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CHRIST'S TEACHING: DEVELOPMENT OR CORRUPTION

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One of the most difficult apologetical problems today arises from a deep confusion over the nature of the development of Christian doctrine from one age to the next. On the one side, certain traditionalists sometimes regard all new expressions of Church teaching to be heretical; on the other, modernists claim as doctrinal development ideas which contradict the body of thought from which they purport to spring. In the article which follows, Rev. Edward J. Berbusse, S.J. uses the work of John Henry Cardinal Newman as the basis for a partial analysis of the nature of legitimate, faithful development in Christ's teaching as opposed to corruption.

IN THE CATHOLIC CHURCH OF TODAY WE ARE FACED WITH TWO DIVERSE STREAMS of thought which are based on two contradictory principles of the development of Christ's teaching. One is based on the principle that the Church is the infallible interpreter of Christ's message; that through her there is a constantly developing and deepening knowledge of this original revelation; that the expression of this teaching comes from the bishops who, as descendants of the Apostles, keep faith as long as they are in union with the Pope who is the successor of Peter. The authentic instrument of this teaching, therefore, is the Roman Catholic Church which holds as its tradition the whole history of councils, from Nicaea to Vatican II. This is the orthodox teaching which allows for development of doctrine within the guidelines of the whole body of Revelation that terminated with the last of the inspired works, the Gospel of St. John. This is the only legitimate interpretation of that authentic teaching that the Holy Spirit preserves in the Church, securing it from error. The continuity of teaching is asserted in Vatican Council II, where, in the introduction to the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, we read:

It [the Church] desires now to unfold more fully to the faithful of the Church and to the whole world its own inner nature and universal mission. This it intends to do following faithfully the teaching of previous councils.(1) As Newman tells us, this is a living growth under supernatural inspiration (through Divine grace) and through the institutional guidance of the Church established by Christ.

The other stream of thought is based on the evolutionary principle that allows for essential change in doctrine; it denies that Revelation ended with the Apostles, and sees an on-going revelation that meets the demands of modern society. It is existentialist in the sense that the philosophical roots of religious truth demand a rejection of any absolute, unchanging dogmas. The religious believer has no foundation for absolutes; he can only experience religion by an immanent act of his being. Dogmas, Sacraments, Scripture and the Church are for him mere passing symbols which have validity only as long as they serve man's current need and are relevant to modern man. He is called a 'modernist' because he holds that man's nature is constantly changing under the impact of new knowledge; the modern thing is the essentially important thing, if anything can be called 'essential'. Relevance to the modern world

LEADING IDEAS IN DOCTRINE

is superior to doctrine; creeds are shattered by every new rationalization of modern man; the Church is a changing structure, and, like political society, must reflect the democratic changes fashioned by man. The teaching authority of the Church is completely subject to the prevalent feelings of the people who must be constantly adjusting to an ever-changing world.

This heterodox position is very prevalent in the Church today, as wide-spread and virulent as Arianism was in the Fourth Century of the primitive Church. It is most vocal among the intellectuals who look with disdain on those who hold fast to Rome, who ignore the great majority of the faithful who cling to the traditional teachings of the Church. It is a twentieth century brand of Modernism; it is not new, but, rather, an expression of old heresies under new labels and with new developments.

In the mid-nineteenth century Cardinal Newman wrote an essay on *The Development of Christian Doctrine*, in which he summarized his own position and asserted—after a long hegira of theological and historical research (and because of the fruitful reception of Divine Grace into his study)—that the Church of Christ and the Catholic Church are identical. He concluded that its teaching is “so consistent with itself, so well balanced, so young and so old, not obsolete after so many centuries, but vigorous and progressive still.” He saw an identity of the primitive Church with that of the nineteenth century Roman Catholicism: he concluded that the developments in Christianity are “the doctrines propounded by successive Popes and councils.” He found in Catholicism alone the “oneness” of past teaching:

No one doubts ... that the Roman Catholic communion of this day is the successor and representation of the medieval Church, or that the medieval Church is the legitimate heir of the Nicene.... Did St. Athanasius or St. Ambrose come suddenly to life, it cannot be doubted what communion he would take to be his own. All surely will agree that these Fathers ... would find themselves at home with such men as St. Bernard or St. Ignatius Loyola [rather] than with the teachers or with the members of any other creed.(2)

Newman, ultimately, found the charism of authentic teaching of Christ's word in the Church guided by Peter's successor.

