
Overtures for Change

In the nineteenth century, various themes arose to prominence within the mind of the church. Some surfaced from within, by the natural process of maturation and development, while others resulted from sharp reminders given by a rapidly changing secular world. Among these, perhaps the most significant, and that because its influence was so far-reaching, was the awakening to a sense of history.¹ This questioned fundamentally the prevailing certainties of knowledge, and had the potential to transform the intellectual disciplines completely. To become aware of historicity is to acknowledge a sense of contingency, pluralism, and the possibility of change. Much that had been considered absolute was opened up to question and reinterpretation, not least the Bible, the liturgy, and dogmatic truth.

1. For a specific analysis of this question, see O. Chadwick, *The Secularization of the European Mind in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), especially 189–228, and A. Dru, *The Church in the Nineteenth Century: Germany 1800–1918* (London: Burns and Oates, 1963). But for a general overview and useful bibliography, see T. Schoof, *A Survey of Catholic Theology 1800–1970* (London: Paulist Newman, 1970.)

The Question in Context

To face history and all it teaches of origins, development, and alteration is to accept a heavier responsibility than that required to maintain the status quo. Retreat always seems safest when the stakes are high. This opening chapter seeks to examine the contours of such a dilemma as it was played out in the church's turn-of-the-century reaction to a historical consciousness. Being an introduction to the whole book, here its major themes will be sounded out in overture as they arise in the decades that precede the focus of this study. More fully elaborated later, they first emerged with any clarity between the silences imposed during the reigns of Pius IX (1846–1878) and Pius X (1903–1914). The relatively relaxed atmosphere of the pontificate of Leo XIII (1878–1903) allowed for some encouragement of the “new things” that theology might discover in the awareness of historicity. And although, like the themes of all overtures, their introduction was initially subtle and ambiguous, they were stated with occasional clarity before being pushed into the background, yet to emerge more strongly.

It would seem that the triple repetition of a theme is pleasing to the ear, as its cadence carries a sense of increasing resolution and so as this chapter unfolds it will seek to exploit these triple sequences so as to give a better sense of both the interaction of discordant themes and the development of harmonious ones. Between the three caesuras of the *Syllabus*,² *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*,³ and *Humani Generis*,⁴ it might be said that the themes and variations central to the question in hand were played out in triplets of increasing harmony. *Aeterni*

2. Pius IX, *Syllabus Errorum*, *Acta Pii IX*, 3, 1864, 687–700 (*Quanta cura*), 701–11 (*Syllabus errorum*).

3. Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, *ASS* 40 (1907): 593–650. English translation in B. Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1970), 237–42.

4. Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, *AAS* 42 (1950), 561–78. English trans. R. Knox, *False Trends in Modern Teaching* (London: CTS, 1959).

Patris,⁵ *Providentissimus Deus*,⁶ and *Divinum Illud Munus*⁷ begin to express the relationship between revelation and history in terms of credible theological method, biblical criticism, and liturgical practice. Yet, while these three novel themes gradually fade before the silence imposed by *Pascendi*, they are given fresh, if for some discordant, variation by the Modernists, for example, Alfred Loisy's (1857–1940) *L'Évangile et L'Église*,⁸ and George Tyrrell's (1861–1909) three works *Lex Credendi: A Sequel to Lex Orandi*,⁹ *Through Scylla and Charybdis: Or the Old Theology and the New*,¹⁰ and *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*.¹¹ These rework the same liturgical, methodological, and biblical themes that were first heard under Pope Leo XIII. However, any emerging harmony was quietened by authority and swamped by the noise of war, only to return in its aftermath, having been kept alive by the liturgical movement, emerging biblical scholarship and the *nouvelle théologie*. These brought the triple theme to the fore again under the aegis of Pius XII (1876–1958) in *Divino Afflante Spiritu*,¹² *Mystici Corporis Christi*,¹³ and *Mediator Dei*.¹⁴ And though the crescendo was temporarily broken by *Humani Generis*, its energy

5. Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, ASS 12 (1879): 97–115. English trans. in Claudia Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903* (Raleigh: McGrath, 1981), 17–26.
6. Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, ASS 26 (1893): 269–92. English trans. in Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 325–38.
7. Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, ASS 29 (1897): 644–58. English trans. in Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 409–17.
8. A. Loisy, *L'Évangile et L'Église* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1902).
9. G. Tyrrell, *Lex Credendi: A Sequel to Lex Orandi* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1906).
10. G. Tyrrell, *Through Scylla and Charybdis, or The Old Theology and the New* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1907).
11. G. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1963; first published by Longmans, Green and Co., 1909).
12. Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, AAS 35 (1943): 297–325, English trans. G. Smith, *Biblical Studies and Opportune Means of Promoting Them* (London: CTS, 1943).
13. Pius XII, *Mystici Corporis Christi*, AAS 35 (1943): 193–248, English trans. G. Smith, *On The Mystical Body of Jesus Christ and Our Union with Christ Therein* (London: CTS, 1943).
14. Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, ASS 39 (1947): 521–600, English trans. G. Smith, *Christian Worship*, (London: CTS, 1947).

built again until the overture ceased and the major work of the Council began. Hence a triple structure appears appropriate for this opening chapter, three sections emerging naturally.

First, the departures and developments of the pontificate of Leo XIII will be examined for the light that context sheds, for it was out of this period that the prevailing question this work tracks emerged. Having gained a sense of the historical roots of some of the abiding issues to be discussed, analysis will be made of the effects and contribution of Modernism to the development of questions that later become central to the four theologians of this study. Lastly, some evaluation of the importance of the liturgical movement and of the new theology in shaping the theological milieu of these writers must be made. Perhaps this can be achieved only by appreciating the significance of their contemporaneity and fundamental theological cohesion. It is in the depths of that relationship that the themes that bear fruit in the *aggiornamento* of the Second Vatican Council take root.

The Pontificate of Leo XIII: An Opportunity for Development?

If verification were needed for the conviction of Avery Dulles¹⁵ that the question of revelation has been at the heart of every theological controversy or undertaking since the Enlightenment, the nineteenth century would provide adequate evidence. Catholic theologians were engaged throughout this period with the refutation of rationalism, skepticism, and their associated errors, and the unity of their enterprise is remarkable.¹⁶ The implications of the challenge that these philosophers had made to the intellectual foundations of belief

15. A. Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 2013), ix.

in positive revelation were many, but the debate soon focused on the transmission of divine revelation, that is, the method of God's self-communication, and the cognate problems of the relationship of faith and reason, nature and grace.

While the Catholic theology of this period was unified in its response to the rationalist attack, it was bitterly divided as to the philosophical and theological method that would best serve its purpose. The quest for a single coherent system,¹⁷ which would provide a united defense against antagonistic philosophies, molded the theology of the nineteenth century, and the outcome of the search has shaped theology since then. Some considered the methodological odyssey to be nearing its end when, toward the close of the century, the Apostolic Constitution *Dei Filius* was approved,¹⁸ and to have reached its goal when, some nine years later, Leo XIII promulgated *Aeterni Patris*.¹⁹ Whether the triumph of Thomism and the scholastic method be considered a victory *force majeure*²⁰ or the

16. G. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century: The Quest for a Unitary Method* (New York: Seabury, 1977), 17. Cf. E. Hocedez, *Histoire de la théologie au XIX^e siècle*, 3 vols. (Paris: Desclée, 1948), 1:8–9.

17. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 18. Notice too the subtitle of McCool's work. The theology of the nineteenth century represents the search for a method.

18. Interestingly, James Hennesey points to this triplet of encyclicals as indicating the tenor of the pontificate of Pius IX: "Authoritative decrees became the criterion of truth, or, rather, certitude guaranteed by authority displaced the quest for truth. A new theological anthropology emerged, well illustrated in three major events of Pius IX's reign: the Immaculate Conception definition of 1854, the syllabus of errors of 1864, and the Vatican Council of 1869–70." Here the repeated theme was that "sin-weakened man was incapable of self-government. He needed the reign of God-given authority to control him. These were the conclusions immediately drawn by contemporary commentators." J. Hennesey, "Leo XIII's Thomistic Revival: A Political and Philosophical Event," *The Journal of Religion* 58 (1978) Supplement, S187. So R. Aubert insists, "To understand the grimness with which Pius IX fought liberalism (which he stigmatised as the delusion of our century) it is important to see this long drawn out battle as part and parcel of his own untiring effort to restore the fundamental data of revelation to their central place in Christian thinking—an effort of which the Vatican Council was intended in his own mind to be the fulfilment." R. Aubert, *The Christian Centuries*, vol. 5: *The Church in a Secularised Society* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1978), 5.

19. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 6.

20. "The conception of theological orthodoxy which triumphed over modernism by *force majeure* rather than by free and open debate was described appositely by some of its defenders as

discovery of the only method capable of addressing the questions that modernity posed, it cannot be denied that Leo's pontificate marks the beginning of a desire within Catholic theology to understand the significance of its own history.²¹ Whatever the motives of its inception and however ambiguous its outcome, this is the period that determines "the method according to which Catholic positive and speculative theology endeavoured to retrieve the heritage of its own Catholic doctrinal tradition and to present that tradition to the modern world."²²

It is with hindsight and the benefit of considerable scholarship²³ that such an understanding has been achieved. The ambiguity, some would say ambivalence,²⁴ that marked many of the attitudes of Leo XIII, especially his approach to scholarship, has not always been fully appreciated. Some perceive his pontificate as simply a bright opportunity for progress between the stifling and trenchant periods that came before and after.²⁵ Some have seen the reign as one characterised by the diplomatic relation of tradition with the modern spirit,²⁶ while still others see only the illusion of change:

What he wanted was to realize ultramontane goals unrealized under

‘integralism.’ In their minds it stood or fell *as a whole*, and a divinely guaranteed whole at that.” G. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence: A Study in Catholic Modernism and Integralism* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 7.

21. Perhaps the most reliable biography of Leo XIII is E. Soderini, *Il pontificato di Leone XIII*, 3 vols. (Milan: A. Mondadori, 1932–33), English trans. by Barbara Carter, *The Pontificate of Leo XIII*, vol. 1, and *Leo XIII, Italy and France*, vol. 2 (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne, 1934).
22. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 1.
23. Cf. *ibid.*, 6.
24. J. D. Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See: A Short History of the Papacy in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Burns and Oates, 1978), 194.
25. See C. Falconi, *The Popes in the Twentieth Century from Pius X to John XXIII*, trans. Muriel Grindrod (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1967), xi–xiii. Italian orig., *I papi del ventesimo secolo* (Milan: Rusconi, 1967). See also E. Poulat, *Église contre bourgeoisie* (Tournai: Casterman, 1977), 175.
26. See G. Lease, “Vatican Foreign Policy and the Origins of Modernism,” in *Catholicism Contending with Modernity: Roman Catholic Modernism and Anti-Modernism in Historical Context*, ed. D. Jodock (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 43–48.

Pius IX by intellectualizing the combat with modernity, by providing a theoretical underpinning for his policies. He would not come to terms with modern values; rather he would restore in the world an objective and immutable order with the church as its most effective guardian. Renewal of Thomistic philosophy was the tool essential to his purpose.²⁷

All three positions hold their portion of truth, yet perhaps the stark judgement of the last has the potential to limit most an understanding of nascent theological change. Standing alone, it is an interpretation that does not fit the context. Unlike his predecessor, Leo XIII was no prisoner of the Vatican and therefore could not remain aloof from the intellectual and political problems of his age and retain a credible position for the Church.²⁸ Neither would merely cosmetic or superficial change convince a world facing monumental shifts with regard to society, government, economics, and culture. The extent to which the iron fist of the ancien régime remained hidden in Leo's new white velvet glove can be questioned. But to suggest that in the light of the recent past, he could harbor a restorationist agenda that defied innovation absolutely goes beyond cynicism and ignores what was unquestionably new and not mere diplomacy in his reign.²⁹ That

27. Hennesey, "Leo XIII's Thomistic Revival," S190. Bernard Reardon also adopts a similar line when he suggests, "Leo was much less a liberal intellectual than a *politique*, more solicitous than his predecessor for the enlightened image which the Catholic Church should now present the world. The substance of Vatican policy continued, that is to say, as before; it was only the means of effecting it were altered." B. Reardon, "Roman Catholic Modernism," in *Nineteenth Century Religious Thought in the West*, vol. 2, ed. N. Smart, J. Clayton, S. Katz and P. Sherry, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 148.

28. Speaking of the new political departures, Bernard Reardon maintains, "Leo XIII, who succeeded Pius IX in 1878, outlined in his first encyclical letter, *Inscrutabile Deo consilio*, a programme for the reconciliation of the Catholic Church with modern civilization, thus evidently reversing the policy of his predecessor." Reardon, "Roman Catholic Modernism," 147. And of the impetus for theological change in Leo's pontificate, he suggests that "Towards the century's end, however, it was becoming only too obvious to Catholic scholars, awake now to the nature and extent of modern Protestant research in the field of the Bible and early Christianity, that the narrowly traditionalist stand-point upon these matters, upheld in the seminaries, was likely to involve all Catholic teaching and apologetic in increasing discredit." Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1970), 13.

