the truths of the faith" and, influenced by Fichte's idealism, offered an "a priori description of all-including supernatural reality on a rational basis."<sup>101</sup> The theology of Hermes came under criticism for its "Pelagian and Semi-rationalistic position."<sup>102</sup> Hermes advanced a concept of theology as "a doctrine which could be understood rationally," causing him to view "the development of dogma and the history of dogmas" as the result of the Enlightenment rather than the tradition of the Church.<sup>103</sup> A Papal Brief on 26 September, 1835 condemned the writings of Hermes as "absurda et a doctrina Catholicae Ecclesiae Aliena."<sup>104</sup> The brief made reference to specific errors in Hermes' writings concerning "ecclesiastical tradition," "God," "grace," and "original sin." Hermes' methodology, however, was the main target of criticism by the Holy See which viewed his adaptation of certain aspects of Enlightenment-inspired rationalism as incompatible with Catholic theology. Thus, the Holy See condemned (1) Hermes' "method of using positive doubt as the foundation of all theological inquiry"; (2) Hermes' "rationalistic principle which sees reason as the only means of obtaining knowledge of supernatural truth."<sup>105</sup> The followers of Hermes accused his opponents of fideism; that is, a one-sided reliance on faith and a disparagement of reason in pursuit of religious truth. In 1854, Pius IX published the Encyclical, 'Qui Pluribus,' which emphasized the importance of the rational



basis of the act of faith. Although this encyclical was directed against the "fideists," it did not habilitate the theological thought of Georg Hermes.

Anton Günther, like Hermes, attracted a following in Germany from those who were anxious that Catholic theology explore new paths better suited to the modern mentality. Günther attempted to reconcile contemporary liberal thought with the Catholic faith with a view to enabling "Catholic intellectuals to remain in the Church while they confronted the great philosophical currents of their time."<sup>106</sup> The essential thought of Günther is contained in his 'Vorschule zur Spekulativen Theologie,' 1828-29. In this work, Günther tried to work out "a philosophical justification of the great Christian dogmas" by confronting "Hegel's pantheistic idealism and Feuerbach's materialistic monism."<sup>107</sup> Many scholars were critical of Günther's blend of Feuerbachian Rationalism (which tried to connect theology with a radical belief in reason) with Hegelian romanticism (which attempted to connect theology with irrational, romantic aspects). According to Roger Aubert, Günther devoted himself to a "new scholarly proof of theology with an anthropological base." He was convinced that Scholasticism was outdated since, in his view, it only provided a "philosophy of concepts." Thus, Günther placed the accent, in his theology, on the concept of man as "nature and mind," and he presented Catholic dogma in the

language of a new "phenomenology of the mind."<sup>108</sup> Pius IX put the works of Günther on the Index in January, 1857, and on 15 June, 1857 issued a Papal brief 'Eximiam tuam' condemning the errors.

#### John Henry Newman (1801-1890)

In England, John Henry Newman was more successful than any of his contemporaries in paving the way for the acceptance of the modern exigencies of reason in the service of the Catholic faith. According to A. Dwight Culler, Newman was "strongly anti-rationalistic" but in no sense was he "anti-intellectual."<sup>109</sup>

Newman published his 'Apologia pro vita sua' in 1864, defending Catholic interest in liberal education and replying to Charles Kingsley's accusation that the Catholic clergy did not regard "truth for its own sake" as a virtue.<sup>110</sup> In this work, Newman criticized the type of rationalistic spirit that created an "all-dissolving scepticism of the intellect in religious enquiries."<sup>111</sup> He defended the rationalism of "right reason" whose real object is truth, but he was careful to point out that 'right reason' is not to be identified with the actual use of reason "as it acts in fact and concretely in fallen man."<sup>112</sup> In his criticism of rationalism, therefore, Newman was concerned with the "faculty of reason actually and historically" in fallen man, without the benefit of Christianity, and whose tendency, he explained "is

towards a simple unbelief in matters of religion."<sup>113</sup> This tendency towards unbelief was evident, according to Newman, in the leanings of "the educated intellect of England, France and Germany" which veered towards "atheism in one shape or another."<sup>114</sup> The rationalistic spirit of Enlightenment thought resulted in a radical liberalism of the intellect which infected Protestant theology, especially Anglican theology, and was nothing more, according to Newman, than a "deep, plausible scepticism" which arose out of "the development of human reason, as practically exercised by the natural man."<sup>115</sup>

In a note appended to the Apologia, Newman defined what he meant by Liberalism. Thus, he wrote: "Now by Liberalism I mean false liberty of thought."<sup>116</sup> The mistake of liberalism of the intellect, according to Newman, was that it did not know where to draw the line "between what was just and what was inadmissible in speculation." Thus, liberalism made the mistake, according to Newman, of

subjecting to human judgment those revealed doctrines which are in their nature beyond and independent of it, and of claiming to determine on intrinsic grounds the truth and value of propositions which rest for their reception simply on the external authority of the Divine word.<sup>117</sup>

In the Apologia, Newman described the adverse effects of liberalism on his own mental development when he preferred "intellectual excellence to moral."<sup>118</sup> The liberal fallacy which Newman exposed in his writings, according to Walter Houghton, was



the failure to distinguish between "the object in itself" and "the object in the human context."<sup>119</sup> Liberals like Charles Kingsley insisted that "things in themselves are good or evil." Thus, Kingsley argued that the physical nature of man is "good" and there cannot be "anything sinful in acting according to that nature." Newman agreed with this position "speaking abstractly" but when it came to fact he pointed out that "it may easily happen that what is in itself innocent may not be innocent to this or that person, or in this or that mode or degree."<sup>120</sup> This was the crucial point which the liberals missed given the basic direction of their thinking which avoided the real, practical moral issue. Speaking concretely and with reference to the facts, Newman observed that "we have in us by nature a something more" than good natural feelings and inclinations, "viz. an evil principle which perverts them to a bad end."<sup>121</sup> Thus, Newman's moral insight and observation were able to revise the liberal's abstract, rational judgment of human nature by pointing to the reality of an evil principle that perverted natural feelings to a bad end.

Nineteenth century intellectual liberalism has been viewed as a reaction to the rationalism of the Enlightenment by forming a false compromise between nature and grace, science and faith. The German philosophy of nature which found "the natural order supernatural" (Carlyle and Coleridge propagated this philosophy in England in their works) provided the rationale for the liberal attitude that

gave rise to a secular form of religiosity without belief in Revelation or dogma.<sup>122</sup> Charles Kingsley adapted this liberalism to Christian theology by propounding a "Physical Theology" which, according to Newman, tells us nothing about Christianity but, rather, disposed the mind "against Christianity."<sup>123</sup> As a result of the compromise between liberalism and faith, Houghton pointed out that

man is not thought of as separate from God, suffering from original sin, desperately needing repentance and grace before he may be reborn again in Christ. On the contrary, all men are born children of God, and baptism is simply the sign of a fact existing from the beginning.<sup>124</sup>

Thus, Newman's intellectual approach to reason and faith was careful to point out and avoid the excesses of liberalism which undermined important truths of Revelation.