Today the Church, which is the infallible custodian of the deposit of Faith given by Christ, must fight vigorously for the preservation of true doctrine and for its own special prerogative as guardian. It is not enough for man to read the Holy Scriptures and believe that the Holy Spirit will illumine him with its authentic meaning. God could have so arranged, but did not. As Paul VI teaches:

The historico-social economy established by the Lord also envisages this vital condition, the Church; the teaching Church, the Church qualified in a special function of custodian, teacher, interpreter of Holy Scripture, whose Word may resound obscure, uncertain and even misleading if not uttered by lips that have the charism of embodying it historically and logically in authentic and univocal Truth.(3)

In the long and profound study of the Development of Christian Doctrine, Cardinal Newman explains that there are leading ideas in the Faith; that they must develop within the Church; that the whole history of the Church attests to its holding firm to a oneness of doctrine, discipline and means of sanctification, despite a multitude of heresies that have surrounded and invaded it. He also makes clear that orthodox development requires retaining doctrine and its initial principles. It is my conviction that the writings of Cardinal Newman, who wrote to resist the errors of his times, are a source of strong argument against the errors of today's process theology, and a means of seeing more clearly the oneness of Faith—preserved in the Roman Catholic Church against the surrounding heresies.

Newman tells us that the 'leading idea' of Christianity is the Incarnation, “out of which the three main aspects of its teaching take their rise, the sacramental, the hierarchial, and the ascetic.” The mind is habituated to God whom it naturally contemplates and about whom it forms statements. This process, he says, is its development, and results in a body of dogmatic statements, or a creed.(4) Here we have the twin approaches to God: the approach through Revelation, which is completed in the teachings of Christ, and the approach through man's nature, which is created with the intrinsic need to find God's creative and conserving law in all reality. In the former approach to God, we find a living society which was decreed by God and given authority to teach, control

and sanctify in His name; this society is the Church with the responsibility to teach the authentic message of God. The latter approach is derived from nature which of itself is calling back to the God Who created it. Against the irreligious spirit of men of the world, St. Paul insists: "Whatever can be known about God is clear to them; He himself made it so. Since the creation of the world, invisible realities, God's eternal power and divinity, have become visible, recognized through the things He has made.(5) The Church-approach to God has its fundamental principles from which ideas are deduced and expressed in explicit teachings (dogmas). This is development which, protected by the Holy Spirit within the one Church established by Christ and ruled over by the successor of Peter, is authentic. Otherwise, it is open to a change of basic principles or to erroneous deductions from these principles; and so we have the corruption of Christ's teaching. The nature-approach to God also has its fundamental principles, and is open to the danger of false inductions in man's reason. Today's secularism-with its focus on reality as a product of, by, and for man-has made science the exclusive source of knowledge and reward for man. This is an example of the complete change (corruption) of basic principles, of 'leading ideas'. Because of the tendency of man's reason to fall into error as well as to achieve truth, Divine Providence has lovingly given man His own direct Revelation. While using reason as a separate approach to Truth, wisdom requires that the reasonings and conclusions of philosophy should be guided by Revelation. To isolate absolutely man's reason from his faith is to dwarf his approach to truth, to leave him smaller than the knowledge that has been given him.

The faith is our greatest gift, because it is God's Revelation of Himself directly given to us. It is preserved to us in Scripture and Tradition, both of which need constant explanation and deeper understanding. This process is that of development. Cardinal Newman said: "Great questions exist in the subject matter of which Scripture treats which Scripture does not solve The whole Bible is written on the principle of development. ... Christian doctrine admits of formal, legitimate and true developments." The Creed, a summary of truths to be believed, is ever an incomplete summary; and each of its doctrines can be further enriched. "No one doctrine can be named which starts complete at first, and gains nothing afterwards from the investigations of faith and the attacks of heresy. "(6) There are, therefore, developments in Christianity. They are always true to the tradition-to the basic,

leading principles, and to the antecedent dogmas-and they stand in stark contrast to the heresies which either break with the leading principles or deduce erroneous conclusions. To prevent error in the prophetic tradition, Divine Providence has given its care into the hands of the Church, which has ever and will ever have to guard it with vigilance. Paul's special charge to Timothy (2 Tim. 1:14) is commanding: "Guard the rich deposit of faith with the help of the Holy Spirit who dwells within us."