29. See M. O'Connell, *Critics on Trial: An Introduction to the Catholic Modernist Crisis* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1994), 31–33.

the pontificate of Leo XIII is ambiguous must be conceded without doubt, but the heart of the question—as Derek Holmes suggests³⁰—is why his ambivalence in matters of scholarship should be greater than that with which he met the social and economic concerns of his day.³¹

The Impact of *Aeterni Patris*

Many reasons could be suggested as to why Leo XIII promulgated *Aeterni Patris* in 1879. Undoubtedly, it was delivered as the foundation to his “grand design”:³² the unified philosophical basis of theological, social and political renewal.³³ As Paul Misner suggests, the encyclical forms the “operational plan” that flows naturally from the claims of the First Vatican Council. Thomistic philosophy would

30. “Leo XIII was less ambiguous in his approach to social or economic problems and in promoting the development of Social Catholicism.” Holmes, *The Triumph of the Holy See*, 196.

31. G. McCool posits a clear distinction between the encyclicals that Leo XIII promulgated in the first half of his pontificate and those in the second. *Aeterni Patris*, appearing toward the beginning of his reign, signalled the restoration of a traditional and conservative rationale that alone could provide the secure basis from which later and more progressive social encyclicals might depart. See G. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism: The Internal Evolution of Thomism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1989), 6–7. However, some still also note a degree of ambiguity or at least inconsistency in the later encyclicals: “Among his pontifical directives there were decrees concerning duels. Duelling is not entirely dead in this generation but then neither is the duck-billed platypus. On the other hand, Leo’s concern with the social problem and the functions of the State are altogether resonant with our worries in the second half of the twentieth century.” G. Weigel, “Leo XIII and Contemporary Theology,” in *Leo XIII and the Modern World*, ed. E. T. Gargan (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1961), 213.

32. See P. Misner, “Catholic Anti-Modernism: The Ecclesial Setting,” in Jodock, *Catholicism Contending with Modernity*, 56–87, 79.

33. “Whoso turns his attention to the bitter strifes of these days and seeks a reason for the troubles that vex public and private life must come to the conclusion that a fruitful cause of the evils which now afflict, as well as those which threaten us, lies in this: that false conclusions concerning divine and human things, which originated in the schools of philosophy, have crept into all the orders of the state, and have been accepted by the common consent of the masses.” (Si quis in acerbitatem nostrorum temporum animum intendat, earumque rerum rationem, quae publice et privatim geruntur, cogitatione complectatur, is profecto comperiet, fecundam malorum causam, cum eorum quae premunt, tum eorum quae pertimescimus, in eo consistere, quod prava de divinis humanisque rebus scita, e scholis philosophorum iam pridem profecta, in omnes civitatis ordines irrepererint, communi plurimorum suffragio recepta.) Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, 98; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 17.

provide a unified method for priestly formation throughout the world, and this unity would bring “force and light and aid”³⁴ to an ordering of the Church’s much-weakened intellectual defenses. That Leo’s Thomistic revival was as much political as philosophical is a truth argued by many,³⁵ but as a result, its impact on theology should not be overshadowed.

Aeterni Patris makes clear that philosophy is the handmaid of theology, and therefore any renewal within the philosophical disciplines will reach its fulfilment in a new apologetic:

Whence it clearly follows that human reason finds the fullest faith and authority united in the word of God. In like manner reason declares that the doctrine of the Gospel has even from its very beginning been manifested by certain wonderful signs, the established proofs, as it were, of unshaken truth; and that all, therefore, who set faith in the Gospel do not believe rashly as though following cunningly devised fables, but, by a most reasonable consent, subject their intelligence and judgement to an authority which is divine.³⁶

The close relationship between Vatican I and *Aeterni Patris* must be asserted if an accurate understanding of this period is to be gained. *Dei Filius* had reaffirmed, in the face of rationalist philosophers and the Reformers, the Church’s teaching on revelation, faith, and reason. The existence of a free, omnipotent, and personal Creator could be known by natural reason, taught the Council, though knowledge beyond this was entirely dependent on the historical revelation contained in Scripture and the living tradition. The act of faith,

34. *Ibid.*, 100; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878-1903*, 18.

35. See especially J. Hennessey, “Leo XIII’s Thomistic Revival,” S185-97, but also P. Thibault, *Savoir et Pouvoir: Philosophie thomiste et politique cléricale au XIX siècle* (Québec: Les Presses de l’Université Laval, 1972).

36. “Simili modo ratio declarat, evangelicam doctrinam mirabilibus quibusdam signis, tamquam certis certae veritatis argumentis, vel ab ipsa origine emicuisse; atque ideo omnes, qui Evangelico fidem adiungunt, non temere adiungere, tamquam doctas fabulas secutos, sed rationabili prorsus obsequio intelligentiam et iudicium suum divinae subiicere auctoritati.” Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, 101; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878-1903*, 19.

however, was no blind leap; it was supernatural but remained reasonable. In its fourth chapter, the Constitution on Faith distinguished the limits of the knowledge afforded by reason to faith. Though the two are related and complementary, beyond the truths available to natural reason were unknowable mysteries of God glimpsed only by faith through revelation. Whatever Leo XIII's political, philosophical, and theological intentions in promulgating *Aeterni Patris*, he certainly believed there to be a harmony between his teaching and that of *Dei Filius*.

The neo-scholastics,³⁷ among whom Leo XIII can be considered, held that Thomism offered the most perfect scientific expression of the scholastic method.³⁸ The grounds for such confidence might be roughly divided into philosophical, theological, and historical aspects, all of which are touched upon in *Aeterni Patris*. As a scientific discipline, the scholasticism of St. Thomas offered a seemingly simple objectivity. Against rationalist and skeptical assertions about the impossibility of supernatural revelation, Aquinas was thought to offer clear proofs of the existence of God and the divine attributes, logically deduced within a system of cause and effect, according to the principles of analogy, and through a pragmatic examination of signs and wonders. The clear formulas of an Aristotelian-inspired

37. For an excellent historical survey of scholasticism, discussion of its major features, and its specific relation to Thomism, see Elizabeth Gössmann, "Scholasticism," in *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology*, ed. K. Rahner, C. Ernst, and K. Smyth, vol. 6 (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 19–38. For a specific analysis of the nineteenth-century scholastic revival, see J.-P. Gollins, *La restauration du Thomisme sous Léon XIII et les philosophies nouvelles, Étude de la pensée de M. Blondel et du Père Laberthonnière* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1959), and J. Perrier, *Revival of Scholastic Philosophy in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: AMS, 1967).

38. "Indeed . . . reason, borne on the wings of Thomas to its human height, can scarcely rise higher, while faith could scarcely expect more or stronger aids from reason than those which she had already obtained through Thomas." (Ita quidem ut ratio ad humanum fastigium Thomae pennis evecto, iam fere nequeat sublimius assurgere; neque fides a ratione fere possit plura aut validiora adiumenta praestolari, quam quae iam est per Thomam consecuta.) Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, 109; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 23.

philosophy provided a logical foundation for the truths of faith because, as *Aeterni Patris* maintained, the best philosophers are those who combine the pursuit of philosophy with dutiful obedience to the Christian faith.³⁹ Thus the philosophical gives way to the theological implications of Leo XIII's agenda: to establish scientifically the veracity of signs and miracles so as to both justify the credibility of the Christian revelation that they accompany, and to vindicate the church which, as the bearer of these truths, claims a divine origin.⁴⁰ Thus scholastic methodology showed itself to be naturally suited to apologetic aims.⁴¹ Moreover, because systematically, Thomism held together as an integrated whole the various elements of the church's scriptural, patristic, and medieval theologies, it lent itself to easy transmission. Scholasticism, and more specifically Thomism, which had so consistently shaped Catholic theology, not least at the Council of Trent, offered a sound structure for the handing down of a secure tradition.⁴² Gerald McCool usefully summarises these points:

39. "For in this, the most noble of studies, it is of the greatest necessity to bind together, as it were in one body the many and various parts of the heavenly doctrines, that, each being allotted to its own proper place and derived from its own proper principles, the whole may join together in a complete union; in order, in fine, that all and each part may be strengthened by its own and the others' invincible argument." (In hac enim nobilissima disciplinarum magnopere necesse est, ut multae ac diversae caelestium doctrinarum partes in unum veluti corpus colligantur, ut suis quaeque locis convenienter dispositae, et ex propriis principiis derivatae apto inter se nexu cohaereant; demum ut omnes et singulae suis iisque invictis argumentis confirmentur.) *Ibid.*, 101; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 19.

40. Cf. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism*, 7.

41. "Philosophy also provides the organizing structure of a scientific dogmatic theology. Through the principles that philosophy supplies, revelation's scattered data 'may be joined together in an appropriate connexion. . . .' Finally, philosophy furnishes the Church with solid arguments to use in her controversies with her opponents." *Ibid.*, 7.

42. "The ecumenical councils, also, where blossoms the flower of all earthly wisdom, have always been careful to hold Thomas Aquinas in singular honour. In the Councils of Lyons, Vienna, Florence, and the Vatican one might almost say that Thomas took part and presided over the deliberations and decrees of the fathers, contending against the errors of the Greeks, of heretics and rationalists, with invincible force and with the happiest results. But the chief and special glory of Thomas, one which he has shared with none of the Catholic Doctors, is that the Fathers of Trent made it part of the order of conclave to lay upon the altar, together with the Sacred Scriptures and the decrees of the supreme Pontiffs, the *Summa* of Thomas Aquinas, whence to seek counsel, reason, and inspiration." (*Ipsa quoque Concilia Oecumenica, in quibus*

The scholastic philosophy described in the encyclical was a highly objective discipline. Its realistic epistemology prepared the way for a vindication of God's existence and attributes through causal arguments grounded on Aristotle's metaphysics. Its Aristotelian metaphysics laid the groundwork for the impersonal apologetics of signs and miracles, which would become the object of Blondel's trenchant criticism before the end of the nineteenth century. As in Kleutgen's *Die Theologie der Vorzeit*, scholastic positive theology was credited with the ability to order and unify the scattered data of revelation and subsume them under its developed concepts; and scholastic speculative theology could acquire a fruitful understanding of the Christian mysteries through its Aristotelian science of God.⁴³

Such then are the primary reasons for the preferred status that Leo XIII gives to Thomism in *Aeterni Patris*. Clearly, the foreseen and intended impact on theology is of particular pertinence, if only because the exact nature of that prognostication remains the abiding ambiguity of the Leonine heritage. From the three perspectives mentioned emerges a clearer understanding of the motives of Leo XIII in his encyclical on Christian philosophy. Only a scientifically unassailable philosophy, both unified and comprehensive, could give the footing necessary for the robust apologetic required to win back the haute bourgeoisie—the educated upper classes of Europe who had been lost to the wiles of the new philosophies. Likewise, a uniform and logical mode of catechesis, vital and accessible, was

eminet lectus ex toto orbe terrarum flos sapientiae, singularem Thomae Aquinati honorem habere perpetuo studuerunt. In Concilio Lugdunensi, Viennensi, Florentino, Vaticano, deliberationibus et decretis Patrum interfuisse Thomam et pene praefuisse dixeris, adversus errorem Graecorum, haereticorum et rationalistarum ineluctabili vi et faustissimo exitu decertantem.—Sed haec maxima est et Thomae propria, nec cum quopiam ex doctoribus catholicis communicata laus, quod Patres Tridentini, in ipso medio conclavi ordini habendo, una cum divinae Scripturae codicibus et Pontificum Maximorum decretis *Summam* Thomae Aquinatis super altari patere vulerunt, unde consilium, rationes, oracular peterentur.) Leo XIII, *Aeterni Patris*, 110; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 24.

43. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 232. For a commentary on Leonine Thomism and especially Joseph Kleutgen's influence on the development of *Aeterni Patris*, see F. Kerr, *After Aquinas: Versions of Thomism* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 17–21.

needed for the working classes who, although less resistant and more ultramontane in regard to the Church, needed to be swayed from the antireligious but increasingly popular doctrines of socialism. Capable of countering the new philosophies, of establishing a secure Catholic apologetic, and of providing a teaching that would prove cohesive and sustainable in its uniformity, Thomism instilled the confidence of a panacea.

Philosophically speaking, unity was to be the overriding contribution of neo-scholasticism to the Church. By the end of the pontificate of Pius IX, the state of Catholic theology was desperate. Writing some time earlier, John Henry Newman, training for the priesthood in Rome, wrote to a former Oxford colleague,

We . . . find very little theology here, and a talk we had yesterday with one of the Jesuit fathers here shows we shall find little philosophy. It arose from our talking of the Greek studies of the Propaganda and asking whether the youths learned Aristotle. “O no—he said—Aristotle is in no favour here—no, not in Rome:—not St. Thomas. I have read Aristotle and St. Thos., and owe a great deal to them, but they are out of favour here and throughout Italy. St. Thomas is a great saint—people don’t dare to speak against him—they profess to reverence him, but put him aside.” I asked what philosophy they did adopt. He said odds and ends—whatever seems to them best. . . . *Facts* are the great things and nothing else.⁴⁴

Certainly, one assumption behind the restoration of Thomistic Christian philosophy by Leo XIII was the provision of a unified method, the disparate and piecemeal philosophies⁴⁵ of the day

44. Newman to Dalgairns, 22 November 1846, in *The Letters and Diaries of John Henry Newman*, vol. 11, ed. S. Dessain, et al., (Oxford: Clarendon, 1961), 279. Roger Aubert, in his study of Pius IX, also quotes the letter of a young priest studying in Rome to his friend in France: “Roman theology is altogether too careless of what happens around it. Generally speaking, rationalism is generally badly understood and is opposed with futility. History has not a single celebrated representative. Linguistics are neglected. The study of medicine is backward and of law is stagnant.” Both quotations found in O’Connell, *Critics on Trial*, 27–28.