Newman's intellectual approach to faith, therefore, avoided the fallacy and compromise of liberalism. According to Patrick J. Corish, it was essentially a psychological analysis of "moral proof, of a collection of probabilities" which demonstrated the reasonableness of the act of faith.<sup>125</sup> The proof of faith for Newman was not strictly a rational proof since it dealt with "non-logical truths." Newman's approach was non-scholastic. He argued that the truths of the faith were reached "not by one direct simple and sufficient proof" as in a scholastic syllogism, "but by a complex argument consisting of accumulating and converging possibilities."<sup>126</sup> This approach recognised the role of conscience which Newman regarded as "the creative principle of religion" just



as "the moral sense is the principle of ethics."<sup>127</sup> Newman, nevertheless, defended the Catholic doctrine that "faith must rest on reason" but he did not see the need to provide a logical or ontological proof of faith. Thus, he wrote: "the faith and reason, of which I speak, are subjective, private, personal, and unscientific."<sup>128</sup>

Newman was quick to point out the limitations of logic in matters of faith. He defined logic as the "regulating principle" of "ratiocination," emphasizing that it offered only "verbal argumentation" but that it "does not really prove."<sup>129</sup> Impressed by the force of St. Ambrose's maxim, "Non in Dialectica complacuit Deo salvum facere populum suum" ('not by means of logic was God pleased to save his people'), Newman realized the drawbacks of paper logic. Thus, he wrote in a memorable passage of his *Apologia*:

I had a great dislike of paper logic. For myself, it was not logic that carried me on; as well might one say that the quicksilver in the barometer changes the weather. It is the concrete being that reasons; pass a number of years, and I find my mind in a new place; how? The whole man moves; paper logic is but the record of it. All the logic in the world would not have made me move faster towards Rome than I did. . . . . Great acts take time.<sup>130</sup>

Thus, logic fell short of "concrete issues." Abstract syllogisms, which are true in logic, prove nothing, according to Newman, about the concrete facts. Universals, he claimed, are "generalizations" and do not come to conclusions about matters of fact or particulars. The abstract syllogism concerning rationality as the proper distinction of man was a case in point for Newman. "Man is



rational, John is a man, therefore John is rational." But what, Newman observed, "if John is an idiot." We must know John as an individual "to be sure of it."<sup>131</sup> The real differentiation of the individual is the "whole self," "reason," "feelings," "psychology," "culture," "bones," "limbs," "morality," "conscience," and so forth. People do not differ in "number" but "in all that they are," in their "identity," "incommunicability," "personality."<sup>132</sup> One cannot subject the individual or thing to an abstract notion.

Thus, Newman wrote:

Each thing has its own nature and its own history. When the nature and the history of many things are similar, we say that they have the same nature; but there is no such thing as one and the same nature; they are each of them itself, not identical, but like. A law is not a fact, but a notion.<sup>133</sup>

Scientific notions, according to Newman, cannot be "the measure of fact" because they have too much "simplicity and exactness."<sup>134</sup>

Newman acknowledged Pascal's genius in showing how "the facts of Christianity" went beyond scientific notions, betokening "the presence of a higher intelligence, purpose, and might."<sup>135</sup> Pascal's reasoning, according to Newman, took a higher form by appealing not just to logic or the abstract notions of scholastics and scientists, but to "the implicit processes of the reasoning faculty."<sup>136</sup>

In his 'Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent,' Newman exposed the weakness of Locke's rationalism. According to Newman, Locke consulted "his own ideal of how the mind ought to act, instead of interrogating human nature, as an existing thing, as it is found

in the world."<sup>137</sup> Newman's strong criticism of Locke was that he rejected "the testimony of psychological facts" and tried to form men "as he thinks they ought to be formed, into something better and higher."<sup>138</sup> In Chapter VI of the 'Grammar,' Newman re-evaluated Locke's reasoning in the 'Essay on Human Understanding.' Locke's position was that no one, pursuing truth for its own sake, should entertain "any proposition with greater assurance than the proofs it is built on will warrant."<sup>139</sup> Thus, Locke was opposed to the notion of "unconditional assent" which he regarded as being "above the evidence." Newman pointed out the inconsistency of Locke's reasoning regarding "unconditional assent" where he admitted exceptions to his own rule demanded by the facts. Exceptions to the rule, even for Locke, were "self-evident propositions" which required "unconditional assent."<sup>140</sup> Newman also observed that assent had no real meaning in Locke's writings. Locke was actually talking about Inference ("a conditional acceptance of a proposition") to a greater or lesser degree, whereas assent, according to Newman, was "an adhesion without reserve or doubt to the proposition to which it (assent) is given."<sup>141</sup>

In his Grammar, Newman appealed to "the experience of human life, as it is daily brought before us" as the true teacher about the nature of assent.<sup>142</sup> He offered six intelligent arguments justifying unconditional assent as an act of reason.

1. Assents or beliefs, according to Newman, constitute "the clothing and furniture of the mind" which enrich our lives and, in no way, are conclusions or imply a "process of thought."



2. Assents often disappear during one's lifetime as arguments and reasons take over. At this point, what began as assents become assertions or inferences.

3. Assent, Newman claimed, is independent of our "acts of inference." People who profess admiration for truth, may not assent to it. Such is the problem with the Socratic principle that 'Knowledge is the only virtue, ignorance the only vice.' The fact that people know the truth doesn't mean that they will assent to it. Prejudice and selfishness often hinder assent.

4. Assent, according to Newman, either exists or it does not exist. It does not rely on proof, for good arguments elicit inference rather than assent. The Sophists who were skilled in argumentation and proof were noted for their scepticism and absence of assent.

5. Moral motives, Newman pointed out, can hinder assent.

6. Demonstrations, even in mathematical and scientific matters, do not 'ipso facto' claim assent. Newman observed that a "party spirit" and "national feeling" often go against what is demonstrably proven.<sup>143</sup>

Thus, Newman illustrated the rational character of assent as opposed to Locke's type of reasoning in the 'Essay on Human Understanding.' Newman pointed out that the Church's teaching on faith and an intelligent understanding of assent are compatible even though both are different. Faith, as assent, is different in kind to



rational assent because it is a divine gift, aided by grace.<sup>144</sup>

The Catholic doctrine, however, that "faith must rest on reason" was upheld by Newman's theory of the rational justification of the act of assent.

The purpose of Newman's 'Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent' was to provide a rational justification of religious belief, not according to "the old and true philosophy" of Scholasticism, but in his "own way."<sup>145</sup> Newman gave two main reasons for embarking upon such a task.

1. The intellectual crisis of the Enlightenment demanded a new approach and Newman felt compelled to speak out in what he described as

the time of an intellectual earthquake, when the opinions of men are stirred from their very foundations, and a revolution is passing over the ideas of the civilized world more appalling than any uprooting of thrones however august, or overthrow of civil institutions, however ancient.<sup>146</sup>

2. Newman preferred to address the intellectual issue in his "own way" because the "tenets" and "language" of "existing schools of thought" were not "securely settled" and because his path was "different from theirs."<sup>147</sup>

In the Grammar, therefore, Newman was breaking new ground. He did not purport to offer a didactic treatise on religious belief or faith in the manner of the Scholastics. His method of investigation into the workings of the faith revealed what he has described as "a law in the matter of religious faith."<sup>148</sup> This law or broad principle did not, according to Newman, arrive at certitude by "rigid demonstration" as in mathematics, but by "accumulated

probabilities."<sup>149</sup> Newman described the process as follows:

He has willed, I say, that we should so act, and, as willing it, He co-operates with us in our acting, and thereby enables us to do that which He wills us to do, and carries us on, if our will does but co-operate with His, to a certitude which rises higher than the logical force of our conclusions. And thus I came to see clearly, and to have a satisfaction in seeing, that, in being led on into the Church of Rome, I was not proceeding on any secondary or isolated grounds of reason, or by controversial points in detail, but was protected and justified, even in the use of those secondary or particular arguments by a great and broad principle. But, let it be observed, that I am stating a matter of fact, not defending it; and if any Catholic says in consequence that I have been converted in a wrong way, I cannot help that now.<sup>150</sup>