TESTS FOR CORRECT DEVELOPMENT

It must next be asked what the tests for determining the correctness of development are. Scientific and controversial arguments are "instruments rather than warrants of right decision. Moreover, they rather serve as answers to objections brought against the actual decisions of authority, than as proofs of the correctness of those decisions." The tests are to be found in the Church which, as an external authority, separates true development from mere human speculation. This is the special role of the infallible Church which keeps a oneness of teaching that preserves the bond of faith and action, while exposing and separating heterodox statements, preventing them from corrupting its members. Even the most original of minds must not allow themselves to be led astray by their scientific prowess and facile rationalizations, but must realize that Christian doctrine always develops within the Church. This is not to deny that individuals can simultaneously arrive at some of the Christian truths, as a result of their own study, reflection and prayer; it is, rather, to assert that Christianity is a revelation which comes to us as a revelation, as a whole, objectively, and with a profession of infallibility; and the only question to be determined relates to the matter of the revelation.... Christianity, unlike other revelations of God's will, except the Jewish, of which it is a continuation, is an objective religion, or a revelation with credentials.

The failure to keep to the wholeness, objectivity and infallible meaning of revelation is not a matter of the revelation, but of its reception; the revelation is in itself divine, but the recipient may ignore, misapprehend, disbelieve, pervert or reject it. To gain the full experience of revelation, one must accept its Divine conditions; one

must submit to the infallible Teacher, the Church, which is prevented from falling into error by the Holy Spirit. This does not exclude the existence of doubts and difficulties, nor inhibit our moral responsibility. As Newman asserted:

A church, or a council, or a pope, or a consent of doctors, or a consent of Christendom, limits the inquiries of the individual in no other way than Scripture limits them: it does limit them; but, while it limits their range, it preserves intact their probationary character; we are tried as really, though not on so large a field.(7)

From the beginning it was so. There were infallible teachers in the first age of the Church, and heretics and schismatics in subsequent ages. The dissidents came to believe that Christian truth is gained solely by personal efforts; the orthodox looked to the Church to support their fallible human efforts, and to keep them within the bounds of authentic development.

As in the whole history of the Church, so today there are serious challenges to the traditional teaching of the Church. Many insist on absolute change of doctrine, or of the basic principles (“leading ideas”) from which doctrines develop. These are they who, like Hans Kueng, would deny the whole authority-structure of the Church, transferring control to the “people”-better understood as those who agree with their theology. Others are more circumspect, indirectly attacking particular beliefs which, they assert, are an invalid increment in development, and which have not achieved the status of *ex cathedra* infallible definition. By this technique, they limit the magisterium’s teaching authority to a small body of dogmas, and reject any infallibility in the ordinary teaching role of the Church in matters of faith and morals. This group comprises a large number of well-publicized theologians who have many disciples among avant-garde priests, nuns, and intellectualized laity. These leaders have inherited much of the Gnostic ability to create a following on the basis of relevance to the modern world; their “leading ideas” often have the persuasive effect of seeming reasonableness. They live in the idealistic world of abstract principles which they mistakenly imagine are meaningful to man, and contributory to the alleviation of his sufferings. These basic principles are what Newman would call “notional ideas”, in contrast to “real ideas”. He tells us that “to the devout and spiritual, the Divine Word speaks of things, not merely of notions.”(8) Prominent among this more circumspect group are the following: Brother

Gabriel Moran who, in the field of catechetics, holds to an on-going revelation that denies any direct revelation from God, finding the only revelation in life experience. Prominent in Latin America and being fostered by Orbis Books of the Maryknoll Fathers is Fr. Gustavo Gutierrez whose idea of revelation is “critical reflection”, which has the effect of “liberating” revelation from the ecclesiastical institution. His theology of liberation, in addition to reducing the Church to a merely naturalistic institution, would make it a political instrument for the dialectic of violence, based on the assumed impossibility of harmony in a class-structured society. Fr. Gregory Baum has accepted an evolution of man, in which truth is totally conditioned by the changes in history; consequently, all theology is secular, with Christ a mere symbol. He says: “Since God has entered into the definition of man, it would be an error to think of God as a being apart from man and superior to him.” In like concern for relevance to “modern man,” Fr. Avery Dulles has substituted for the Roman Catholic Church a democratic church in which the determinant of religious belief is the consensus of the “people of God”, and in which the magisterium of Pontiff and Council is a mere guiding light without finality of doctrinal definition. (9) These are but a few of the dissident voices in the Church.