45. “In 1878 Thomism was one feeble philosophical approach among many in the Catholic armory. Eclecticism prevailed. Some eighteenth-century Catholics had flirted with Enlightenment.

seeming to provide only a weak and ineffectual defense, often because they were tainted by the methodology of their opponents. Moreover in judging the intention of the pope in *Aeterni Patris*, one should be careful not to underestimate the threat, real and perceived, that the Church felt at this time. As Kenneth Scott Latourette said of the late-nineteenth century,

The threat was multiform. One of its most striking features was that it arose in historic Christendom. Indeed, much of it had at least part of its source in perversions of what had come from Christianity. It seemed that Christianity was giving rise to forces which were making it an anachronism—as though it was digging its own grave.⁴⁶

The newer philosophies, such as the ontologism of Vincenzo Gioberti (1801–1852) and Antonio Rosmini (1797–1855), or the Idealism of Georg Hegel (1770–1831), Johann Fichte (1762–1814), and Friedrich Schelling (1775–1854), essentially have their roots in the *cogito* philosophies⁴⁷ of René Descartes (1596–1650) and Immanuel Kant (1724–1804).⁴⁸ Not only did these latter two seminal

John Locke's ideas were taught in French Jesuit schools and imbibed there by the likes of Charles Carroll of Carrollton. Cartesianism had a wide following, and so did traditionalism and fideism growing out of romanticism. Nineteenth-century *deutsche Theologen* were influenced by rationalism and historical method. Ontologism had a vogue at Louvain, in France, and in Italy, where Gioberti and Rosmini were philosophers to the national movement. Only in Spain and there principally among Dominicans, was more than lip service paid to the Angelic Doctor as the nineteenth century began." J. Hennesey, "Leo XIII's Thomistic Revival," S190–91.

46. K. Scott Latourette, "The Church and the World in the Nineteenth Century," in Gargan, *Leo XIII and the Modern World*, 51.

47. "[Modern philosophy's] use of the *cogito* as its starting point and its demand for apodictic reflex certitude in the name of philosophical rigor cut it off from our legitimate spontaneous certitudes and imprison the philosopher in his own mind. Some modern philosophers are content to remain there, as we can see from the empiricism of Hume and the idealism of Kant. The modern philosophers who have opted for realism are obliged to postulate an intuitive grasp of God or the divine ideas to ground the necessary principles of their metaphysics." McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism*, 29. For a useful analysis of the modern philosophers and their engagement with theology, see D. Brown, *Continental Philosophy and Modern Theology* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1987).

48. T. Harper gives a suggestion of this process when he says, "Descartes may be justly said to have bequeathed to us a Hume; Hume in turn, a Kant, a Fichte, a Hegel, a Schelling. So, again, the ontology of Gioberti under a modified form, found its way into Catholic universities and

writers build their systems on the individual, but they established them by complete separation from Christian revelation. Rightly, *Aeterni Patris* was anxious about such “separated philosophies” as a danger to faith, the church, and society. Fundamental, however, was the neo-scholastic conviction that the new philosophies could not support Catholic dogmatics.⁴⁹ Because Thomism alone preserved a distinction of sense and intellect within its epistemology, Thomism alone could “defend the substantial unity of spirit and matter within the human agent”⁵⁰ that was crucial to Catholic theology. Hence, the pragmatism of St. Thomas and his belief in universals, his setting of humanity within a causal system that leads from a contingent world toward God, his teaching on the natural and supernatural, his conviction as to the essential difference between the created and uncreated orders, between faith and reason, even philosophy and theology, all speak of careful distinction, but far more importantly, of the possible integration of these poles in the union of a higher truth. Herein is the attraction that the neo-scholastic system held for the vulnerable, fragmented, and changing Christian world of Leo XIII, and therein lies the reason why many saw *Aeterni Patris* as fundamental to his “grand design.”

Yet it was not as if this task was simple. Just as postrevolutionary, democratic society had the Christian faith among its sources, so many of the new philosophies from René Descartes onward and, indeed, what would later become the “new” theology, had their origin and took their departure from scholastic philosophy and theology. It was difficult to know the enemy exactly, and there was a constant risk of jettisoning legitimate development along with incompatible

colleges.” T. Harper, “The Encyclical,” *The Month* 18, no. 37 (1879): 363. See also Kerr, *After Aquinas*, 19–30.

49. See McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism*, 100–2.

50. *Ibid.*, 100.

novelties. In the face of such tension between old and new, it was difficult to know the best course. Though many have interpreted Leo XIII's response in *Aeterni Patris* as definitive and absolute, in fact it could be said to reflect the ambiguity of the age and of theology in particular. Some see it as a reactionary measure designed to arrest the development of theology according to novel principles,⁵¹ while still others regard the promulgation as simply another aspect of the extreme ultramontanism that sought unity and isolation at all costs.⁵² However, it remains possible to see within the decision to impose the scholastic system of St. Thomas on the Church a desire to end the disarray of Christian philosophy⁵³ and to seek an impulse toward the rediscovery of a philosophical heritage that would serve the progress of theology.⁵⁴ For in fact the choice as seen by the neo-scholastics was more nuanced than old or new:

The early nineteenth-century Neo-Scholastic synthesis, of which

51. Cf. a contemporary review by Archibald Alexander, "Thomas Aquinas and the Encyclical Letter," *The Princeton Review* 5 (1880): 249, where Alexander claims that "there are certain characteristics of the scholastic thought of St. Thomas that make it useless in modern times." J. D. Holmes, quoting from the liberal journal *Siècle*, suggests that the encyclical "was interpreted as a declaration of stagnation restricting the development of future thought." J. D. Holmes, "Some English Reactions to the Publication of *Aeterni Patris*," *The Downside Review* 93 (1975): 270. Also, W. Ward, writing in *The Fortnightly Review* of 1903, speaks of the "restrictive" nature of the encyclical: W. Ward, "Leo XIII," *The Fortnightly Review*, 80 (1903): 256.
52. "The development of scholasticism reflected the aims and the policies of the more conservative and extreme ultramontanes. . . . By 1864 the revival of Thomism was an ultramontane movement." Holmes, "Some English Reactions to the Publication of *Aeterni Patris*," 270.
53. Cf. J. C. Hedley, "Pope Leo XIII and Modern Studies," *The Dublin Review* 34, no. 1, 3rd series (1880): 273. "The Encyclical is rather a domestic warning than a plan of campaign. It is an order to the household to attend to its own health rather than a call to go forth and fight. The Catholic flock has been wasting its time with second rate teachers; it has been divided, outside the domain of Faith, into sets and parties; its best men have spent a lifetime in elaborating systems to which the last touch had scarcely been given when they were found to be worthy of condemnation."
54. J. Collins, "Leo XIII and the Philosophical Approach to Modernity," in Gargan, *Leo XIII and the Modern World*, 182. "This (the renewal of Christian philosophy) is the main theme of *Aeterni Patris*, the key encyclical which has served since 1879 as the guiding stimulus toward recovering the sources of Christian philosophical ideas." Cf. F. Ehrle, *Zur Enzyklika "Aeterni Patris": Text und Kommentar* (Rome: Editioni di storia e letteratura, 1954), 110–13.

Liberatore and Kleutgen are forceful and influential advocates, established Neo-Thomism as a modern system into which the Thomists believed the best of modern thought could be absorbed. None of them denied that the modern world had made many discoveries. None of them condemned its progress in natural and historical sciences. Nevertheless only the philosophy and theology of the Scholastic Doctors possessed the principles required to interpret the results of modern progress correctly and to integrate them into a Christian wisdom.⁵⁵

Again, whatever the Thomists believed about their system, the degree to which they remained suspicious of notions of contingency and history, either with regard to the works of Thomas or the church as a whole, remains debatable. And if for no other reason, it therefore remains difficult to dismiss absolutely a sense of reactionary conservatism from Leo XIII's motivations in the promulgation of *Aeterni Patris*. The ambiguity that remains and that emerges the stronger in the theological response to the neo-scholastic system is not perhaps peculiar to this question but inherent to the nature of theology itself. As Karl Rahner was to point out much later,

It is the bitter grief of theology and its blessed task too, always to have to seek (because it does not clearly have present to it at the time) what, in a sense—in its historical memory it has always known. The history of theology is by no means just the history of the progress of doctrine, but also a history of forgetting. . . . What was once given in history and is ever made present anew does not primarily form a set of premises from which we can draw conclusions which have never been thought before. It is the object, which while it is always retained, must ever be acquired anew.⁵⁶

Thus from a perspective not dissimilar to Rahner, Gerald McCool can conclude that “*Aeterni Patris* must now be considered an historical moment in the dialectical progress of theological development.”⁵⁷

55. McCool, *From Unity to Pluralism*, 31.

56. K. Rahner, “Current Problems in Christology,” in *Theological Investigations*, trans. C. Ernst, vol. 1, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1974), 151–52.

Yet, for the Church of the nineteenth century, this ambiguous process of ongoing discovery may in retrospect be seen mainly as “a history of forgetting,” and perhaps because of that the period was one of particularly “bitter grief.”

A Positive Influence on Positive Theology

Even as the strong and cumulative effect of *Dei Filius* and *Aeterni Patris* begins to be assessed and the advantages of neo-scholastic methods examined, the essential weaknesses of the movement become apparent. The fatal flaw, as many have acknowledged, is there from the beginning, when the system establishes a tension between efforts to come to an understanding of faith and efforts to develop a science of faith.⁵⁸ The possibility of separating knowledge of the mysteries themselves from knowledge that can be deduced from them was an ever-present danger that post-Vatican I studies did not always avoid. Consistently, the theology of this period up until the Second World War and beyond fell into what Gerald McCool refers to as a sterile “conclusion theology.”⁵⁹ This evolved from the neo-scholastic stunting and objectivization of the revealed mysteries in an effort to contain them within a deductive and ahistorical scientific system. So the positive attributes of the methodological system of St. Thomas chosen by the neo-scholastics of the late nineteenth century begin to yield their counterpoint problems and thus inspire the theological movements of the early twentieth century. The conviction of the neo-scholastics that their method

57. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 6.

58. McCool makes this point and cites the distinction that Johannes Beumer makes between *Glaubensverständnis* and *Glaubenswissenschaft* in his *Theologie als Glaubensverständnis* (Würzburg, Echter, 1953), 13–24. See also B. Lonergan, “Theology and Understanding,” in *Collection* (New York: Herder and Herder, 1967), 121–41.

59. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 225.

offered a single metaphysical system, unaltered through the centuries from St. Bonaventure (1217–74) to Cardinal Cajetan (1480–1547) and beyond, gave rise to charges of a lack of historical awareness or of ignorance of the possibilities of dogmatic development.⁶⁰ Undoubtedly, there were those who championed the objective universality of the method, and saw within it respect for the unalterable truths of revelation and the authoritative teachings of the Church:

It is still agreed, of course, that Thomas is not to be regarded as having an explicitly historical approach, yet it has been shown by his use of the neo-Platonist scheme of *egressus* and *regressus* he advanced historical thinking far more than had previously been suspected, not only in the Third Part of his *Summa* but throughout his work. Creation, incarnation with grace already at work in history, the bringing home of the world, these are all conceived by Thomas in terms of the economy of salvation and therefore historically, and not merely as necessary modes of being.⁶¹

60. “Yet only on a superficial interpretation would one infer from the untroubled and unhurried serenity of the work that the author himself lived in freedom from outer or inner disturbances. On the other hand, it is certainly clear that the *Summa Theologica* can only be the work of a heart fundamentally at peace. St. Thomas did not discover and map out his majestic outline of Christian teaching in the ‘silence of a monastic cell.’ It was not in some idyllic sphere of retirement cut off from the happenings in the world that he lived out his life. Such presentations, as untrue to history as they are impermissibly simplified, not only color, or rather *discolor* in many particulars the conventional portraits of Thomas; they frequently have an effect on biographical studies which make higher claims to accuracy.” J. Pieper, *The Silence of St. Thomas* (South Bend, IN: St. Augustine’s Press, 1999), 3–4. See also Pieper’s reflections on the “Timeliness of Thomism,” for example, “The fullness of truth can never be grasped by a neutral and indifferent mind, but only by a mind seeking the answer to a serious and urgent existential problem. But this urgency can only be aroused by an immediately experienced, real situation, of the individual and the community. This means that the truth will be more profoundly known *as truth*, the more vigorously its timeliness comes to light; it also means that a man experiencing his own time with a richer intensity of heart and fuller spiritual awareness has a better chance of experiencing the illuminating force of truth. Together with its timeliness, by which the responsive power of truth is focused on the immediate present, the eternal validity of truth which, incomparably compelling, transcends the whole of time, would become manifest. This makes clear the twofold, never-ending task of the true teacher: to reflect the totality of truth *and*, in a constantly inquiring meditation, to discover and point out wherein lies the relevance of truth to his own time.” *Ibid.*, 75–107, 106.

61. Gössmann, “Scholasticism,” 32.

Ambiguity has remained, to varying degrees, with regard to whether Thomism adopts a consciously historical approach. Yet the question remains as to whether Leo XIII consciously desired to exploit this ambiguity in his efforts to restore Christian philosophy and theology.