Newman very cleverly evaded theological criticism of his theory, and the charge of unorthodoxy, by stating that he was speaking "historically," not "theologically," and that he was expressing "a matter of fact, not defending it."<sup>151</sup>

The manner of 'proof' which Newman offered in the matter of religious faith is treated at length in his 'Grammar of Assent.' The kind of rational justification of faith is described by Newman as "an accumulation of various probabilities" on which one may "construct legitimate proof, sufficient for certitude."<sup>152</sup> In the *Apologia*, Newman outlined the same argument. Thus, he wrote:

My argument is in outline as follows: that that absolute certitude which we were able to possess, whether as to the truths of natural theology, or as to the fact of a revelation, was the result of an assemblage of concurring and converging possibilities, and that, both according to the constitution of the human mind and the will of its Maker; that certitude was a habit of mind, that certainty was a quality of propositions; that probabilities which did not reach to logical certainty, might suffice for



a mental certitude; that the certitude thus brought about might equal in measure and strength the certitude which was created by the strictest scientific demonstration; and that to possess such certitude might in given cases and to given individuals be a plain duty, though not to others in other circumstances.<sup>153</sup>

The "validity of proof" in matters of religious faith was determined, according to Newman, "not by any scientific test, but by the Illative sense."<sup>154</sup> Newman's notion of the "Illative Sense" is the most controversial ingredient of his theory. He regarded the Illative Sense as a "special faculty" which enabled us "to do our best" in any class of reasoning.<sup>155</sup> The rationale for the Illative Sense, according to Newman, lay in the fact that, "in any inquiry about things in the concrete" people differ according to (1) "the principles" which govern "their reasoning"; and (2) the "personal character" of those principles.<sup>156</sup> Newman offers four characteristics of the Illative Sense in the Grammar: (1) It is the same "in all concrete matters, though employed in them in different measures." (2) It is "attached to definite subject-matters"; that is, it is possessed in one department of thought but not necessarily in another. For example, the poet can possess this sense in his own area while the statesman can possess it in an entirely different area. (3) It proceeds by "a method of reasoning" that extends "the limits of abstract science." (4) Finally, the "ultimate test of truth and error in our inferences" in any "class of concrete reasonings" is the "trustworthiness of the Illative Sense that gives them its sanction."<sup>157</sup>



The Illative Sense, according to Newman, is its own "living rule" and is the "ultimate test of truth and error" in concrete matters of religious faith. Newman viewed this sense, not in the manner of an instinct, but as a "particular mental sense" that provided the rational argument for faith. The sense of certitude about faith could only be derived, according to Newman, through the development of the Illative Sense.<sup>158</sup> Newman claimed that the views and interpretations of great theologians and scholars concerning the same subject-matter are illustrations that their ideas and vision were governed by "the process of assumption lying in the action of the Illative Sense" which he maintained is "applied to primary elements of thought respectively congenial to the disputants."<sup>159</sup> The Illative Sense, therefore, is viewed as "a personal gift or acquisition"; that is, a form of reasoning which extends the usual operations of reason and which does not merely perform "the function of logic."<sup>160</sup> In Chapter IX of the Grammar, Newman describes this sense as:

the reasoning faculty which has its function in the beginning, middle, and end of all verbal discussion and inquiry, and in every step of the process. It is a rule to itself, and appeals to no judgment beyond its own.<sup>161</sup>

In the 'Grammar,' therefore, Newman offered a detailed description of (1) the type of proof required for religious faith; and (2) the reasoning faculty validating such proof in religious matters. The type of proof is described as "an assemblage of concurring and converging possibilities." The reasoning faculty of the religious mind is called the Illative Sense.

Many of the positive insights of Enlightenment-inspired liberal thought can be found in Newman's theology. For example, the primary role of conscience as the means of entry into religious experience has echoes of Rousseau; the emphasis on the 'non-logical' character of religious truths points up to the influence of Kant and German Enlightenment; the non-scholastic method, whereby real assent is contrasted with notional assent in the Grammar, illustrates the influence of the British empirical way of viewing things.

Newman was careful, however, to acknowledge the limitations of his non-scholastic approach in matters of doctrine. He published 'An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine,' 1845, in which he emphasized and illustrated the value and the need for historical thought.<sup>162</sup> In the 'Apologia,' published later in 1864, Newman recognised the limitations of his method in the Essay on doctrinal development. Thus, he wrote in the Apologia that he acknowledged his "ignorance of the details of doctrine, as the Church of Rome holds them" and his "impatience to clear as large a range for the principle of doctrinal development."<sup>163</sup> The justification of religious belief offered by Newman in the Grammar was likewise criticised by Martin D'Arcy for failing to offer a proper epistemology and for presenting a subjective theory of religious assent.<sup>164</sup> Newman justified his subjective theory on the grounds that the "language of the existing schools of thought" was not "securely settled."

I. T. Kerr has defended Newman's approach, claiming that D'Arcy viewed



Newman from a scholastic perspective in which he found him wanting.<sup>165</sup> Newman's type of religious proof was also similar to Bishop Joseph Butler's argument based on probability.<sup>166</sup> Newman admitted his indebtedness to Butler but he claimed that he was carrying Butler's ideas forward positively. According to Newman, Butler only offered a negative proof for the divine truths of Christianity "derived from their parallels as discoverable in the order of nature." Newman, on the other hand, claimed to offer "a positive and direct proof of the Divine origin of the Christian doctrines."<sup>167</sup>

In the Grammar Newman offered a different intellectual approach whereby reason and faith could be reconciled or harmonized. He emphasized the "practical character" of his work, disclaiming any intentions to offer a metaphysical proof or a didactic theological message. His thinking has had a pervasive influence on contemporary Catholic scholars, such as Bernard Lonergan.<sup>168</sup> Like Thierry of Chartres in the twelfth century, who fashioned the concepts and vocabulary of Scholastic theology according to the laws of classical liberal education, John Henry Newman opened a new way. He went beyond the logical and abstract language of the Scholastics, and established a new intellectual approach to faith based on real as well as notional assent. Thus, Newman, writing in a non-scholastic fashion, demonstrates the reasonableness of the act of faith. He was more successful than any of his contemporaries in laying the basis for the reconciliation or harmonious relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology in an age when such a relationship was thought to be non-existent.



## 5. Modernism

The crisis in the Church of the twentieth century, known as Modernism, was, according to Roger Aubert, the result of "various concepts that had spontaneously developed" during the nineteenth century favouring the "reconciliation between the Church and modern society."<sup>169</sup> Modernism was defined by Poulat as "the meeting and confrontation of a long religious past with a present which found the vital sources of its inspiration in anything but this past."<sup>170</sup> The modernist crisis is a good example of the tension existing between liberal education and Catholic theology in the Church during a time of great cultural and intellectual ferment. This crisis came to light when Catholicism clashed with the changing currents of society, but, particularly, when the Church's traditional doctrines came into conflict with modern religious studies. The crisis was heightened by the fact that these modern studies had developed independently and often in opposition to the directives and guidance of the Church's magisterium.