In much of this dissent from the Church’s tradition there is a pervading naturalism which becomes “process theology”, which is founded on evolution, rather than on the existence of a transcendent God. It has the effect of secularizing religion, and presenting man with a better temporal future as the goal of life. A social gospel gradually and subtly replaces the supernatural truths of faith. Such Modernists are prone to misinterpret Vatican II’s document, *The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World*, by seeing in it secular values and even asserting that there is only the secular city.

To this naturalism, Cardinal Newman-in treating the matter of the existence of a standing authority in matters of faith on the “analogy of Nature”-insisted that “Revelation has introduced a new law of Divine governance over and above those laws which appear in the natural course of the world.” He finds preservation “involved in the idea of creation”, adding a law of continuing and developing life: “as creation argues continual governance, so are Apostles harbingers of Popes.” It is to be remembered that:

As the essence of all religion is authority and obe-

dience, so the distinction between natural religion and revealed lies in this, that the one has a subjective authority and the other an objective. Revelation consists in the manifestation of the Invisible Divine Power, or in the substitution of the voice of a Lawgiver for the voice of conscience. The supremacy of conscience is the essence of natural religion; the supremacy of Apostle, or Pope, or Church, or bishop is the essence of revealed.... Thus what conscience is in the system of nature, such is the voice of Scripture, or of the Church, or of the Holy See . . . in the system of Revelation.(10)

The Church removes doubt in religion by interpreting Sacred Scripture and tradition just as St. Philip helped the Ethiopian understand Isaiah (Acts 8:26-39). Moreover, Newman continued, there

can be no combination on the basis of truth without an organ of truth If Christianity is both social and dogmatic, and intended for all ages, it must humanly speaking have an infallible expounder. Else you will secure unity of form at the loss of unity of doctrine, or unity of doctrine at the loss of unity of form.... The doctrine of infallibility is a less violent hypothesis than this sacrifice either of faith or charity. It secures the object, while it gives definitiveness and force to the matter, of the Revelation.(11)

The Church of Rome today is the same as that of Nicaea (325) and ante-Nicaea, of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451), of Trent (1545-63) and Vatican I(1869-70). It maintains that development of doctrine needs an infallible expounder; that doctrines are members of one family, confirmatory of each other, and in need of definitive teaching that proceeds from one infallible font under the protection of the Holy Spirit.

Preparatory to the beginning of the Holy Year, Pope

Paul VI urged the faithful to a “new Christian vitality”, and warned them of modern man’s tendency to doubt:

To doubt has become today a habitual and general attitude; everything is questioned. The frenzy for change seems to offer a remedy for the uncertainty and mistrust that invade the public mentality; and that often not without operative benefit and practical progress: so the world changes and progresses. But man’s heart suffers and unconsciously he sighs for that truth and that love that

the exterior world cannot give, but only the inner Master, Who comes in search of us on the ways of reason, illumined by faith.(12)

In an earlier address to the Plenary Congregation of the Secretariat for Non-Believers, Paul VI stressed the modern error of naturalism which “excludes all reference to God and to transcendence. “ He remarked that sciences, history, philosophy and morality “tend to take man as their only source of reference, his reason, his freedom, his earthly existence, excluding a religious perspective.” This secularization, he said, is “a striking fact of our Western civilizations.... It goes so far as to claim man’s absolute autonomy before his own destiny.” From this has derived a “secular version of Christianity”, which, by a strange absurdity and contradiction of terms, is called “Christian atheism”.(13)

In returning to the reasoning and faith of Cardinal Newman, we note his absolute commitment to the See of Peter which is the chief visible source of correct development in doctrine. On October 7, 1866-four years before, Vatican I’s definition of papal infallibility-he urged Catholic duty to the Holy See, on the basis of Christ’s establishing of Peter as the foundation rock of the Church, with the power of the keys that bind and loose in the kingdom of heaven. This power is secure against evil, and will perdure until the end of time. It is a kingdom that is begun on earth and is “as unchangeable as He; its framework, its polity, its ranks, its offices, its creed, its privileges, the promises made to it, its fortunes in the world, are over what they have been.” It is in the world, but not of it. As in Apostolic times, so today, it teaches truth, gives the sacraments of grace, and has bishops with the same powers of the Apostles. The successors of Peter are the successors in the Chair of Peter, the Bishops of Rome. The prerogatives of this Holy Father, the Pope, give him supreme jurisdiction over the people of God. Our obligation to him-when he is administering Christ’s kingdom-is “never to oppose his will, or dispute his word, or criticise his policy, or shrink from his side.” The explicitness of Newman’s belief in Papal authority is only matched by his humility of submission to his rule:

We must never murmur at that absolute rule which the Sovereign Pontiff has over us, because it is given to him by Christ, and in obeying him we are obeying his Lord. We must never suffer ourselves to doubt that, in his government of the Church, he is guided by an intelligence more than human. His yoke is the yoke of Christ;

he has the responsibility of his own acts, not we; and to his Lord must he render an account not to us.(14)

In looking at the consistency of the teaching of the Church despite the heterodox elements that oppress it both from within and from without; in recording the growth in doctrine which reveals that it is a living body under the gentle impulse of the Holy Spirit; and in seeing that the successor of Peter keeps its oneness in teaching, authority and means of sanctification, we are compelled to acknowledge and to thank the Eternal Father for His Son's constant presence in His Church.

ANTECEDENT PROBABILITIES

In searching for the evidences that lead us to Divine Truth, Newman analyzes the differences between the physical sciences which depend upon the investigation of knowledge derived from the senses, and history and ethics. In history, the facts are not present; in ethics, "the phenomena are more subtle, closer, and more personal to individuals than other facts." Here, in the absence of 'mere facts' we must look to "the opinions of others, the traditions of ages, the prescriptions of authority, antecedent auguries, analogies, parallel cases." Furthermore, Divine Providence has given us religion, as "the method of recommending ourselves to Him and learning His will"; and, if it be His will that we learn it, "the means He gives for learning it, be they promising or not to human eyes, are sufficient because they are His." Consequently, "if the formal basis on which He has rested His revelations be ...of an historical and philosophical character, then antecedent probabilities, subsequently corroborated by facts, will be sufficient...to bring us safely to ...the organ of those revelations." In history, ethics, metaphysics and theology, where moral proof is pre-eminent, antecedent probability has much weight and cogency. In all matters of human life, says Newman, "presumption verified by instances, is our ordinary instrument of proof and, if the antecedent probability is great, it almost supersedes instances." (15)

In turning to the matter of development of doctrine-in order to show that medieval forms were a natural and consistent development of primitive Christianity-Newman asserted that the antecedent probability is strengthened by the forms being found "in the historic seats of Apostolic teaching and in the authoritative homes of immemorial tradition" and he said the weight of proof is "with those who assail a teaching which is,

and has long been, in possession."

He then poses, as an hypothesis, the assertion that the Church acting through Pope or Council as the oracle of heaven has never contradicted her own enuniations. Hereupon Cardinal Newman launches out upon a study of the evidences to support the current Creed of Christendom as a development from the "leading ideas" of Revelation, and as consistent with the doctrines already taught in the early Councils and in the teachings of the Pontiffs since Peter's time. His argument is:

From the first age of Christianity, its teaching looked toward those ecclesiastical dogmas, afterwards recognized and defined with ... more or less determinate advance in the direction of them; till at length that advance became so pronounced as to justify their definition.

He asserts that a "converging evidence in favor of certain doctrines may, under circumstances, be as clear a proof of their Apostolical origin as can be reached practically from the Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus (That which is held always, everywhere, and by all)." (16) As a first example, Newman studied the evidences for accepting the Canon of the New Testament as it comes to us on the authority of the Church of the fourth and fifth centuries. He remarks that previous centuries were prevented from research by persecution, lack of facilities and by some misapprehension, as well as by want of intercourse between the Churches. The fifth century is the age of expression, "a limit to which all that has been before said converges." It became "a comment on the obscure text of the centuries before it." Another study is that of the effect of the Arian and Monophysite heresies upon the Church. In controverting the Arian doctrine that Christ was, in His Divine Nature, inferior and subservient to the Father, the early Councils grew in their explication of the Divine aspects of our Lord's mediatorial acts. The Nicene Creed is "a natural key for interpreting the body of Antenicene theology." Whereas the Nicene Fathers stressed the relation of the Son to the Father and the Holy Spirit, the Athanasian Creed-in order to reject the Arian "subordinationism"-stressed the absolute perfections of our Lord. And so we read in the Athanasian Profession: "the Father Eternal, the Son Eternal, and the Holy Spirit Eternal" with the insistence that "none is afore or after the other, none is greater or less than another." The Monophysite heresy which held that at least virtually our Lord was not man, had the de-

veloping effect, in the teaching of the Church Fathers, of interpreting His “manhood texts”, for instance “My Father is greater than I.” And so the doctrine of His subordination to the Eternal Father “comparatively fell into the shade.” (17)

Another development consequent upon the Arian controversy is the Church’s insistence, through the voice of St. Athanasius, on the benefits accruing to man through Christ’s supreme Divinity:

Not Christ but that human nature which He had assumed was raised and glorified in Him Intimate indeed must be the connexion between Christ and His brethren, and high their glory, if the language which seemed to belong to the Incarnate Word really belonged to them.