Gabriel Daly makes the important point that *Aeterni Patris* did not seek a “return to scholastic philosophy *in general*,” but was an unambiguous summons “to the philosophy of Aquinas *simpliciter*.”⁶² However implicit, within this restoration was the impulse to historical, if not critical, study. The opening of the Vatican archive to scholars for the first time in 1880, the promulgation of *Providentissimus Deus* in 1893, and the setting up of the Biblical Commission in 1902 support this tendency of Leo’s to return to the sources.⁶³ Granted, Daly is skeptical of the pope’s appreciation of the diversity, pluralism, and contingency to which such a study could give rise, but that he “initiated the movement” cannot be denied.⁶⁴ Indeed, something of the methodology of *Aeterni Patris* itself speaks of the dynamism that theology draws for the future through an appreciation of the interaction of the present with the past. As Marvin O’Connell says,

To this Christian philosophy, to this handmaiden of robust theology, Pope Leo gave a broad historical dimension. The doctors and Fathers of the early church, he argued, had themselves been philosophers, had themselves “well understood that, according to the divine plan, the restorer of human science is Christ, who is the power and the wisdom of God, and in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.” From Justin Martyr to Augustine of Hippo they had all appreciated that “in the case of such doctrines that the human intelligence may perceive, it is . . . just that philosophy makes use of its own method, principles and arguments.” This tradition was brilliantly continued by the Scholastic masters who flourished in the medieval universities and who “addressed

62. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 9–10.

63. See Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism*, 13–15.

64. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 10.

themselves to a great work—that of diligently collecting, and sifting, and storing up, as it were, for the use and convenience of posterity the rich and fertile harvests of Christian learning scattered abroad in the voluminous works of the holy Fathers.”⁶⁵

Whether or not Leo XIII had ambiguous intentions in promulgating *Aeterni Patris*, and whether he realized that with his nascent notions of history he had brought a Trojan horse into the theological camp, the effect of his encyclical was certainly ambiguous and not without irony.⁶⁶ While the practical interpretation of *Dei Filius* that he provided in *Aeterni Patris* gave a particular direction to Catholic theology by orienting it according to a particular school, the emergent vicissitudes of that method could never have been anticipated, nor could the final results of the rediscovery of St. Thomas have ever been expected. Responses to the apparent inadequacies of the scholastic system guided the theology of the period between the two Vatican councils, and significant shifts can be charted in fundamental, liturgical, and dogmatic theology, each initiated by the dialogue between Thomism and the modern world that *Aeterni Patris* began. Scholasticism, as opposed to Thomism, came to be regarded as a denial of the individual and subjective element of faith and of the inevitable historicity of revelation as given in Scripture and tradition. Hence, ironically

the Thomistic synthesis, which the nineteenth-century Neothomists were convinced was required to defend and explain *Dei Filius'* teaching on faith and reason, would change and evolve from within until its

65. O'Connell, *Critics on Trial*, 35.

66. “Since it was Leo who initiated the movement which only later issued in a truly critical study of medieval philosophy, he himself can hardly be expected to have appreciated the diversity, indeed pluralism, of that philosophy, and he may have supposed that the differences between Thomism and Augustinianism were less significant than they in fact were.” Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 10. Cf. R. Aubert, “Aspects divers du néo-thomisme sous le pontificat de Léon XIII,” in *Aspetti della cultura cattolica nell' età di Leone XIII* (Rome: Edizioni 5 Lune, 1961), 148–49.

epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophical method had ceased to be the epistemology, metaphysics, and philosophical method which in the minds of the drafters of *Aeterni Patris* distinguished the timeless, universal, Aristotelian, science of the Angelic Doctor from the individual, subjective, and historical thought of the modern philosophers.⁶⁷

Indeed the irony is more bitter. The philosophical errors from which the neo-Thomists had sought to free Catholic theology became the springboard for the new theology and the revised systems of twentieth-century transcendental Thomists.⁶⁸

Providentissimus Deus and *Divinum Illud Munus*

In a study of theological method, Jared Wicks asserts that

Vatican II reflected the interconnectedness of the mysteries when it showed how biblical interpretation, by which divine wisdom takes on written form, resembles the mystery of the incarnation, by which the divine Word assumed a human nature by the work of the Holy Spirit. Such theological reflections on the teachings of faith assume and further set forth, the symphonic harmony of the different truths of revelation.⁶⁹

In *Providentissimus Deus* and *Divinum Illud Munus* are the beginnings of that later harmony. Written in the latter half of Leo's pontificate, these two encyclicals focus on biblical criticism and the role of the Holy Spirit in salvation and express more explicitly the historical consciousness and openness to plurality at which *Aeterni Patris* had

67. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 235.

68. "Thus, sixty years after *Aeterni Patris* the Jesuit descendants of the early Neothomists had welcomed into their revised Thomistic synthesis the epistemology and metaphysics of their ancestors' theological arch-enemies." *Ibid.*, 3. See also R. Aubert, "L'enciclica *Aeterni Patris* e le alter prese di peozione della Santa Sede sulla filosofia cristiana," in *La filosofia cristiana nei secoli XIX e XX*, vol. 2: *Ritorno all'eredità scolastica*, ed. E. Coreth, W. Neidl, and G. Pligersdorffer (Rome: Città Nuova Editrice, 1994).

69. J. Wicks, *Introduction to Theological Method* (Rome: Piemme, 1994), 24.

hinted. Emerging here is a congruency between the word, flesh, and spirit phases of revelation that the Second Vatican Council later harmonizes within the overarching notion of sacrament.

Though written with the specific purpose of countering rationalist attack, the letter on the study of Holy Scripture sustains a predominantly positive tone.⁷⁰ The pope realizes that the best defense against pernicious liberal exegesis is the better and correct use of modern methodologies. And though he remains suspicious of higher criticism, the welcome of thorough analysis by Leo XIII is far more than a begrudging relaxation of the traditional defiance. It is the positive recognition of scientific, linguistic, and exegetical studies. To accept critical exegesis, in no matter how limited a way, is to accept that the Scriptures do not offer easily accessed, univocal, and ahistorical truth, but a unique and complex blend of the human and divine aspects of revelation.⁷¹ Effective and fruitful study of the word of God demands emergence from the “single system” mentality that was the tragedy of nineteenth-century Catholic theology. Jan Walgrave describes the prevailing mentality as follows:

A mind educated in one single system has a strength of its own. On his own ground, playing according to the rules he is accustomed to, he is undefeatable. But beyond his own ground he feels distressed and forlorn. He simply does not understand what it is all about. As he identifies thought with the requirements of his own system—there is but one truth, one true method, one true philosophy—it seems to him that those who do not think within the same frame of concepts, principles and methods, are obscure, muddled and somehow perverted. He is not disposed to take them seriously. He scorns them from the heights of eternal truth. They are but adversaries and villains whose opinions can be set forth in a few lines of the introduction and briefly confuted in

70. Cf. Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, 270; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 325–26.

71. See J. Fitzmyer, *The Biblical Commission's Document “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church”*: *Text and Commentary* (Rome: Editrice Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 1995), 19.

a *scholion*. All along there is no real interplay, no dialogue, no advance toward mutual understanding.⁷²

In the light of *Aeterni Patris*, many saw Leo XIII as the pope of a single system, yet perhaps *Providentissimus Deus* sheds some light on the implicit intentions of that earlier encyclical. Certainly, in 1893 the pope remained alert to the dangers of the unbridled use of modern methods: “There has arisen to the great detriment of religion, an inept method, dignified by the name of ‘higher criticism,’ which pretends to judge of the origin, integrity and authority of each Book from internal indications alone.”⁷³

Moreover, he did maintain that biblical analysis should be grounded within Thomistic method, stating that

the best preparation [for biblical study] will be a conscientious application of philosophy and theology under the guidance of St. Thomas of Aquin, and a thorough training therein—as We ourselves have elsewhere pointed out and directed. By this means, both in biblical studies and in that part of theology which is called *positive*, they will pursue the right path and make satisfactory progress.⁷⁴

Nevertheless, while Leo exhorts scholars to show reverence for the scholastic framework, he indicates that this is not the only acceptable system. Insisting that for biblicists “the first means is the study of

72. J. Walgrave, *Unfolding Revelation* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1972), 154.

73. “Perperam enim et cum religionis damno inductum est artificium, nomine honestatum criticae sublimioris, quo, ex solis internis, uti loquuntur, rationibus, cuiuspiam libri origo, integritas, auctoritas diiudicata emergant.” Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, 285; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 334.

74. “Erunt autem optime comparati, si, quâ Nosmetipsi monstravimus et praescripsimus via, philosophiae et theologiae institutionem, eodem S. Thoma duce, religiose coluerint penitusque perceperint. Ita recte incedent, quum in re biblica, tum in ea theologiae parte quam *positivam* nominant, in utraque laetissime progressuri.” *Ibid.*, 284; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 333. For an example of how the scholastic system helped to shape Leo’s understanding of the Scriptures, see teaching on inspiration (*ibid.*, 288–89; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 336). Jared Wicks provides a helpful insight into this in *Introduction to Theological Method*, 56.

the oriental languages and the art of criticism,”⁷⁵ the pope declares interplay with modern methods to be legitimate and indicates the beginnings of a tentative dialogue with other theological systems. For example, the encyclical shows a greater awareness of the Scriptures and the early fathers as sources of doctrine, and this in itself opens up a consciousness of history, without which revelation cannot be adequately understood. Another important, yet to some extent implicit, element in this perspective is the notion of experience. The truth and power of the word of God have been increasingly appreciated through the church’s reflection on her experience down the ages:

The Holy Fathers well knew all this by practical experience, and they never cease to extol the sacred Scripture and its fruits. In innumerable passages of their writings we find them applying to it such phrases as “an inexhaustible treasury of heavenly doctrine,” or “an overflowing fountain of salvation,” or putting it before us as fertile pastures and beautiful gardens in which the flock of the Lord is marvellously refreshed and delighted.⁷⁶

Essential to the recognition of historical-critical exegesis, and the growing respect given to the role of experience in the church, is a conviction with regard to the realism of the incarnation.⁷⁷ The

75. “Est primum in studio linguarum veterum orientalium simulque in arte quam vocant criticam.” Leo XIII, *Providentissimus Deus*, 285; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 334.

76. “Quae omnia SS. Patres cognitione et usu quum exploratissima haberent, nunquam cessarunt in divinis Litteris earumque fructibus collaudandis. Eas enim vero crebris locis appellant vel thesaurum locupletissimum doctrinarum caelestium, vel perennes fontes salutis, vel ita proponunt quasi prata fertilia et amoenissimos hortos, in quibus grex dominicus admirabili modo reficiatur et delectetur.” *Ibid.*, 272–73; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 327.

77. “The Church of Christ takes the realism of the incarnation seriously, and this is why she attaches great importance to the ‘historico-critical’ study of the Bible. Far from condemning it, as those who support ‘mystical’ exegesis would want, my Predecessors vigorously approved. ‘Artis criticae disciplinam,’ Leo XIII wrote, ‘quippe percipiendae penitus hagiographorum sententiae perutilem, *Nobis vehementer probantibus*, nostri (exegetae, scilicet, catholici) excolant’ (Apostolic Letter *Vigilantiae*, establishing the Biblical Commission, 30 October 1902). The same ‘vehemence’ in the approval and the same adverb (‘vehementer’) are found in *Divino Afflante Spiritu* regarding research in textual criticism.” John Paul II, “Address on The Interpretation of

union of the divine and the human in the historical life of Jesus Christ is the principle that determines our understanding of the gracious self-manifestation of God. *Providentissimus Deus* thus affirms a rich parallelism of meaning between the scriptural and the incarnate Word, a parallel that *Divinum Illud Munus*⁷⁸ extends to the Word made flesh in the life of the church:

Let it suffice to state that, as Christ is the Head of the Church, so is the Holy Ghost her soul. “What the soul is in our body, that is the Holy Ghost in Christ’s body the Church” (St. Aug., *Serm.* 187, *de Temp.*) This being so, no further and fuller “manifestation and revelation of the Divine Spirit” may be imagined or expected; for that which now takes place in the Church is the most perfect possible, and will last until that day when the Church herself, having passed through her militant career, shall be taken up into the joy of the saints triumphing in heaven.⁷⁹

In this encyclical on the Holy Spirit, Leo XIII makes very clear the revelatory status of the church. The Spirit who made the Christ flesh in the womb of Mary and inspired the word of God in the minds and hearts of the writers of sacred Scripture, is the Spirit who makes manifest and reveals the same incarnate Word in the church. There is, as will be seen later, a surprising novelty in Leo’s conviction in the present and perfect actualization of revelation in the life of the church. Surprising too is the personal and somewhat immanent

the Bible in the Church,” in Fitzmyer, *The Biblical Commission’s Document “The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church,”* 5.

78. For a very useful general overview, see A. Huerga, “La enciclica de Leon XIII sobre el Espiritu Santo,” in *Credo in Spiritum Sanctum*, vol. 1: *Acti del congresso teologico Internazionale di pneumatologia* (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1983), 507–16.