In a general sense, the intellectual thrust of modernism called for a radical revisionism of Catholic theology, holding that the Church should relinquish unalterable doctrines and devise new doctrines and interpretations in order to preserve contact with the changing currents of society. The movement was influenced by liberalism, rationalism, neo-Kantianism and the philosophy of Maurice

Blondel.<sup>171</sup> Some Catholic scholars and theologians were more often influenced by liberal Protestant theologians than by their own tradition of learning. In the area of Biblical studies, Catholic theologians liberally applied the principles of historical criticism to the teachings and history of the Church, thus calling into question some essential doctrines. A major problem emerged in Catholicism; namely, "the compatibility of Catholic belief with the results of modern exegetic scholarship."<sup>172</sup> Pope Leo XIII issued the Encyclical, 'Providentissimus' in 1893, providing principles to solve problems arising from modern exegetic scholarship. The Church's magisterium was wary of the new critical methods of scriptural studies which were thought to be "infested with rationalistic methods" and which tended to erase systematically "the supernatural aspect" of the Bible.<sup>173</sup>

The Modernist crisis, however, is not to be confused with other movements which developed contemporaneously, such as 'Reform Catholicism' and 'Americanism.' These movements respected the basic structures of the Church and the faith, but they were open to the cultural and intellectual currents of the age. Although these manifestations of modernism did not try to divest Catholic teaching of its supernatural content, they were not without difficulties, however. Thus, Leo XIII issued a papal letter, 'Testem benevolentiae,' 22 January, 1899, warning against some of the views contrary to Church doctrine termed, 'Americanism.'<sup>174</sup>

In Germany, Franz Xavier Kraus endeavoured to promote Catholic reform by distinguishing between "religious" Catholicism (which he defended) and "political" Catholicism which he criticised.<sup>175</sup>



Herman Schell, Professor at Würzburg, likewise set out to "baptize modern philosophy and science and to prove that they were by no means incompatible with Catholic belief."<sup>176</sup> Schell published 'Die Neue Zeit und der Alte Glaube,' 1897. In this work, he argued that the Church, while preserving its core doctrine, must "rejuvenate itself continuously through dialogue with the world."<sup>177</sup> Schell's theological insights are taken for granted today, but they were quite unfamiliar at the time he wrote. He promoted an "ideal Catholicism" in his writings, emphasizing "the personal and vital aspect and the inwardness of Catholicism" without denying "the visible and hierarchical aspects of the Church."<sup>178</sup> Schell developed theories about "religious freedom," "the apologetics of immanence," "the role of the Holy Spirit," and "the position of the laity in the Church." On 15 December, 1898, Schell's most important works, however, were put on the Index of Forbidden Books by the Church.

Albert Ehrhard, Professor at Bonn (1920-27) also published a scholarly work 'Der Katholizismus' in which he strove to reconcile Catholicism with "the modern world of thought."<sup>179</sup> Ehrhard pursued a positive line of inquiry, urging the abandonment of "anti-Christian prejudices" in modern thought, and recognising the role of the Church when it came to conceptualizing the faith. Ehrhard pointed out the weakness of Scholasticism when it was conceived "merely as an



unqualified restoration of the past."<sup>180</sup> The works of these Catholic scholars are not to be confused with modernism which rejected many of the basic tenets and doctrines of the faith.

Alfred Loisy (1857-1940) became the leader of the modernist movement in France. Loisy favoured a method in Catholic theology of "independent" criticism, and he wanted to abrogate "a great number of traditional doctrines" in the Church's teaching. On 8 December, 1899, Pope Leo XIII published the encyclical 'Depuis le jour' warning against "the alarming tendencies attempting to invade the exegesis of the Bible," and expressing regret over what he described as "a daring and far too liberal form of interpretation" in the area of scripture study.<sup>181</sup>

Loisy was influenced by Adolf Harnack's 'The Essence of Christianity,' 1902. In November of the same year, Loisy published 'L'évangile et l'église.' Like Harnack, Loisy maintained that "the content of a critically interpreted Gospel" and the different manifestations of "historical Christianity" were not necessarily "identical."<sup>182</sup> The approach of Loisy, however, to this perceived disagreement was different to the liberal Harnack and to orthodox Catholic theology. Loisy interpreted the Church's development as an evolution that could lead to new truths and new discoveries of the faith. Orthodox Catholic theology emphasized new interpretations of dogmas as part of the interplay between reason and faith, but it did not propose the rejection of the original datum of Revelation. Newman's ideas on doctrinal development made this clear; namely, that the

doctrines, handed down and clarified through the Church's tradition, constitute Revelation by development and do not imply rejection of existing doctrines.<sup>183</sup> At the time, however, Newman's ideas were confused with Loisy's. The Church's dogmas, for Loisy, were merely "symbols of the eternal truth" and only reflected "the general state of the knowledge of the times and of the people who devised them."<sup>184</sup> Loisy not only asserted that scientific scholarship could bring about a new interpretation of old doctrines, he also claimed that the Church's dogmas could be changed or abrogated. Thus, Loisy attacked various Church teachings such as the divinity of Christ, the resurrection, and the Virgin birth. The subject of theology, according to Loisy, was "the disciples' belief" in the resurrected Christ, and this belief, he maintained, underwent progressive refinement and definition.<sup>185</sup> Loisy, therefore, rejected Harnack's view that the essence of Christianity rested in a "rigid core" of the New Testament. He also rejected the Church's traditional teaching concerning the consistent development of doctrine.

In 1903, Loisy published 'Autour d'un petit livre.' In this work he endeavoured to free Catholic scholars from anachronistic methods, and he proclaimed "the autonomy of biblical criticism" in Catholic theology free from the guidance of the Church's magisterium.<sup>186</sup> The most famous work of Loisy is his extensive commentary



on the Synoptic Gospels (1907-8). His fundamental ideas in this work have been summarized by Roger Aubert as follows:

1. The gospel, according to Loisy, was not an "historical scripture in the true sense" but rather a catechetical document.
2. Scriptural exegesis and scholarship, according to Loisy, was autonomous and independent of "ecclesiastical teachings" and authority.
3. Loisy questioned "the basic concept of orthodoxy."<sup>187</sup>

Loisy has been referred to as the father of modernism. His influence, however, only affected one aspect of modernism; namely, the relationship between liberal thought and the study of the Scriptures. The type of scholarship and form of interpretation of Scripture, employed by Loisy, were altogether too liberal. Loisy's liberal method of scholarship ignored the 'depositum fidei' and, by adopting a method of independent criticism, it lacked the guidance of the Church's magisterium. The sense of harmony needed for the fruitful application of liberal methods of scholarship to the study of Catholic theology was lacking.

The philosophical aspect of modernism, which attacked the essentialist, classical philosophy of scholasticism, was propounded by Lucien Laberthonniere. Lucien revived the ideas of Maurice Blondel and applied them to "the problem of religious cognition."<sup>188</sup> Lucien published 'Essais de Philosophie Religieuse,' 1903, and 'Le réalisme chrétien et l'idéalisme grec,' 1904. In these works, Lucien set out to replace the Scholastic philosophy of "essences" with a "philosophy of action and personal inspiration."<sup>189</sup> The



Thomistic philosophy of the Church was subjected to a radical re-appraisal, and the orders of nature and grace were so closely correlated through a type of immanence that the distinction between the two was blurred. Lucien also attacked the Church's "extrinsicism" which was viewed in an authoritarian and self-serving manner.<sup>190</sup>

Edouard Le Roy (1870-1954) went further than Lucien by questioning "the classical conception of the dogma."<sup>191</sup> In 1905, he published 'Qu'est-ce qu'un dogme'? Le Roy claimed that dogma was related to "the scholastic philosophy inherited from the Middle Ages," and he asserted that it derived its "static concept of an eternal truth" from this philosophy.<sup>192</sup> In place of the Church's traditional doctrinal statements, Le Roy proposed "the radical incommensurability of the mysteries and the human spirit."<sup>193</sup> He assigned to dogmas "an essentially pragmatic significance," emphasizing "rules pertaining to ethical and religious actions" rather than "speculative conceptions" forced upon the faithful.<sup>194</sup> This pragmatic thrust in Le Roy's thought led to his rejection of the objective "concept of the miracle" and many other doctrines of the faith.