As a result, a truth which was indeed held by Christians, but less perfectly realized, was publicly emphasized: “the sanctification, or rather the deification of the nature of man.” In a word, He deified that which He put on. And because of our relationship to Christ’s Body, we have become God’s temple. At the Council of Ephesus, another aspect of Christ’s nature was formally decided and defined as a dogma of Faith. In order to defend the true doctrine of the Incarnation, “in order to secure a right faith in the manhood of the Eternal Son, the Council of Ephesus determined the Blessed Virgin to be the Mother of God.” This decision was a formalizing of the traditional feeling of Christians; from primitive times, the title Theotokos (Mother of God), was recognized and used by Christians.(18) What was given in the body of Revelation was discovered and developed through study, prayer, and in resistance of heresy. It was in the spontaneous and traditional feeling of Christians from the beginning; it was through the Councils and Papal teaching that a definite form was given and true, irreformable doctrine proclaimed.

PAPAL SUPREMACY

Having shown the consistent teaching of the Church on the nature of Christ, with its explication through developing understanding and teaching, Newman then proceeded to study the evidence which “is adducible in the first five centuries in behalf of the supremacy of the Holy See.”(19) In the period immediately following the Apostles, all acknowledged the Sacramentum Unitatis: “Christians knew that they must live in unity, and they were in unity.” Then, when the Church was

thrown upon her own resources, first local disturbances gave exercise to bishops, and next ecumenical disturbances gave exercise to Popes; and whether communion with the Pope was necessary for Catholicity would not and could not be debated till a suspension of that communion had actually occurred.

St. Peter’s prerogative remained a dead letter until there became need to invoke it; and no doctrine is defined until it is violated. Besides, Newman stated, there is nothing in the early history of the Church to contradict Papal supremacy as part of Christianity. He finds that “doctrine cannot but develop as time proceeds and need arises, and that its developments are parts of the Divine system.” He, accordingly, reasons that it is “necessary to interpret the words and deeds of the earlier Church by the determinate teaching of the later.” Newman viewed this as a “general probability”.(20)

Newman sees as a counterpart of antecedent probabilities the assertions of Scripture, such as “You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it, and I will give to you the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven” (Mat. 16:18).



A partial fulfillment of what was to become a full expression of Papal supremacy is found in the first centuries, in the respect, deference and recourse expressed by St. Ignatius of Antioch, St. Polycarp of Smyrna and Eusebius. St. Irenaeus spoke of Rome as “the greatest Church, the most ancient ... founded and established by Peter and Paul”; and insisted that “to this Church every Church must resort.” St. Cyprian spoke of Rome as “the See of Peter and the principal Church, whence the unity of the priesthood took its rise.. whose faith has been commended by the Apostles, to whom faithlessness can have no access.” Though Cyprian had his differences with Rome, he acknowledged its claim of “Cathedra Petri”.

Newman then argued that the Church is in need of a monarchical power by its very nature, and so this becomes the ground for anticipating it:

If the whole of Christendom is to form one

Kingdom, one head is essential; at least this is the experience of eighteen hundred years. As the Church grew into form, so did the power of the Pope develop; and wherever the Pope has been renounced, decay and division have been the consequence. We know of no other way of preserving the Sacramentum Unitatis but a centre of unity.

In the fourth century, Newman reported, St. Jerome wrote to Pope St. Damasus in obedience:

I speak with the successor of the fisherman and the disciple of the Cross. I, following no one as my chief but Christ, am associated in communion with your blessedness, that is, with the See of Peter. I know that on that rock the Church is built. Whosoever shall eat the Lamb outside this House is profane.

Lastly, popes themselves have given testimony. St. Siricius (A.D. 385) said: "We bear the burden of all who are laden; yea, rather the Blessed Apostle Peter bears them in us, who, as we trust, in all things protects and defends us the heirs of his government."⁽²¹⁾ In a much more extensive treatment, Newman proved that an historical study of both faithful and heretics reveals their acknowledging of the Papal See in Rome as "the school of the Apostles."