79. “Atque hoc affirmare sufficiat, quod quum Christus caput sit Ecclesiae, Spiritus Sanctus sit eius anima: *Quod est in corpore nostro anima, id est Spiritus Sanctus in corpore Christi, quod est Ecclesia.*—Quae ita quum sint, nequaquam comminisci et expectare licet aliam ullam ampliolem uberioremque *divini Spiritus manifestationem et ostensionem*; quae enim nunc in Ecclesia habetur; maxima sane est, eaque tamdiu manebit quoad Ecclesiae contingat ut, militiae emensa stadium, ad triumphantium in caelesti societate laetitiam educatur.” Leo XIII, *Divinum Illud Munus*, 650; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 412.

manner by which he understands that the Holy Spirit makes himself manifest in the lives of the just:

Among these gifts [of the Holy Spirit] are those secret warnings and invitations, which from time to time are excited in our minds and hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost. Without these there is no beginning of a good life, no progress, no arriving at eternal salvation. And since these words and admonitions are uttered in the soul in an exceedingly secret manner, they are sometimes compared in Holy Writ to the breathing of a coming breeze, and the Angelic Doctor likens them to the movements of the heart which are wholly hidden in the living body (*ST 3a q vii., a. I ad. 3*).⁸⁰

While there is some sense in which Leo regards the sacraments as the formal objectification of this inner movement,⁸¹ his treatment of the *signum demonstrativum* remains muted. However, this may be because sacramentology is not central to his purpose. Moreover, while in this encyclical, the pope does not make explicit links between the liturgical celebration of the sacraments and the actualization of revelation in the church, his stressing of the unificatory role of the Holy Spirit within the economy of salvation opens the way to later more direct parallels.⁸² Certainly, throughout Leo XIII's long reign

80. "In his autem muneribus sunt arcanæ illæ admonitiones invitationesque, quæ instinctu Sancti Spiritus identidem in mentibus animisque excitantur; quæ si desint, neque initium viæ bonæ habetur, neque progressionem, neque exitum salutis æternæ. Et quoniam huiusmodi voces et motiones occulte admodum in animis fiunt, apte in sacris paginis similes nonnunquam habentur venientis auræ sibilus; easque Doctor Angelicus scite confert motibus cordis, cuius tota vis est in animante perabditâ: *Cor habet quamdam influentiam occultam, et ideo cordi comparatur Spiritus Sanctus, qui invisibiliter Ecclesiam vivificat et unit.*" Ibid., 653–54; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 414.

81. "The beginnings of this regeneration and renovation of man are by Baptism. In this sacrament, when the unclean spirit has been expelled from the soul, the Holy Ghost enters in and makes it like to himself. 'That which is born of the Spirit, is spirit' (John iii., 6). The same Spirit gives himself more abundantly in Confirmation, strengthening and confirming Christian life." (Huius regenerationis et renovationis initia sunt homini per baptisma: in quo sacramento, spiritu immundo ab anima depulso, illabatur primum Spiritus Sanctus, eamque similem sibi facit: *Quod natum est ex Spiritu, spiritus est.* Ueberiusque per sacram confirmationem, ad constantiam et robur christianæ vitæ, sese dono dat idem Spiritus.) Ibid., 652; Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 413.

it is possible to chart a circumspect yet increasing openness to the insights that an understanding of historical development gives to the theological disciplines. This, coupled with the recognition of methodologies other than the scholastic, beg for a reconsideration of the pope's intentions in promulgating *Aeterni Patris*.

Earlier Responses to the Question of Historicity

The rise of a historical consciousness in Catholic theology, and an investigation of the internal, subjective dimensions of faith, as well as the way these two phenomena shape both Scripture and tradition, were not movements that began in the twentieth century. Nor did they result solely in response to Leo XIII's philosophical and theological prescriptions. Although it would be difficult to imagine twentieth-century theology developing as it did without the decisive direction that *Aeterni Patris* gave,⁸³ there were, nevertheless, traces of a new theology prior to Pope Leo XIII. As Yves Congar points out,

82. One might single out the encyclical *Mirae Caritatis* of 1902, in which Leo XIII states, "The Eucharist, according to the testimony of the Holy Fathers, should be regarded as in a manner a continuation and extension of the Incarnation. For in and by it the substance of the Incarnate Word is united with individual men, and the supreme sacrifice offered on Calvary is in a wondrous manner renewed." (Eucharistia, Patrum sanctorum testimonio, Incarnationis continuatio quaedam et amplificatio censenda est. Siquidem per ipsam incarnati Verbi substantia cum singulis hominibus copulatur; et supremum in Calvaria sacrificium admirabili modo renovatur.) Leo XIII, *Mirae Caritatis*, ASS 34 (1902): 645. English trans. in Carlen, *The Papal Encyclicals 1878–1903*, 502.

83. "Without the firm leadership of Leo XIII himself in the Thomistic revival, it is hardly likely that the vast historical scholarship and the remarkable systematic development that characterized the Thomistic movement in the century after the publication of *Aeterni Patris* would have taken place. Certainly the history of twentieth-century Catholic philosophy and theology would have followed an entirely different course. The twentieth century would not have been the age of Rousselot, Mercier, de Raeymaecker, Grabmann, Gilson, Maritain, Garrigou-Lagrange, Journet, de Lubac, Bouillard, Rahner, and Lonergan. Less than a decade after *Dei Filius*, the practical interpretation of its teaching by Leo XIII in *Aeterni Patris* gave a decisive and irreversible orientation to Catholic philosophy and theology." McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 236.

The romantic current in theology is the first factor to bring about reconstruction in the course of the years from 1810–1840. Its action promotes unity and the reintegration of the elements dissociated in the preceding period. It regains first of all a sense of the past, of the Fathers and even of Scholasticism through its interest in the Middle Ages. In this way it begins to recapture a sense of the contemplation of truths of the faith and of speculation about them. . . . In this very manner, Romanticism recaptures or discovers a sense of development and history.⁸⁴

The liberal Protestant theologian, Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), along with the Catholic theologians of the Tübingen school, whom he influenced, especially Johann Adam Möhler (1796–1838), the English convert John Henry Newman (1801–1890), and the French Traditionalists Félicité de Lamennais (1782–1854) and Louis Batain (1796–1867), were perhaps the most influential forerunners with regard to the themes that occupied twentieth-century Catholic theology. Here were the beginnings of the rebellion against a totally objective and scientifically deduced scholastic method in theology, a rebellion that *Aeterni Patris* was ironically to deepen and intensify.

Schleiermacher bases his understanding of faith on the sense of certainty that arises from feeling oneself dependent on a transcendent reality, which is God.⁸⁵ The Christian community is the place where this faith is strengthened by the testimonies of experience. Faith results from such testimonies and is passed through the community. Hence faith may be defined as “the inward condition of one who feels content and strong in fellowship with Christ.”⁸⁶ This basing of the act of faith on the testimony of others in the Christian community is also

84. Y.-M. Congar, *A History of Theology* (New York: Doubleday, 1968), 183.

85. For a concise study of the major themes of his work, and a selection of his writings, see K. W. Clements, *Friedrich Schleiermacher, Pioneer of Modern Theology* (London: Collins, 1987), especially 35–66.

86. F. Schleiermacher, *Der christliche Glaube nach den Grundsätzen der evangelischen Kirche im Zusammenhange dargestellt*, 2nd. ed., 2 vols. (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1830–31). English trans. of 2nd

at the heart of the French doctrine of traditionalism. This doctrine was the preferred alternative to the skepticism that the Enlightenment had brought. In its more radical forms, it responded to the question of faith and reason by asserting that the knowledge of God, morality, and religion is not accessible to human reason, but must be accepted in faith, a faith that is engendered by the historical transmission of the truths of revelation.⁸⁷ Tradition is the locus of supernatural knowledge, and without it, individual reason can lead only to skepticism and despair. Félicité de Lamennais was, in his early writings, the most typical exponent of extreme traditionalism. In his comprehensive four-volume work, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*,⁸⁸ the first volume of which had wide and significant effect, he identifies the universal consent of the human race, represented by the church as the criterion of truth and certitude. Though in some ways initially pleasing to the authorities at Rome, his works became increasingly liberal in character and politically contentious.⁸⁹

Louis Bautain, a professional philosopher, was more conversant with the modern philosophies, and as a result his arguments were more nuanced than those of De Lamennais. However, Bautain was certainly a traditionalist and, though philosophically knowledgeable,

German edition, *The Christian Faith*, ed. H. R. Mackintosh and J. S. Stewart (New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 483.

87. Like most theologians of this period, Schleiermacher and the traditionalists were seeking to respond to the devastating effect that the philosophy of Immanuel Kant had had on Christian epistemology. "But, if Kant's vindication of objective certitude were correct, how could an act of faith in Christian revelation be valid rational knowledge? And how could Catholic theology be a science? The act of faith was a free assent to a contingent fact revealed by God. Catholic theology had contingent historical revelation as its object. Science and History were mutually exclusive according to Kant. Yet, ever since the Middle Ages, Catholic theology had defined itself as a scientific discipline which moved from its revealed first principles to its conclusions according to the norms of a scientific method." Cf. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 59–63.

88. F. de Lamennais, *Essai sur l'indifférence en matière de religion*, 2nd ed. (Paris: Tournachon-Molin et Seguin, 1818).

89. For a fuller discussion of the contribution of De Lamennais, see Y.-M. Congar, *L'Église de saint Augustin à l'époque moderne* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1970), 146ff.

thought no philosophy claiming to be independent of faith was capable of establishing God's existence. Faith was the means to reality and truth, and no rational system was necessary to underpin, explain, or introduce revelation. The credibility of Christian revelation, and therefore the act of faith, was dependent not on natural reason but on an act of primitive revelation, prior to which "no mind can think."⁹⁰ An interesting aspect of Bautain's thought is his opinion of scholasticism as simply another philosophical method that sought to subject faith to an individual's rational understanding. Interestingly, Bautain's philosophy was never condemned and, after following the lectures of Giovanni Perrone (1794–1876) at the Roman College, he revised his position substantially, and was to be informed amicably by Gregory XVI that "he had sinned by too much faith."⁹¹

Such cordiality was not to be the experience of De Lamennais. Though his early ultramontane doctrines had been well received by Pope Leo XII in 1824, he was, in later years, unremitting in his efforts to realise his Christian philosophy practically and politically, efforts that resulted in his doctrines being condemned by Gregory XVI. Indeed, the career of De Lamennais forms an interesting contrast to Bautain's, and might be said to map the rising politicization of the approach in the new philosophy to faith and reason. Here, perhaps, is the incipient disdain for the wedding of any philosophical methods other than the Thomistic to papal ultramontanism, an alliance that was to be strengthened by Vatican I and the pontificate of Pius IX, and which would reach its fullest expression in *Aeterni Patris*. Though by the standards of the subsequent teachings of Vatican I, De Lamennais is wrong to reject the part played by reason in the act of faith, it was his political liberalism that led to his condemnation.⁹² By

90. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 50.

91. *Ibid.*

92. "But Maréchal was quite correct in pointing out that during this period Lamennais thought more theocratically than monarchically. From this vantage point it becomes understandable

this is meant his linking of the knowledge of the truths of salvation to the universal consent of the human race at the expense of the papal prerogative. Gregory took an increasingly inflexible stance on papal authority, which he came to see as the only means of defeating the rationalist threat. As Herbert Jedin makes clear,

Gregory XVI's battle against the excesses of rationalism, indifferentism and Kantian subjectivism helped to achieve a balance between the sense of the supernatural and the value of human reason, and thus laid firm foundations for the future development of the Catholic spirit and Catholic spirituality. By insisting inflexibly on the prerogatives of the Holy See and the independence of the Church, however, the Pope also prepared the way for the future successes of ultramontaniam which ultimately stifled pluralism and endangered the collegial nature of ecclesial authority.⁹³

Until the relatively recent research of Josef Rupert Geiselmann (1890–1970) established the theological credentials of the Tübingen School,⁹⁴ their work tended to be “dismissed as one more nineteenth-century method which had failed the crucial test of dealing successfully with the relations between faith and reason, grace and nature.”⁹⁵ Geiselmann, however, uncovered a careful and scientific theology of revelation, and an understanding of the development of doctrine and the role of the Holy Spirit within the church. Johann Sebastian Drey (1777–1853) was the founder of the Catholic School at Tübingen and, responsive to philosophical currents and especially the Kantian critique, devised a theology centered on “revelation as God’s action in history for the education of the human race.”⁹⁶

that once he grew disillusioned with monarchy—he found it easy to turn away from it. He associated the Church with the growing cause of the people and strove to achieve what Verucci has called a democratic theocracy.” H. Jedin, ed., *History of the Church*, vol. 7: *The Church between Revolution and Restoration* (London: Burns and Oates, 1981), 273–79.

93. *Ibid.*, 265.

94. Cf. J. R. Geiselmann, *Die katholische Tübinger Schule* (Freiburg: Herder, 1964).

95. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 4.

96. A. Dulles, *The Assurance of Things Hoped For*, 83.

J. Adam Möhler, Drey's pupil, an associate of Schleiermacher and Friedrich Schelling and the most imaginative theologian of the Tübingen School, developed Drey's traditionalism into an understanding of faith as something personal, interior, and transcendent. However, by the time of his final work, *Symbolik*, Möhler's thought had been tempered considerably by the Roman theology, though he still resisted a propositional theory of faith.⁹⁷ The theological themes of the Tübingen School were those of John Henry Newman, whose famous *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* begins, "Christianity has been long enough in the world to justify us in dealing with it as a fact in the world's history."⁹⁸ Yet Newman refines continental traditionalism by suggesting that revelation exists as an inner tradition, and not in the propositional formulations of Scripture and creeds. Such expressions were merely the response to external attack. As Aidan Nichols explains, "A sound understanding of Christian revelation, then, depends on growth in holiness, is not accessible to secular reasoning, and exists as an internal tradition within the Church taking the form of an articulated Creed only in some doctrinal emergency."⁹⁹

Newman consciously rejects the extrinsicism of the neo-scholastics, and looks to the experience of the historical church to arrive at an understanding of humanity's coming to faith. As Rino Fisichella says, Newman "gave first place, with the Pascalian *raison du coeur*, to the psychology of experience,"¹⁰⁰ and it is this that makes him a modern¹⁰¹ and a harbinger of the new theology. From the

97. For an exposition of Möhler's theology of faith, see Geiselman, *Die Katholische Tübinger Schule*, 146–53.

98. J. H. Newman, *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* 3rd ed. (London: 1878; reprinted Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1989), 3.