George Tyrrell (1861-1909) was the most influential proponent of modernism in England in "the area of fundamental theology and religious philosophy."<sup>195</sup> In 'Christianity at the Cross-Roads,' 1909, Tyrrell defined what he understood by a modernist:

I understand a modernist to be a christian of any denomination who is convinced that the essential truths of his religion and the essential truths of modern society can enter into a synthesis.<sup>196</sup>

Tyrrell's description of a modernist offered no significant problem; the latter lay in the way he interpreted and forged the synthesis between the "essential truths" of "religion" and the "essential truths of modern society." The writings of Tyrrell were influenced by Von Hügel, Neo-Kantian philosophy, and English liberal protestants. In 1902, Tyrrell published 'Religion as a factor of Life.' In this work, he attacked the classical formulations of the 'depositum fidei,' maintaining that dogma was merely a human attempt to express the divine force within man in intellectual statements. In 1903, Tyrrell published 'The Church and the Future,' attacking what he described as "the despotic authority" of the Roman Curia, and the idea of the Church as an "official institute of truth."<sup>197</sup> In 1906, 'Lex Credendi' appeared, and in 1907, 'Through Scylla and Charybdis.' For Tyrrell, the Church was essentially a "school of divine love," and he saw the mission of the Church to translate the divine inspirations of its members into "new temporary rules."<sup>198</sup> In 'Medievalism' published in 1908, Tyrrell criticised "Papal absolutism and traditional catholicism."<sup>199</sup>

The liberal currents of thought in philosophy, exegesis and fundamental theology, and the independent spirit of criticism of Modernists like Loisey, Le Roy and Tyrrell, began to shake Catholic theology in regard to a whole series of essential issues. Thus, Roger Aubert lists some of the essential doctrines and teachings of the Church which were questioned by Modernism:

the nature of Revelation, the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures and religious cognition, the



person of Christ and his true role in the birth of the Church and its Sacraments, the nature and role of oral tradition within the Catholic system, the limits of dogmatic development, the authority of ecclesiastical teachings and the true meaning of the term 'orthodoxy,' and the value of classical apologetics.<sup>200</sup>

Pope Pius X condemned sixty-five theses of modernism in the decree, 'Lamentabili,' 17 July 1907. Later, on 8 September, 1907, Pius X published the Encyclical, 'Pascendi.' This encyclical blamed the errors of modernism on "agnosticism" which was opposed to the rational development of insights in the religious realm, and the "philosophy of immanence" which minimized the objective nature of religious truth.<sup>201</sup> The encyclical also warned against the "modernistic conception of biblical criticism" and stressed the "obligation to study scholastic philosophy and theology."<sup>202</sup> Thus, the encyclical defended and clarified the Church's orthodox teaching by opposing, in Catholic theology, the kind of rational orientations that so obviously contradicted the Church's doctrine. The negative thrust of the encyclical towards modern liberal studies and scholarship, however, ran the risk of causing a major rift between liberal education and Catholic theology. The preservation of orthodoxy was one thing but, as Monsignor Mignot observed, after the publication of Pascendi, the papal document confined itself to "condemnation without defining what one can say without being a modernist."<sup>203</sup> The encyclical, Pascendi, announced "the establishment of an international institute for progressive research," but the benefits that would have accrued from this were undermined by the anti-modernist suppression that spread



throughout the Catholic world. On September 1, 1910, Pope Pius X published the anti-modernist oath, "Sacrorum Antistitum," which was demanded of all Catholic clergy.

The modernist crisis in Catholicism had, unfortunately, some negative consequences for liberal education and Catholic theology. The excesses of modernism, which repudiated fundamental doctrines of the Catholic faith, led to a lack of positive engagement between many worthwhile features of contemporary intellectual culture and the Church's beliefs.<sup>204</sup> The rejuvenation of the Church's authentic tradition, commenced under Leo XIII, was, according to Roger Aubert, seriously interrupted "throughout a whole generation."<sup>205</sup> In the space of a few years the Church's doctrine was rudely shaken on a number of fundamental points: "the nature of revelation," "biblical inspiration," "the personality of Christ," "the authority of the Church's magisterium," and "the real import of the concept of orthodoxy."<sup>206</sup> These were major problems and they called for an answer. The Magisterium was obliged to defend and re-iterate the basic doctrines of the faith which were being attacked by the proponents of Modernism. A typical manifestation of the Church's over-riding concern for the preservation of orthodoxy was the twenty-four theses of the Congregation of Studies, issued on 27 July 1914. These theses re-affirmed central teachings of the faith as elaborated in the Church's authentic tradition by St. Thomas Aquinas. The Church also responded to the need to foster authentic biblical scholarship by establishing the 'Pontifical Biblical Institute'

in 1909 to provide a centre for Scriptural studies under the guidance and direction of the Holy See.

The modernist crisis, however, posed real problems for discussion in the Church which could not be solved merely by the condemnation of error or the defence of orthodoxy. One of the major problems re-introduced by modernism at the beginning of the twentieth century was the relationship between Catholic theology and its sources; namely, the Bible and the Church's tradition. The Church's tradition included the historical documents, the decisions of the magisterium, and the intellectual content of the Christian faith. This important issue was never really faced since the defence of orthodoxy became the overriding concern of the Church. Thus, A. Cavallanti, one of the strongest supporters of the Church's orthodoxy of this period, expressed the prevailing mood of the Church in 'La Critique du Libéralisme,' 16 November, 1908:

Arianism, Pelagianism, and Jansenism, having disappeared after their condemnation by the Church, left a trail of errors even more subtle and less obvious than that of modernism, errors that became known as semi-Arianism, semi-Pelagianism, and semi-Jansenism. Likewise, today, Modernism, fatally exposed, has left after its departure other kinds of errors, sprouting all over like seeds and threatening to ruin, or ruining, many a good Catholic.... I repeat, that there is a semi-Modernism that, although not as ugly as its antecedent, is much more deceptive and insidious, a modernism that proposes to be a synthesis of all heresies.<sup>207</sup>

Efforts to create a synthesis between the Catholic faith on the one hand and the modern exigencies of reason on the other hand did



not proceed smoothly, but were often marred by tensions inside Catholicism.<sup>208</sup> The crisis of Modernism gave rise to a grouping of loyal Church supporters within Catholicism known to history as the 'Integrists' or 'Integral Catholics.' The 'integrists' wanted to preserve, according to the 'Agence Internationale Roma,' "the integrity of their Romanism: the entire Roman Catholicism (doctrine and praxis) and nothing but."<sup>209</sup> Intensely loyal to the Church's traditional doctrine and to the Pope, the Integrists feared all liberal studies and ideas that might pose a threat to the Church's fundamental doctrines and practices. The attitude and commitment of the Integrists were made clear in 'La Vigie,' their most important journal:

We are integral Roman Catholics, which means that we prefer over everything and everybody not only the traditional doctrine of the Church in regard to absolute truths, but also the directives of the Pope in the area of pragmatic contingencies. The Pope and the Church are one.<sup>210</sup>