CONCLUSION

In this analysis of the ideas of Cardinal Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, we have seen his insistence on a "leading idea" which has come to us from Revelation, and which is expressed in Tradition and Scripture, by means of the infallible Church. This "leading idea" has its correct development within the Church. Besides, the antecedent probability is that it will be found "in the historic seats of Apostolic teaching." He then proceeded to exemplify this argument, by showing how the fifth century, "the age of expression", gives us a comment (and so development) on "the obscure text of the centuries before it". When the Apostolic Faith is attacked

or misinterpreted, the Church explains the true teaching and corrects the errors; in so doing, it gives deeper insight (development) into the deposit of Faith. The Church is, as the Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Vatican II) teaches, "in Christ like a sacrament". The early Church was aware of and living this sacramental life of unity. When the unity was attacked, the Church defended itself and its teaching; and so teaching became defined, dogmas were expressed in creeds, and the Papacy became the visible spokesman of Christ's Revelation. The principle of unity was preserved by a center of unity, Peter's chair, which was ever acknowledged as "the school of the Apostles".

In our study of Newman's *Essay*, we have only proceeded to the mid-point of his analysis. In the remaining half of his *Essay*, he sets out seven characteristics of "true development". They are: the one and same type of life, the same principles, logical development, the beginning anticipating subsequent phases, later phenomena protecting and conserving earlier ones, the powers of assimilation and revival in the structure, and a vigorous and enduring action of the living ideas. He, finally, applied these characteristics to Christian doctrine, and concluded that they have been fully realized in the teaching of the Catholic Church. In many ways, this part of the *Essay* is the most convincing in its application of the necessary credentials for a true church to the Catholic Church. History unfolds before us, revealing the consistency of teaching and life in the Church that has Peter as Christ's Vicar. Reason draws us to its acceptance as the only, the one Church founded by Christ. Space, however, prevents a further study of this greatly rewarding work of Newman. We must conclude with a prayer to the Father of Lights that, in the exercise of reason, we may use it "in the obedience of faith, with a view to His glory, with an aim at His truth, in dutiful submission to His will, for the comfort of His elect, for the edification of Holy Jerusalem, His Church." So it was that Newman saw the needful and humble attitude by which all men must approach the teaching of Christ.



NOTES

- 1 Dogmatic Constitution on the Church in *The Sixteen Documents of Vatican II*, Boston, St. Paul Editions, no. 1, p. 109.
- 2 Newman, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, N.Y., 1960, Image, 113-14. In his Preface to this edition of 1878, Newman states that alterations in the text have been made from his earlier edition of 1845.
- 3 *L'Osservatore Romano* (English ed.), June 2, 1971.
- 4 Newman, 59, 73-4.
- 5 Romans, I:19-20.
- 6 Newman, 81, 86, 93, 88.
- 7 *Ibid.*, 96-97, 100, 101.
- 8 Newman, *Grammar of Assent*, N.Y., 1898, Longmans, 79-99.
- 9 Gabriel Moran, *Catechesis of Revelation*, N.Y., 1966, Herder; *Gregory Baum*, New Horizons, N.Y. 1972, Paulist; Gustavo Gutierrez (*A Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll, 1973, Orbis) is treated in Gustavo Gutierrez: *Utopian Theologian of Liberation in F&R II*, pp. 67-96; Avery Dulles, S.J., *Current Trends in Mission Theology in Studies in Inter National Apostolate of Jesuits*, Jan., 1972.
- 10 Newman, *Development*, 103-104.
- 11 *Ibid.*, 107.
- 12 *L'Osservatore Romano* (Eng. ed.), Nov. 13, 1974. Emphasis is mine.
- 13 *Ibid.*, Mar. 18, 1971.
- 14 Newman, *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*, N.Y., 1900.
- 14 Newman, *Sermons Preached on Various Occasions*, N.Y., 1900, Longmans, 281ff.
- 15 Newman, *Development*, 125-28.
- 16 *Ibid.*, 133-36.
- 17 *Ibid.*, 137-38, 145-49.
- 18 *Ibid.*, 151-56.
- 19 *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1845 ed.), Canada, 1973, Penguin, p. 207.
- 20 Newman, *Development* (1878 ed.), 159-64.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 164-68.