99. A. Nichols, *From Newman to Congar: The Idea of Doctrinal Development from the Victorians to the Second Vatican Council* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 28.

100. R. Fisichella, "John Henry Newman," in *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, ed. R. Latourelle and R. Fisichella (New York: Crossroads, 1995), 734.

perspective of experience, he establishes a fundamental theology of the act of faith, a doctrine that is most clearly set forth in his *Grammar of Assent* of 1870. Here, Newman concludes that the act of assent “is in itself the absolute acceptance of a proposition without any condition,” yet the act is based on “sense sensations, instinct, intuition,”¹⁰² all of which can supply us with facts that the intellect can use. Thus, though the reasons are of the heart, they nevertheless remain reasons, and so allow Newman to provide a rational exposition of the act of faith, to provide a grammar for assent.

Between Newman, Bautain, Möhler, Drey, and De Lamennais there is a certain similarity not merely in their preoccupying theological themes, but also in their disregard of, or at least ambivalence toward, scholasticism. The Tübingen School was a noted rival to Roman scholasticism in the nineteenth century, embracing as it did the many and new German philosophies. French traditionalism had, in general, “a low opinion of scholasticism,”¹⁰³ and a parallel can easily be drawn with the stance of Newman:

Newman had displayed not so much a dislike of, as psychological and intellectual discomfort with, the scholastic method. His mind worked in a concrete, image-laden manner which was out of harmony with the deductive, logic-based, method of neo-scholasticism. His distinction between implicit and explicit reasoning is the heuristic key to much of his thought. The long reign of the syllogism in Roman Catholic

101. “I cannot but think that if Newman were studied and assimilated it would tend to unbarbarise us and enable us to pour Catholic truth from the scholastic to the modern mould without losing a drop in the transfer.” *Letters from a “Modernist”: The Letters of George Tyrrell to Wilfrid Ward 1893–1908*, ed. M. J. Weaver (Shepherdstown, WV: Patmos Press, 1981), 3. And, for a general discussion of the relationship of Newman and the Modernists, see M. J. Weaver, ed., *Newman and the Modernists* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1985).
102. J. H. Newman, *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent*, ed. I. Ker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 13.
103. “Bautain shared the low opinion of scholasticism prevalent in Catholic circles during the early years of the nineteenth century. To him scholasticism was another form of rationalism, it was simply another philosophy of discursive reason which endeavoured to subordinate Christian faith and Christian tradition to the judgement of the individual understanding.” McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 47.

theology had created an intellectual climate antipathetic to the working of some distinguished Christian minds, including Newman's. At many points during the second millennium of the Christian Church, Aristotle appeared to have been enshrined among the Apostles as a source of faith; for, as Tyrrell never tired of pointing out, as long as revelation was in practice identified with its theological expression, uniformity of method would be judged necessary to unity of faith.¹⁰⁴

And yet, in that final allusion to George Tyrrell, Gabriel Daly points to a defect from which the Tübingen school was not entirely free, a defect with which Newman struggled. Though the introduction of the Romantic strain in theology had brought vitality to a desiccated scholastic system, the prevailing context remained cognitive. To quote Yves Congar again:

Certainly, theology had never been defined there [Tübingen], as in the liberal Protestantism sprung from Schleiermacher, as an analysis and a description of religious experience. The thought of the greatest among those at Tübingen is thoroughly orthodox. But their theology is conceived too much as an intellectual realization of what the Church (and the theologian in the Church) has received and by which it lives. It is not sufficiently the human construction of a faith rising up from a datum objectively established and from objective criteria. In a word, their theology is too much a science of faith and not enough a science of Revelation.¹⁰⁵

Though the inadequacies of the scholastic system had been detailed by these and other theologians prior to *Aeterni Patris*, with the promulgation of the teaching of Leo XIII a reassessment of the suitability of scholasticism to deal with the theological problems of the day began from within the school itself. What *Aeterni Patris* initiated among some twentieth-century Thomists was a search among the resources of the scholastic tradition for answers to the

104. G. Daly, "Newman and Modernism: A Theological Reflection," in Weaver, *Newman and the Modernists*, 185–204, 186.

105. Congar, *A History of Theology*, 184.

problems that critics of scholasticism, Modernist or otherwise, had made in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Before turning to the particular criticisms of the Modernists, it is necessary to come to some appreciation of the state of Catholic theology prior to what came to be known as the *nouvelle théologie*.

The Neo-Thomist Movement

The Thomistic movement had its origins in the first half of the nineteenth century. As Drey, the Tübingen school, the traditionalists, ontologists, and those critical of scholasticism developed a response to post-Enlightenment rationalism and Kant's criticisms of Christian epistemology, those who sought a solution in the work of St. Thomas began to formulate their own response. The suppression of the Jesuits was lifted in 1814,¹⁰⁶ and ten years later Gregory XVI returned the Roman College to their direction. Luigi Taparelli (1793–1862) was made rector. A belligerent and unyielding Thomist, he had held no position of influence for long but, as a result of his brief term of office at the Roman College and subsequently as Jesuit Provincial to the Province of Naples, he influenced a nucleus of men who were to hold critical positions later, and who were to do everything in their power to further the Thomist cause. At Rome, he influenced Carlo Maria Curci (1810–1891), the Jesuit neo-scholastic who was to be the founder of *Civiltà Cattolica*, and Gioacchino Pecci, the future Leo XIII and author of *Aeterni Patris*. In Naples, he converted to

106. "The influential position which these Jesuit theologians and philosophers acquired during the pontificate of Pius IX placed remarkable power over the development of Catholic theology in the hands of an incredibly small body of men. They were perhaps the most influential advisers to the Roman curia at the very moment when the papacy was resolutely determined to shape the course of Catholic theology by an unprecedented use of the authority which the curia had acquired in the centralized nineteenth-century Church." McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 135.

Thomism Pecci's brother, Giuseppe, a scholastic who was to become bishop of Perugia and establish Dominican control in the diocesan seminary, creating a center for the Thomistic revival. He influenced also Matteo Liberatore (1810–1892), who was later to become an influential Thomist and collaborator on *Civiltà Cattolica*. Through these personal associations, the somewhat scattered neo-Thomist movement took on a certain unity, and, when the time was ripe and it sought to express its understanding of method in theology more militantly, it was able to do so with a gathering momentum. As G. McCool says,

By 1850 the intellectual force of the Romantic movement had been spent and the influence of German Idealism was on the wane. The revolutions of 1848 had turned Pius IX against modern movements in social and religious thought. The climate was favourable for an aggressive attack on modern philosophy and upon theological systems structured by it.¹⁰⁷

On the back of a militantly defensive papacy, which was intransigent toward the rising Italian nationalism and liberalism, the neo-scholastics took their opportunity. *Civiltà Cattolica* was founded in 1849 by a group of Thomist academics at the request of Pius IX. Essentially it was to provide the Church with an intellectually rigorous response to the social and cultural changes that Italy was experiencing. However, by 1853 the review was synonymous with the campaign to restore Thomism as the only system within Catholic theology. Taparelli was influential on the editorial team,¹⁰⁸ their main aim being the theoretical explanation of the merits of Thomism and the restoration of the system in Catholic institutions.

In the period between the year of *Civiltà Cattolica's* flourishing in 1853, and the promulgation of *Aeterni Patris* in 1879, the Jesuit

107. *Ibid.*, 86.

108. Cf. P. Dezza, *Alle origini del neotomismo italiano* (Milan: Fratelli Bocca, 1940), 52–55.

neo-Thomists became increasingly powerful,¹⁰⁹ and their associations at the court of Pius IX are well-known.¹¹⁰ Yet essentially it was the linking of this newfound influence in the increasingly powerful and centralized papacy to their concise and clear response to the theological issues of the day that established them as the dominant school within Catholic theology. The First Vatican Council had highlighted the role of the papacy as the premier teaching organ within the Church, and had focused on the questions of faith and reason, nature and grace. The neo-Thomists saw in these two issues the means of establishing their method.¹¹¹ Using the increased status of the post-Council papacy and appealing to its newly asserted power, the neo-scholastics put forward their argument to answer the question of the relationship between faith and reason. Manipulating the conviction that modern systems both confused the natural and supernatural orders, and compromised the gratuitous nature of the workings of grace by an overestimation of humanity's rational capacities in the act of faith,¹¹² the neo-scholastics created a theological problem to which the system of St. Thomas provided the only competent and complete answer. With *Aeterni Patris* for approbation in the last years of the century, the schoolmen merely consolidated and extended their position.

Though *Aeterni Patris* did not evoke an instant response,¹¹³ by the turn of the century there was a considerable degree of uniformity within Catholic theological institutions. Effective in achieving the

109. "At least one historian has implied that the real explanation of neo-Thomism's triumph over its rivals in the nineteenth century was an unscrupulously brutal use of its authority by a clerical establishment." McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 135. Here McCool cites P. Thibault, *Savoir et Pouvoir*, 95–99, 151–58, 229–31.

110. R. Aubert, *Le Pontificat de Pie IX, (1846–1878)* (Paris: Bloud et Gay, 1952), 286.

111. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 9.

112. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 139. Cf. R. Aubert, *Le Problème de l'acte de foi* (Louvain: Warny, 1950).

113. R. P. Lecanuet, *La Vie de l'Église sous Léon XIII* (Paris: Aubier, 1930), 472.

aims of *Aeterni Patris* and the neo-Thomists were the theological manuals of the Roman colleges, which brought the scholastic system and standardization to seminaries and Catholic universities in the city and across the world. As Gabriel Daly is aware,

It is to the manuals which one must go if one is to determine the character, quality, and, particularly, the limitations of Catholic theology between the Vatican Councils. Given a propositional view of revelation, deductive method in theology, and an ever-increasing concern to identify and label doctrinal assertions according to the degree of their ecclesiastical authority, the method employed by the manuals was both theologically consistent and pedagogically effective.¹¹⁴

The works of Giovanni Perrone and Louis Billot (1846–1931) are perhaps the best examples of the theology of this period, their persistence until the eve of the Second Vatican Council being enough of a testimony to their effectiveness.¹¹⁵ There was little development, however, between Perrone’s *Praelectiones theologicae*¹¹⁶ and the publication of the fifth edition of Ludwig Ott’s *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*¹¹⁷ in 1962. Pertinent to this study is the clear fact that the manualists’ understanding of revelation shows no development whatever. The same forensic and logical definition was reiterated for nearly eighty years. Translation of the manuals into the vernacular served only to keep the definition similar throughout the world, and did not encourage a reexamination or redefinition of the concepts themselves. In this case, when Daly terms a theologian *Roman*, we

114. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 12. Cf.: “The degree of uniformity achieved in these manuals is striking and should not be neglected by anyone seeking to appreciate the nature and temper of Roman Catholic theology between the two Vatican Councils,” *ibid.*, 13.

115. “In 1962, the year in which the Second Vatican Council opened, there appeared the fifth English edition of Ludwig Ott’s *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, a book which may go down in history as the last of the widely used neo-scholastic ‘manuals,’” *ibid.*, 1.

116. G. Perrone, *Praelectiones theologicae*, vols. 1–4 (Paris: Gaume Freres Bibliopolæ, 1883).

117. L. Ott, *Grundriss der Katholischen Dogmatik*, 1952; *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, trans. P. Lynch (Cork: Paulist, 1962).

may interpret his epithet to refer to almost any geographical location: “No Roman theologian will qualify in any essential respect Perrone’s definition of revelation as the manifestation of some truth or truths which is supernatural both in origin and in the mode of its communication.”¹¹⁸

Not only was there no essential qualification of this definition, in fact the Thomistic revival of the late nineteenth century and the Modernist crisis of the early twentieth served to refine the argument and tightened it against any possible nuance. If Perrone set the foundations, it was the Jesuit and future Cardinal Louis Billot who was largely responsible for solidifying the teaching on revelation. Billot’s work concentrated on a profound analysis of the act of faith. He sought to chart an unwavering course through the Scylla and Charybdis of rationalism and fideism.¹¹⁹ In this Billot showed complete disregard for any method that based itself on the feelings,

118. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 14. See also G. Perrone, *Praelectiones theologicae*, vol.1: *De vera religione*. Further examples would be two typical Roman manuals: H. Dieckmann, *De Revelatione Christiana* (Freiburg: Herder & Co., 1930), 130–54; and R. Garrigou-Lagrange, *De Revelatione*, 2nd ed. (Rome: Libreria Editrice Religiosa, 1932), 56–71. However, perhaps the best example of the scope of the Roman manual’s influence is afforded by looking at the definitions of revelation contained in some of the vernacular translations based on the textbooks. A good example would be the much translated J. Brunsmann, *A Handbook of Fundamental Theology*, vol. 2: *Revealed Religion*, adapted and edited by A. Preuss (London: Herder, 1929). Here the author suggests, “To reveal means to make known something which was unknown before, to unveil to the intellect a truth or fact of which it had no previous knowledge. The term *revelation* may designate both the act of communicating knowledge and the communicated knowledge itself. Here we are interested mainly in the former, i.e. the manner in which knowledge is communicated. Revelation in this sense, that is, as manifestation of the truth, primarily concerns the intellect.” 11. Thus, between the Latin definition of Perrone in 1883 and the vernacular definition of Brunsmann–Preuss some fifty years later, there is little if any development.