The Integrists opposed the tendency of 'liberal' and modernising Catholics to reduce the Church's teaching to a minimum. They have been accused of having had recourse to clandestine procedures in order to propagate their views and stifle open discussion. It is only fair to point out, however, that they openly discussed their views "through the publication of books, pamphlets, and above all of a range of journals."<sup>211</sup>

The over-reaction of the Integrists to modernism and semi-modernism led, it seems, to their distrust of liberal studies



manifested in their opposition to the research efforts of Catholic scholars in the fields of Scriptural exegesis, dogmatic theology, philosophy and Church history.<sup>212</sup>

Notwithstanding the crisis of Modernism, however, a few Catholic theologians tried to find a positive answer to the questions raised by the crisis. Léonce de Grandmaison, for example, made some progress in applying the findings of modern liberal studies to Catholic theology in a series of articles, compiled in "le dogme Chrétien. sa nature, ses formes, son développement," (Paris, 1928). Ambroise Gardeil also made a lasting contribution to the development of methodology in Catholic theology. He published 'La Crédibilité et l'Apologétique,' (Paris, 1908) which long remained a classic on apologetic methodology. Later, he published 'Le donné révélé et la théologie,' (Paris, 1910). This work developed further the notion of methodology in Catholic theology. In the area of Scriptural exegesis, Fr. F. Prat S.J. published 'La Théologie de St. Paul,' 1908-12. Fr. Lagrange wrote his commentary on the 'Gospel of Saint Mark,' 1911. In dogmatic theology, J. Tixeront published 'Histoire des dogmes,' 1905-12. J. Lebreton published 'Origines du dogme de la Trinité,' 1910. The doctrinal position of the Church, advocating a positive reconciliation between liberal studies and theology, was upheld, theoretically, by the Church. The effort to achieve collaboration between liberal

education and Catholic theology was always pursued by certain theologians. Thus, the Church's authentic tradition was upheld and defended even during this period of greatest difficulty for the Church. The solution to the problems and issues raised by modernism in the twentieth century would take time and would have to await a more propitious era.

CHAPTER EIGHT  
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## CHAPTER NINE

### REDISCOVERY OF A TRADITION

The major intellectual challenge facing the Catholic Church after the Enlightenment was the preservation of the tradition of liberal education while absorbing the new learning of the age. We have seen how various Catholic scholars like Pascal, Berthier, and later, Newman, tried to re-capture the dynamism of faith and reconcile it with liberal education which was viewed as the province of the secular world, independent of Christianity. On the whole, the official Catholic Church proceeded as if there was no split or discontinuity in the tradition, and continued to present apologetics in justification of a position that was outmoded and out-of-touch with the signs of the times.

During the nineteenth century, however, a Renaissance of Catholic theology took hold in parts of Germany, creating a revival in Catholic studies that tried to combat rationalism and provide a basis for the union of reason and faith. This Renaissance of Catholic theology signalled a departure from the Suarezian theological mold that dominated the previous two centuries of the Church's tradition and which was characterized by mere commentaries on the works of Aquinas.<sup>1</sup>

The complex revival of Catholic studies had its origins in the Tübingen School of theology (established in 1817) and at the University of Munich which, while being faithful to Catholic orthodoxy and tradition, were open to contemporary movements of thought.

The Tübingen School, which was the earliest in this revival, took advantage of the fact that much of the new liberal learning of the

Enlightenment was already "theologically adopted" by contemporary Protestant scholars.<sup>2</sup> Johann Sebastian Drey (1777-1851) is acknowledged as the founder of the Tübingen School. His thought was tied to the ideas of Schelling and Schleiermacher. Drey developed Catholic theology "from the perspective of transcendental idealism" with a view to leading Catholic thought back to a "fundamental and comprehensive idea."<sup>3</sup> For Drey, this comprehensive idea was not based "a priori upon reason" as in Kant's philosophy, but was grounded in "revealed realities"; that is, it was part of God's eternal plan manifesting itself in time to man.<sup>4</sup> Drey's theology, according to Roger Aubert, incorporated various intellectual currents from Schelling and Schleiermacher which led him to "a treatment of the organic unity of the Church, its continuing development, and the life of the community inspired by the Holy Spirit."<sup>5</sup> These topics continued to surface in Catholic theology for a long time.

Johann Baptist Hirscher of the Tübingen School emulated Drey's achievements in the speculative field by trying to rejuvenate Catholic moral theology. Hirscher presented moral theology in a less abstract manner. He wrote a catechism (1842-47) for the diocese of Freiburg which emphasized "the organic and communal aspects of the faith," thus avoiding the casuistry of previous presentations.<sup>6</sup>

The most famous Catholic theologian of the Tübingen School was Johann Adam Möhler (1776-1838). Möhler reformulated, in his theology, topics such as "the basic dogmas of Christianity," "the knowledge of faith," "the supernatural," "grace," and "the Church."<sup>7</sup>



He published 'The Unity of the Church,' 1825; and 'Symbolism,' 1832.

"Mohler was influenced, in his theology, by romanticism but his writings suffered from certain "philosophical assumptions" which later proved "vulnerable."<sup>8</sup>

The great achievement of the Tübingen School of Catholic theology was the rethinking of Catholic dogma from the historical dimension. The discovery of the historical dimension became the main intellectual breakthrough of the Catholic theological revival during the nineteenth century. This dimension dealt not merely with critical scholarship and chronology but focussed on "a sense of becoming and the awareness that events, institutions, and doctrines are what they really are only when they are placed in the context of time and when their historical development is taken into consideration."<sup>9</sup> This intellectual development was to have vital consequences for Catholic theology which "became more interested in the vitality of dogma than its metaphysics."<sup>10</sup>

The University of Munich ranks alongside the Tübingen School for its contribution to the renewal of Catholic studies. After the first half of the nineteenth century, Munich grew to be the most important intellectual centre of Catholicism in "the areas of philosophy, history, literature, and the arts."<sup>11</sup>

The early phase of the Catholic theological renewal in Germany has been described as an apologetic phase which addressed the new developments in the intellectual world while defending its own teachings. According to Roger Aubert, "the defence of religion and



the foundations of Christianity" characterised the writings of the Catholic scholars at Tübingen and Munich.<sup>12</sup> Thus, Aubert asserts that four essential suppositions of Christianity had to be defended against the new secular thinking of the Enlightenment and Post-Enlightenment.

1. The 'historical claims of Christianity' had to be defended against the criticisms of Atheists.

2. The "traditional authority of the bible" was questioned in the name of historical criticism, discoveries in paleontology and Near-Eastern archeology.

3. The uniqueness and "transcendence of Christianity" was threatened by the history of comparative religions.

4. The "foundations of theism" and "the idea of religion" were attacked by Feuerbach, liberal Hegelians and Auguste Comte.<sup>13</sup>

The interest of Catholic theologians and scholars was in re-directing their efforts away from the traditional speculative approach towards the historical dimension. They did this because of the need to employ the same tools as their liberal critics in order to answer them; that is, "with facts, texts, and documents, and to revise positions incompatible with the facts."<sup>14</sup>

At Munich, Ignaz Dollinger emerged as "the uncontested leader of the German Catholic historical school."<sup>15</sup> Dollinger wrote 'Hippolytus and Callistus,' 1853, a powerful apologetic work which applied the techniques of historical criticism to questions relating to the Papacy in face of liberal criticisms and objections. He also

wrote 'Heidentum und Judentum. Vorhalle zur Geschichte des Christentums,' 1857. In this work, Dollinger demonstrated that, historically speaking, the rise of Christianity could not be explained by developments of Greek or Jewish origin. This work marked the first scholarly attempt by a Catholic theologian "to present the origins of Christianity within their historical context."<sup>16</sup> Catholic scholars, like Dollinger, maintained close, scholarly contact with the academic world as they sought to liberate Catholic theology from the backwardness into which it had fallen.