119. George Tyrrell charted quite a different course in his *Through Scylla and Charybdis*. As Aidan Nichols points out, “In this brief study, Tyrrell points out that ‘theology’ may refer in a Catholic context to one of two things. More narrowly it is the Scholastic tradition currently in possession in institutes of academic and ministerial formation. More widely, it is the attempt to articulate revelation, an enterprise defined by Tyrrell in terms of the unification and elucidation of data provided by Christian experience in the concrete. The applying of philosophical concepts to revelation, as carried out in Scholastic theology, tends like all philosophising to ‘excessive abstraction and vague unreality.’ It needs to be facts: ‘the facts here being the Christian religion as lived by its consistent professors.’” Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, 117.

affectivity, or experience. The intuition of which the Modernists and others spoke, “Billot simply regarded as weak-mindedness.”¹²⁰ He can be regarded and dismissed summarily as “the leading exponent of a theological perspective which saw revelation as assertion, faith as intellectual assent, and theology as a mainly deductive procedure.”¹²¹ Describing his method as “clinical” and “robotic,” Gabriel Daly gives no merely personal attack, but exposes one who epitomized the neo-scholastic apologetic of his age and beyond. Essentially, we are speaking of a dry theological system that lacked any humanity or dynamism, took little, maybe no, regard of the internal, personal response of human faith, and no cognizance of the social structure of that faith.¹²²

Alternative Roman Responses and The Modernist Movement

Perhaps the only “Roman” figure to counter this apologetic in any way was Archbishop Victor Dechamps of Malines (1810–1883).¹²³ His subjective apologetics or “apologetics of providence” differed from the scholastic method by asserting the importance of the subjective “internal facts” in an individual’s coming to faith, in addition to the verifiable external facts of signs and miracles on which the scholastic method concentrated solely. Indeed, Dechamps himself

120. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 15

121. *Ibid.*

122. “The *facta externa* were there to be observed and registered by the senses just as any pikestaff might be. The interpretative element was given a minimal role as something ‘subjective’ and therefore by definition open to error and waywardness. The would-be believer had merely to observe, register, and respond with his mind and will. He brought nothing of his own to the process beyond the *tabula rasa* so conveniently underwritten by Aristotelian epistemology.” *Ibid.*, 19–20.

123. The contribution of the Jesuit, Pierre Rousselot (1878–1915) in distancing Catholic theology from merely objective and propositional notions of faith by embracing a sense of faith as a living and loving knowledge that allows us to perceive the connections in what is given so as to be able to make assent, though of great importance comes later. See Pierre Rousselot, *The Eyes of Faith*, trans. Joseph Donceel, (New York: Fordham University Press, 1990).

prevented *Dei Filius* from making a direct identification between its own understanding of faith and reason and the Aristotelian method of the schools.¹²⁴ The theology that Dechamps championed at the First Vatican Council remained largely hidden until the Second. The desire for apologetic argument was as much a function of the ultramontane politics of the Church, buoyed up by recent teachings on infallibility, as it was part of the neo-scholastic method.

Together the powerful and united forces of curial authority and clear schoolroom method effectively stemmed the call for a reasoning of the heart in apologetics. The call that Dechamps had made, and that can be traced back through Newman, the Tübingen School, and Pascal to St. Augustine, though frequently silenced by the louder Christian Aristotelianism¹²⁵ and papal authority, was to be heard again in the writings of the Modernists. This time, the efforts to restrain the resurgent theme were even stronger than before. Nevertheless, the work begun by Dechamps and the others was about to be reshaped by Maurice Blondel (1861–1949),¹²⁶ and those who drew inspiration from his immanentist teachings, into theological forms that would instill a sense of crisis in Catholic theology.

In more recent studies, the concept of a body of writers putting forward a cohesive theology that might be represented by the term *Modernism* has been largely rejected. As Darrell Jodock clearly states,

If Modernism is defined as a coherent system of thought, no such thing existed prior to the encyclical [*Pascendi*]. Alfred Loisy, Friedrich von

124. As McCool points out: “The important position which Dechamps occupied on the conciliar deputation on faith enabled the archbishop of Malines to exert a constant and significant influence upon the drafting of the revised schema which the deputation submitted to the council fathers in 1870.” *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 223. See also the letter of Cardinal Billot, the president of the preconconciliar Dogmatic Commission, to Dechamps, cited in Aubert, *Le problème de l'acte de foi*, 142.

125. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 24.

126. As G. Daly points out: “Maurice Blondel was delighted to discover in Dechamps’s work striking similarities to his own approach.” *Ibid.*, 21. For a concise account of the contribution of Blondel to nineteenth century theology, see “The Blondelian Challenge,” in *ibid.*, 26–50.

Hügel, and George Tyrrell, all among those regularly considered to be Modernists, each objected to the accuracy of the portrait drawn by the encyclical. As Bernard Reardon points out, “Loisy, himself the most distinguished of them, [the Modernists], refused to accept any description of the movement’s adherents as ‘a homogeneous and united group’” and called “the pope’s exposition of their doctrines ‘a fantasy of the theological imagination.’”¹²⁷

Maurice Blondel and the *Méthode D’Immanence*

Maurice Blondel, a loyal Catholic layman, submissive to authority and never censured by the Church, is perhaps an unlikely candidate for the description of Modernist, however disparate that group may be deemed to be. Yet it is with him that our analysis will begin, because it was there that *Pascendi* began with a notion of an underlying philosophy:

We begin, then, with the philosopher. Modernists place the foundation of religious philosophy in that doctrine which is commonly called *Agnosticism*. According to this teaching human reason is confined entirely within the field of *phenomena*, that is to say, to things that appear, and in the manner in which they appear: it has neither the right nor the power to overstep these limits.¹²⁸

127. D. Jodock, “Introduction I: The Modernist Crisis,” in Jodock, *Catholicism Contending with Modernity*, 2. A similar sentiment is evidenced by Daly’s remark about the draughtsman of *Pascendi*: “He evinces a stronger urge than they to connect up the disparate elements in the case he is attacking and thus to confer on those elements a logical cohesion which is academically tenuous but pedagogically satisfying.” *Transcendence and Immanence*, 180. See also N. Provencher, “Modernism,” in Latourelle and Fisichella, *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 720: “As historians look back from a later time, too many of them tend to attribute to Modernism a unity and cohesiveness it never had.”

128. “Iam ut a philosopho exordiamur, philosophiae religiosae fundamentum in doctrina illa modernistae ponunt, quam vulgo *agnosticismum* vocant. Vi huius humana ratio *phaenomenis* omnino includitur, rebus videlicet quae apparent eâque specie qua apparent: earumdem praeteregre terminos nec ius nec potestatem habet.” Pius X, *Pascendi Dominici Gregis*, 596; Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism*, 238.

The philosophical stance that *Pascendi* radicalizes and intemperately terms *Agnosticism*, is but the negative aspect of a system of *vital immanence*—the latter arising naturally out of the former.¹²⁹ And, though Bernard Reardon rejects Guiseppe de Ruggiero's description of Blondel as its "spiritual father" as an "assessment so exaggerated to be false,"¹³⁰ one can begin to see why Blondel's *méthode d'immanence*¹³¹ was attractive to the Modernists and regarded with suspicion by those trained in a scholasticism marked by extrinsicism.

Blondel defended his doctoral thesis on "Action" in the Faculty of Philosophy at Paris in 1893. Shortly before beginning work on the thesis, he had written to a friend detailing his intentions, "Between Aristotelianism which devalues and subordinates practice to thought, and Kantianism which segregates them and exalts the practical order to the detriment of the other, there is something needing definition, and it is in a very concrete manner, by the analysis of action, that I should like to establish what that something is."¹³²

Blondel was convinced that experience was the point of departure for philosophy, and that an analysis of how human beings experience action would reveal the "something" he sought to establish. In this way, he endeavors to prove the presence of signs of transcendence in the human dynamic.¹³³ In so doing, he rejects the scholastic method of external objective argument beginning from a priori facts. Blondel

129. "Hic tamen *agnosticismus*, in disciplina modernistarum, non nisi ut pars negans habenda est: positiva, ut aiunt, in *immanentia vitali* constituitur." Ibid., 597; Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism*, 239.

130. Reardon, "Roman Catholic Modernism," 166.

131. This is the description that Blondel himself gives of his philosophical procedure in the article, "Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière d'apologétique," in *Lettres philosophiques* (Paris: Aubier, 1961). English trans. in A. Dru and I. Trethowan, *Maurice Blondel: The Letter on Apologetics and History and Dogma* (London: Burns and Oates, 1964).

132. Blondel, *Lettres philosophiques*, 10, in Daly *Transcendence and Immanence*, 30.

133. For a concise but fuller exposition of Blondel's theory in *L'Action*, see the analysis of R. Latourelle in "Maurice Blondel," in Latourelle and Fisichella, *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 78–84.

accepts the Kantian critique of scholastic method, but rejects Kant's attempt to isolate pure reason from practical reason. For Blondel, analysis of human action "points inexorably toward a transcendent term."¹³⁴ In his *Letter on Apologetics*, he makes explicit the consequences of his study of action for Christian fundamentals. Here he speaks of the "necessity" of adhering to the supernatural,¹³⁵ and rejects the notion that the possibility and actuality of the supernatural can be demonstrated separately. Philosophy can reveal that the makeup of human existence is radically open to supernatural revelation. Though philosophy cannot produce but only prepare for faith, at the same time "it can show that man is not morally free to reject with impunity the possibility of faith and a supernatural order."¹³⁶ Philosophy has no competence within the supernatural realm. Hence Blondel rejects the traditional concern of apologetics with miracles as a proof of the faith, and concludes, "If the [revelatory] fact is to be accepted by our minds and even imposed upon our reason, an interior need and, as it were, an ineluctable appetite must prepare us for it."¹³⁷

Blondel had opened wide discussion on the act of faith, apologetics, and theological method, but of crucial interest to those seeking a revitalized theology in the Catholic schools were the repercussions of his work for the relationship between the natural

134. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 31.

135. "We must show *the necessity for us* of adhering to this reality of the supernatural," M. Blondel, "Lettre sur les exigences de la pensée contemporaine en matière de la philosophie dans l'étude du problème religieux," in *Les premiers écrits de Maurice Blondel*, vol. 2 (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1956), 13. English trans. in Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 36 (Blondel's italics).

136. "Que l'homme ne peut se passer impunément." "Blondel's continual use of the verbs 'se passer' and 'se dépasser' manifests his central concern with the dynamism of man's relationship with God. Faith has 'a logic' which is not extrinsically imposed on it but is interiorly generated by the dynamism of action." Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 37.

137. Blondel, "Lettre sur les exigences," 14, in Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 37. Here, Daly cites F. Rodé, *Le miracle dans la controverse moderniste* (Paris: Desclée, 1965), 53–99 as giving full documentation of the debate on miracles in Blondel's *Letter on Apologetics*.

and supernatural orders and the question of divine revelation. Lucien Laberthonnière (1860–1932) was right to warn Blondel that he was most likely to be denounced by the neo-scholastics for suggesting a continuity between the natural and supernatural orders.¹³⁸ And for this reason, too, it is not surprising that René Latourelle can draw, if not directly, a line from *L'Action* to the *Hörer des Wortes* of Karl Rahner.¹³⁹ Blondel had done more than inspire the Modernists by redefining the relationship of philosophy and theology. He had given theology a new point of departure, and had thus implied possibilities for a Catholic treatment of revelation that Louis Billot and his disciples could hardly have imagined.¹⁴⁰

Alfred Loisy, The Gospel and the Church

If Blondel could be said to have provided the philosophical inspiration of the *méthode d'immanence*, then *L'Évangile et L'Église* by Alfred Loisy (1857–1940) must be regarded as the next departure of significance—"the book that could be said to have precipitated the Modernist crisis."¹⁴¹ Usefully, C. J. T. Talar sets this study within

138. C. Tresmontant, ed., *Maurice Blondel–Lucien Laberthonnière: Correspondance philosophique* (Paris: Seuil, 1961), 79.

139. "What Rahner tried to do on the basis of the dynamism of human knowledge (*Hörer des Wortes*) Blondel attempted on the basis of the dynamic being of the essential human person." R. Latourelle, "Maurice Blondel," in Latourelle and Fisichella, *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 83.

140. "One can only regret that Blondel was so ready to acquiesce in his gratuitous and arrogant exclusion from the theological field of play. Since it was the theologians who wrote the script for the philosophers in the neo-scholastic system, one must resolutely point out that any attempt to re-define the role of philosophy in that system must of necessity have a theological dimension of crucial importance, no matter how one chooses to define theology. Blondel had not passed through a course in seminary theology; but he was (partly in consequence) a far better theologian than many of his critics who had. Today's Roman Catholic theology of revelation and tradition owes infinitely more to Blondel than to Billot and his disciples." Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 29.