The German Catholic theological revival, however, ran into difficulties with Rome over issues dealing with academic freedom and the Church's teaching authority. Rome wanted a "system of diocesan seminaries" as opposed to the German system where Catholic studies were pursued in "departments of theology attached to public universities."<sup>17</sup> The idea of a Catholic university like Louvain was pursued as an alternative to the German system by Rome and the Catholic hierarchy. Thus, five Catholic colleges were founded in France at Paris, Lille, Angers, Lyon and Toulouse. In England, Cardinal Manning attempted to establish a Catholic college at Kensington and in Ireland, Cardinal Cullen solicited the help of John Henry (later Cardinal) Newman to found a Catholic university in Dublin. Both of these experiments failed. In Germany, Dollinger headed the opposition to Bishop Kettler's attempt to establish a Catholic university. As leader of the historical school, Dollinger reasoned that (1) the faith needed an educated clergy "completely conversant with the



latest knowledge"; (2) there was a danger of educating Catholic priests "in complete isolation" which would deny them "access to all of the scholarly tools which only the universities could provide"; (3) there was a justifiable fear that Catholics would be cut off "from the intellectual life of their time."<sup>18</sup>

Rome and the Catholic hierarchy, on the other hand, were concerned about the approach of the German theologians which failed to take "account of ecclesiastical directives."<sup>19</sup> The papal brief, 'Tuas libenter,' 1863, made this clear when it bound Catholic scholars by the "magisterial office" and the "solemn definitions" of the Church.<sup>20</sup> Rome was also alarmed at the excesses of speculative thought in the theological writings of some German theologians, such as M<sup>ö</sup>hler, Hermes and G<sup>ü</sup>ther. Thus, notwithstanding developments and advances made in Catholic theology at the German universities, the neglect of the Church's leadership role led to the search for an alternate system that would build on the Church's authentic tradition, while being open to modern developments.

Pope Leo XIII opened up a new epoch in the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology with the publication of his inaugural encyclical, 'Aeterni Patris,' 1879. The goal of Leo XIII in publishing this encyclical was to "reconcile an uncompromised tradition" with "the modern spirit."<sup>21</sup> Leo considered it his foremost task to restore the close union and understanding between Catholic



theology and the modern world of ideas by re-fashioning a "Christian Weltanschauung."<sup>22</sup> 'Aeterni Patris' initiated a vital philosophical movement within the Church which led to a renaissance of Catholic theology and the Church's tradition which maintained a close union between its teachings and liberal education. Thus, 'Aeterni Patris' contains two aspects: (1) it speaks from the Church's tradition; (2) this tradition was revived in order to do justice to the problems and intellectual needs of the modern world. The philosophy of Aquinas, particularly, was revived positively in order to include knowledge by means of faith and knowledge by natural reason since it taught that human intelligence could know "spiritual beings" by way of "the sensible world." Thus, Leo described the philosophy of Aquinas as "perennial" because it "differentiated properly between reason and faith and, at the same time, combined the two in friendship and because [Aquinas] perfected reason to the utmost degree."<sup>23</sup>

In this encyclical, Leo also differentiated between "the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas and that phase of Scholasticism in which the philosophers proceeded nimia subtilitate," referring to the period of decline of the disputatio.<sup>24</sup> Although the intellectual world was perfected in a classical sense in the philosophy of Aquinas, this did not mean that modern questions could not be incorporated into this philosophy or that the philosophy of Aquinas could not be more thoroughly refined and developed. Thus, Leo described Aquinas' philosophy as "a totally continuous process, leading smoothly from

the old Christian Apologists via Augustine to culmination in Aquinas."<sup>25</sup>

Leo commissioned the 'Editio Leonina' (Leonine edition) of St. Thomas' original writings which appeared in 1882. Thomistic Scholarship, it must be admitted, suffered initially by leaving out the problem of history.<sup>26</sup> The needs of the faith, however, to undertake a serious review of the texts of Aquinas which modern historical criticism required were hampered by the Church's negative view of the German historical school. According to O. H. Pesch, it took several decades for historical research to exercise a proper influence on the "systematic interpretation of Aquinas."<sup>27</sup>

The renewal of Catholic scholarship, however, through the study and research of its rich philosophical and theological heritage led to the development of different intellectual movements within the Catholic Church. As a result of this renewal, therefore, Catholic theology re-discovered a pluralism of perspectives and intellectual strengths flowing from its own tradition.

### 1. Neo-Thomism

A traditionalist school of Catholic theology called Neo-Thomism was revived around the middle of the nineteenth century. The Gregoriana in Rome, the University of Freiburg in Germany, and the University of Louvain in Belgium were early centres of Neo-Thomism. Oskar Köhler describes Neo-Thomism as "the renaissance of Aquinas' philosophy and theology, proceeding without direct relation to academic tradition."<sup>28</sup> One of the greatest Neo-Thomists was Désiré (Cardinal) Mercier (1851-1926) who was professor of Thomistic philosophy at the University of Louvain. Mercier became president of the 'Institut Supérieur de philosophie,' 1889, and he helped found the 'Revue Néo-Scolastique' in 1894. Mercier revived the philosophy of Aquinas to deal with "ultimate questions posed by the natural sciences."<sup>29</sup> He experienced opposition from Rome over his preoccupation with the natural sciences and his use of vernacular "terminology" in the study of Aquinas. Rome decreed that Latin be the language of instruction after 1895. It was only after the Second Vatican Council (1960-65) that Latin ceased to be the language of instruction at clerical institutions of learning. Mercier had recourse to "extensive use of psychology" in his writings. He also tried to come to terms with the modern ideas of 'Positivism' and the philosophy of Emmanuel Kant.<sup>30</sup> Réginald Garrigou-Lagrange (1877-1969) and Jacques Maritain (1882-1973), for example, both aligned themselves with this school. Garrigou-Lagrange has been viewed by the Harvard



Divinity scholar, George Hunston Williams, as "the most distinguished authority in Christendom on Thomism in the tradition of the Leonine revival of the Angelic Doctor."<sup>31</sup> It is, perhaps, due to the influence of Jacques Maritain, however, a Catholic layman and philosopher, that Neo-Thomism was able to regain a more respectable place in liberal studies. Maritain published Le Doctor Angélique, 1930; Les Degrés du Savoir, 1932; Humanisme Integral, 1938; Christianisme et démocratie, 1943; Personne et le bien commun, 1947. The educational writings of Maritain apply the philosophy of Aquinas to modern problems and exigencies.

## 2. Neo-Scholasticism

Neo-Scholasticism refers to another intellectual orientation emanating from the revival of Catholic scholarship, and, according to Oskar Köhler, it includes "the scholastic traditions which continue to survive in spite of Thomas Aquinas' preferential position since 1879."<sup>32</sup> This movement endeavoured to find sources for the revival of Catholic theology in the Church Fathers, in monastic thought and spirituality, in the traditions which followed Augustine and Duns Scotus, in the Scriptures and in the philosophy of Plato as well as Aristotle. Thus, Neo-Scholasticism complemented the efforts of Neo-Thomism by preventing the "Thomistic renaissance from stagnating into a classicism."<sup>33</sup> This second intellectual thrust, according to Williams, sought "a comprehensive restatement of the plenitude of Catholic thought, coming to grips with modern thought, including that of Protestant and Orthodox theologians."<sup>34</sup> In spite of Papal censure, this school, Williams claims, was to emerge "as the dominant current in Vatican II and hence in the thought of the reigning Pontiff" (John Paul II).<sup>35</sup>

The most original theologian of the early Neo-Scholastics was Matthias Joseph Scheeben (1835-88). Scheeben incorporated various parts of Catholic tradition into his theology--"post-Tridentine theology," the historical dimension of the "Tübingen School," and "Neo-Thomism."<sup>36</sup> Joseph Maréchal (1878-1944) continued the labours of Scheeben by bringing the principles of Aquinas to bear on the most challenging problems of modern thought represented, at that time, by

post-Kantian philosophy. Maréchal published Le Point de départ de la Métaphysique in five volumes, 1923-47. In this work, Maréchal confronted the problem of knowledge posed by Kant that knowledge of the noumenon (thing-in-itself) was not possible, and that only the phenomena (appearances) were knowable by means of the mind's "a priori" categories. Maréchal set out to reconcile the principles of Aquinas with Kantian philosophy in Vol. V of his work. In this philosophy, Kant distinguished between 'transcendent' and 'transcendental.' Transcendent conveyed the "usual meaning as beyond human cognition," whereas transcendental for Kant referred to "what remains to be known within the limits of his critique of pure and practical reason."<sup>37</sup> According to Maréchal, Aquinas' dynamic understanding of the intellect made it possible to absorb the achievements of transcendental philosophy. Thus, the intellectual dynamism of Aquinas' philosophy enabled Maréchal to break free from the received interpretation of Scholastic philosophy as "rationalist conceptualism," and to avoid the "subjectivism" of Kantian philosophy by opening up the mind to "unlimited Being outside itself."<sup>38</sup> The intellectual achievement of Maréchal is sometimes referred to as "Transcendental Thomism." The writings of Maréchal and Pierre Rousselot who wrote The Intellectualism of St. Thomas (London: 1935): a work influential in awakening Maréchal to the dynamism of the intellect in the philosophy of Aquinas, created a reconciliation between Scholasticism and the secular continental tradition of liberal philosophy.



This creative revival of Catholic studies gave rise to another intellectual thrust called 'La Nouvelle Theologie,' which tried to better accommodate the received tradition of Catholic theology to the modern spirit. 'La Nouvelle Theologie' was very successful in re-introducing the dynamism of the lost secular tradition of liberal education into Catholic theology. The documents and teachings of Vatican Council II were largely influenced by this tradition. The writings of many of the theologians of 'La Nouvelle Theologie' are discussed with reference to liberal education in this work, such as Henri Bouillard, Yves-Marie Congar, Marie-Dominique Chenu, Henri de Lubac and Hans Urs (Cardinal) von Balthasar. One of the fundamental concerns of 'La Nouvelle Theologie' was the Catholic acceptance of and accommodation to the modern theory of evolution. Teilhard de Chardin (1881-1955), for example, wrote The Phenomenon of Man showing that the world of nature was suffused with the grace of God.<sup>39</sup> In this work, de Chardin examines (1) the laws affecting "physico-chemical conditions" in the nascent earth; and (2) the laws affecting the "development of spiritual energy." According to de Chardin, both laws "intervene and shed light upon each other without ambiguity."<sup>40</sup>

### 3. New Philosophers

A third intellectual tradition of the Catholic theological revival is referred to as "New Philosophers" and signifies a movement "leading from Augustine via Bonaventure to Pascal."<sup>41</sup> This tradition was propagated by writers like Maurice Blondel and Herman Schell. The new philosophers attempted, within the Augustinian tradition of Catholic thought, to break "the anthropocentric concept of the world from the inside."<sup>42</sup> The anthropocentric concept of the world refers to a view of the world centred on man and not fully open to the mystery of transcendence. Thus, the new philosophers set out to reconcile immanence and transcendence by an existential approach that would combine two apparently opposite principles.

Maurice Blondel did not accept the opposition between immanence and transcendence but found them both unified in the "existential realization."<sup>43</sup> Thus, Blondel in his writings tried to overcome "the conflict between faith and knowledge" by arguing that both came together in "personal experience" and by showing that revelation does not approach reason like a stranger from outside but that it corresponds to the intimate nature of human reality.<sup>44</sup> Blondel defended his views in his famous Lettre in 1896, and in the Histoire de dogme, 1904. Blondel's philosophy was supported by St. Augustine, Blaise Pascal and Nicolas de Malebranche.

Herman Schell found the source of unity between immanence and transcendence in the theological doctrine of the Holy Spirit. The

Holy Spirit was "the essential manifestation of the Deity" and, therefore, combined "the principle of immanence and the idea of transcendence."<sup>45</sup> Schell transmitted the Augustinian tradition by means of German idealism since his image of God could not be grasped by "the terminology of academic tradition."<sup>46</sup> Although Schell rejected, in his writings, any form of pantheism, his works were put on the Index.

The principal representative of the existentialist thrust in Catholic thought today is Etienne Gilson (1884-) who holds that Aquinas is "primarily existential."<sup>47</sup>



### Conclusion

The revival of Catholic scholarship, initiated by Pope Leo XIII in his inaugural encyclical--'Aeterni Patris,' led to a rediscovery of the comprehensive Catholic tradition which was able to re-unite the spiritual forces of Christianity with the intellectual resources of liberal education. The development of the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology is on-going since human reason and scholarly research are constantly presenting additional knowledge and discoveries which have to be newly integrated into the Catholic theological tradition.

This study has endeavoured to explain the relationship between liberal education and Catholic theology by revealing the changing patterns of interconnections that have existed between both. In doing this, it purports to show the intellectual benefits of the pursuit of theological knowledge, and the contribution of this knowledge to liberal learning. The various advantages of theological education for liberal learning may be summarized as follows:

- (1) Theological knowledge opens up whole new dimensions of thought;
- (2) Theology provides a regulating science which integrates and unifies all knowledge;
- (3) A theological education offers a means of transcending the limits of the natural man and natural reason.

The great religions of the world are in agreement that there is an eternal reality beyond the flux of temporal and natural things

which is at once the ground of being and the basis of rationality. Up until the Enlightenment, the Western mind has always been conscious of the existence of a theological order of spiritual claims and realities from which its moral values derive their validity. This theological order has been lost to liberal education in our secular culture. Our society has given rise to an impressive technological order, but this seems to be resting on a spiritual and moral vacuum. Speaking at the Harvard Commencement in 1978, Alexander Solzhenitsyn observed that Western education had lost the principles of the spiritual and moral order which transcended the world of human passions and interests, and he made a plea for a spiritually complete education that would return to its Christian roots.<sup>48</sup>

An essential function of liberal education is the transmission of the entire tradition of our Western culture intact. This function, from a theological standpoint, is to raise the mind above the narrowing of intellectual horizons by providing it with a unifying vision of the spiritual sources from which Western intellectual culture flowed. In his book, entitled The Closing of the American Mind, Allan Bloom was critical of the education in vogue at universities today for cultivating narrowness and for closing rather than opening intellectual horizons.<sup>49</sup> The lost dimension of the intellectual tradition of liberal education is theological, and only ignorance of the Western tradition of liberal education prevents a return to it. It

is hoped that this study helps to clarify the critical problem that it set out to address; namely, the intimate connection between liberal education and Catholic theology.



CHAPTER NINE  
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