141. C. J. T. Talar, "Innovation and Biblical Interpretation," in Jodock, *Catholicism Contending with Modernity*, 191.

the complex of institutional and methodological change that biblical exegesis was facing at the turn of the century. History was shifting from a strongly literary basis and was developing as a critical discipline. At the same time, changes in educational institutions were encouraging this transition from the study of flexible genres to that of organized disciplines. Though the state of Catholic exegesis with regard to the historical-critical method was substantially impoverished, it was not totally lacking.¹⁴² Yet biblical exegesis was about to play a significant part in what Émile Poulat memorably terms “the end of the universe consecrated to the Council of Trent.”¹⁴³ The position of the Church within this worldview had been entirely clear. To quote Talar again,

As a continuation of the Incarnation, the church united the divine and human on earth. This view lent a more than human character to its teaching authority and reinforced its hierarchical nature. The attempts to extend the church’s authority into the political order, the socio-economic order, and the cultural order have been discussed earlier. . . . Moreover, Ralph Keifer has argued that the institutional, hierarchical, and juridical understanding of church was not simply promulgated by theologians, but the very experience of worship communicated it more pervasively to the faithful.¹⁴⁴

Bolstered by the scholastic hegemony emerging from the Thomistic revival of *Aeterni Patris*, a certain arrogance could be perceived in the confidence with which the schools deduced their theology, and in particular their ecclesiology, from the first principles of revelation. Within such a system, which subordinated history, philosophy—and indeed all other disciplines—to the science of theology, biblical exegesis was assigned a role that went little beyond the proof texting

142. *Ibid.*, 195–97.

143. Quoted in R. de Boyer de Sainte Suzanne, *Alfred Loisy, entre la foi et l'incroyance* (Paris: Éditions du Centurion, 1968), 36.

144. Talar, “Innovation and Biblical Interpretation,” 196.

of scholastic premises.¹⁴⁵ Studying within this context in the later decades of the nineteenth century,¹⁴⁶ Loisy began to face the dilemma in which he would later become embroiled: while Catholic exegesis continued in its traditional stasis, it remained continually open to rationalist criticism and yet closed to the modern methods that might yield an appropriate defense. At least that would be one view. Before embarking on a brief analysis of the import of *L'Évangile et L'Église*, it is necessary to be reminded of the ambiguity that still surrounds the person of Alfred Loisy, particularly with regard to his intellectual sincerity.¹⁴⁷ Gabriel Daly provides a suitably composite and complex picture:

There are two views of Loisy which go back to the modernists themselves. The first is Loisy's self-portrait supplemented by Henri Bremond. The second, and diametrically opposite, view is given by Albert Houtin and Félix Sartaux, Loisy's erstwhile friends and disciples. The first portrait gives us a man tragically caught up in the events of his time, broken on the wheel of ecclesiastical obscurantism and left to live out his life in lonely isolation and proud integrity at Garnay and Ceffonds. The second portrait is of a supercilious egoist, vain, querulous

145. Such a notion is still present in the relatively progressive encyclical *Divino Afflante Spiritu*: "Commentators must have as their chief object to show what is the theological doctrine touching faith and morals of each book and text so that their commentary may . . . assist teachers of theology in expounding and corroborating the dogmas of faith." (Sed, illis quidem opportune allatis, quantum ad exegesis conferre possint ostendant potissimum quae sit singulorum librorum vel textuum theologica doctrina de rebus fidei et morum, ita ut haec eorum explanatio non modo theologos doctores adiuvet et fidei dogmata proponenda confirmandaque.) Pius XII, *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, 310; Smith, *Biblical Studies and Opportune Means of Promoting Them*, 19. Joseph Ratzinger gives an interesting reflection on the closed and circular nature of this very relationship when he says, "This [method] is then developed to the point at which the task of theology is described as that of showing how what the teaching office has established is contained in the sources—and that precisely in the sense in which it has been defined." J. Ratzinger, "The Transmission of Divine Revelation," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. H. Vorgrimler, vol. 3 (London: Burns and Oates, 1968), 197.
146. These are the years in which Loisy studied at the seminary in Châlons and at the Paris Institute. See A. Loisy, *Choses passées* (Paris: Nourry, 1913); English trans. R. Wilson Boynton, *My Duel with the Vatican* 2nd ed. (New York: Greenwood, 1968), 62.
147. Ronald Burke provides a useful overview of the scholarly debate with regard to this issue in "Loisy's Faith: Landshift in Catholic Thought," *Journal of Religion* 60 (1980): 138–64.

and—most damaging of all—a thoroughgoing sceptic who maintained a front of religious belief and practice, in short, a hypocritical tactician.¹⁴⁸

Whatever Loisy's motives, his objective was clear:

I had conceived [he afterwards wrote] a programme of very simple but vast and logical teaching, which would have filled my life had I been left to fulfil it. My fundamental thought, which I did not utter too clearly, was that there was no scientific study of the Bible in the Catholic Church, and that it had to be created by shifting . . . questions of biblical introduction and exegesis from the theological and dogmatic spheres into the sphere of history for rational and critical study.¹⁴⁹

Hence Alfred Loisy wrote to Blondel, after the publication of his book *L'Évangile et L'Église* in 1902, that “my book contains only one thesis: development is not extrinsic or foreign to the gospel.”¹⁵⁰ Yet it is not difficult to detect that there is “at least one *implicit* thesis”¹⁵¹ underlying Loisy's interest in doctrinal development, and the most significant of these implicit theses is his understanding of revelation.¹⁵² By suggesting a certain separation between Gospel and church, Loisy rejects the doctrine of an unbreakable historical line between Jesus and the church, which he felt to be accentuated in Roman Catholic teaching so as to assert a unity between the revelation of Christ and subsequent church theology. Loisy makes a clear distinction between the original revelatory event of Jesus Christ, which he describes in anything but intellectual or objective terms,

148. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 51.

149. A. Loisy, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire religieuse de notre temps* (Paris: Nourry), 1:172; English trans. in Reardon, *Roman Catholic Modernism*, 16.

150. R. Marlé, *Au coeur de la crise moderniste: le dossier inédit d'une controverse* (Paris: Aubier, 1960), 84.

151. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 56.

152. For a comparison of Loisy's teachings on development with Newman's, see R. Burke, “Was Loisy Newman's Modern Disciple?” in Weaver, *Newman and the Modernists*, 139–57.

and the subsequent expression of this experience by believers.¹⁵³ As C. J. T. Talar makes clear,

In lieu of the church founded by Jesus Christ with its essential hierarchical structures in place, its sevenfold sacramental system operative, and its “deposit” of faith handed over in order to be faithfully handed on, Loisy accentuated the apocalyptic element in the gospel tradition. Jesus preached the kingdom, a future event very near at hand. Under the influence of this eschatological perspective Jesus could not consciously and intentionally have founded a church replete with hierarchy, worship, and doctrine. This element of discontinuity was resolved by recourse to a developmental perspective, couched in organic metaphors. The Church in its various aspects developed after the death of Jesus in response to the varied environments in which his followers found themselves.¹⁵⁴

In the metaphor of organic development, of which the Romantics, Möhler, and the Tübingen School were so fond, the Modernists clearly express their central convictions: the implicit rejection of deductive scholastic method, the centrality of history in the interpretation of the deposit of faith, and the essential distinction (if not separation) of revelation and church.¹⁵⁵ To complete the Modernist menu, we might add implicit immanentism. And this is because it is the very distinction between the kingdom message of Jesus and the emergence of the church that accounts for Loisy’s infamous and condemned remark in *Autour d’un petit livre*: “Revelation can only be the acquired consciousness which human beings have of their relationship with God.”¹⁵⁶ Norman Provencher

153. “He [Loisy] describes the original revelatory event in terms of ‘religious experience,’ ‘perception,’ contact with the divine.” See Provencher, “Modernism,” 720

154. Talar, “Innovation and Biblical Interpretation,” 203.

155. One should bear in mind that a significant element of the teaching of Loisy is here concerned with a defense of the Catholic understanding of the church and its organic connection to the gospel. And this was over and against the liberal Protestant position of Adolf von Harnack, who claimed a simple gospel was in opposition to an institutional church. Cf. D. Jodock, “Introduction II: The Modernists and the Anti-Modernists,” in Jodock, *Catholicism Contending with Modernity*, 21.

maintains that this must be understood in the light of a distinction that Loisy makes between “living revelation” and “revelation formulated in human language.” Living revelation is reducible to the embodiment in human beings of the divine mystery of which religion is the chief expression. The progressive human consciousness of the person’s relationship with God is revelation in its human embodiment, which then takes the form of symbolic language and teaching. Revelation cannot exist unless human beings grasp and express it.¹⁵⁷

What was apparent to Loisy is the fact that Jesus Christ had the most perfectly clear consciousness of his relationship with God, and is the historical witness to the fact that “God reveals himself to humanity in humanity, and humanity enters into a divine association with God.”¹⁵⁸ It is interesting that when discussing, in separate chapters, Loisy and Tyrrell, Gabriel Daly uses the same image to explain the two men’s understanding of revelation as it was born out of recently emerging doctrines of development. Of Loisy, he asserts,

Harnack had diagnosed a moral discontinuity between the Gospel message and the Hellenised Church. Loisy, with Weiss and Schweitzer, diagnosed an historical and eschatological break between Jesus and the kerygma. Roman Catholic orthodoxy of the period accepted no break whatever, either between Jesus and the kerygma or between the kerygma and the later Church.¹⁵⁹

In his chapter on Tyrrell, Daly has this to say: “He [Tyrrell] has excavated the ground around ‘primitive revelation,’ detaching it from all later intellectual development. Blondel found a ditch between

156. A. Loisy, *Autour d'un petit livre* (Paris: Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1903), 195, in Provencher, “Modernism,” 720.

157. Provencher, “Modernism,” 720.

158. Loisy, *L'Évangile et L'Église*, 268.

159. Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 56.

faith and fact; von Hügel found one between the absolute and the contingent; Tyrrell dug one between revelation and theology.”¹⁶⁰

Revelation as Experience in the Thought of George Tyrrell

George Tyrrell¹⁶¹ was conscious of his “French connections”¹⁶² from the beginning of that period that marked his maturity as a writer. He wrote the preface to the English translation of *L'Évangile et l'Église*¹⁶³ in 1908, and some years previously had proclaimed,

I have read several times Blondel's little brochure, and am much impressed with it, though I do not pretend to enter into all his ideas owing to my unclearness as to much of his meaning. Wherever I understand him I agree with him; especially, for example, in his criticism of the insufficiency of current forms of apologetic; and also in his wider view of saving faith. It has driven me back to reconsider views of my own which I have always felt were censurable theologically as rash, but which would not always be rash.¹⁶⁴

In 1897, when Tyrrell wrote the above to Friedrich Von Hügel (1852–1925), he was entering a period of “mediating liberalism” that would form the bridge from what Maude Petre called his phase of “militant orthodoxy.”¹⁶⁵ Tyrrell had entered the Church in the same year that *Aeterni Patris* was promulgated, and throughout his early years as a Catholic and a Jesuit, showed great devotion to St. Thomas and Pope Leo's program of philosophical restoration. Indeed, his enthusiasm led to accusations that he was turning young Jesuits into

160. *Ibid.*, 143.

161. For an excellent biographical study, see N. Sagovsky, *“On God's Side”: A Life of George Tyrrell* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

162. See M. O'Connell, “A French Connection,” chapter 9 of *Critics on Trial*, 155–76.

163. A. Loisy, *The Gospel and the Church*, new ed. with prefatory memoir by G. Tyrrell, trans. Christopher Home (London: Pitman and Sons, 1908).

164. Tyrrell to von Hügel, 6 December, 1897, quoted in O'Connell, *Critics on Trial*, 155.

165. Maude Petre, *Autobiography and Life*, vol. 2 (London: Arnold, 1912), 42.

Dominicans, and he was removed from St. Mary's Hall, Stonyhurst, where he taught philosophy to scholastics, and was sent to Farm Street to work on the periodical *The Month*. It was in this period, as he began his work as spiritual guide and apologist,¹⁶⁶ that he was "driven back" to reconsider his formative theological influences. At first glance, he would, at this point, seem far from the critical milieu of Loisy, upbraiding Von Hügel for undermining the delicate balance of his daughter's faith by discussing with her the finer points of biblical criticism,¹⁶⁷ and theologians for shaking the simple devotion of the pious. However, in "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," an essay published in *The Month* for November 1899, a new departure is signaled in Tyrrell's thought. Speaking of devotion to Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, he says, "I have more than once known all the joy and reality taken out of a life that fed on devotion to the Sacramental Presence, by such a flash of theological illumination; and have seen Magdalens left weeping at empty tombs and crying: 'They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him.'"¹⁶⁸

Here, Tyrrell begins his "excavation" of a "primitive revelation," for if, as he concludes in this article, devotion exists before theology,¹⁶⁹ he must then wonder wherein revelation lies. In no sense is a rejection of theology implied;¹⁷⁰ rather, his fervor for

166. See H. Bremond, "Father Tyrrell as an Apologist," *New York Review* 1 (June–July 1905): 762–70.

167. See Maude Petre, *Von Hügel and Tyrrell: The Story of a Friendship* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1937), 14–28.

168. G. Tyrrell, "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," *The Month* (November 1899): 423. *The Month* reprinted this essay on the hundredth anniversary of its original appearance in the November 1899 issue.

169. "Devotion and religion existed before theology, in the way that art existed before art criticism." Tyrrell, "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," 425.

170. "Tyrrell's quarrel was not with reason or theology, but with 'theologism,' that is, theology dominated by scholastic rationalism." D. Schultenover, "George Tyrrell: Devout Disciple of Newman," *The Heythrop Journal* 33, no. 1 (1992): 38.

philosophical scholasticism has been chastened by the truth of the statement *lex orandi, lex credendi*.

Lex Orandi as Source for the *Lex Credendi*

In 1899, it was Tyrrell's conviction that devotion existed "in the Christian religion as lived by its consistent professors."¹⁷¹ This devotion was the first and hidden expression of the self-communication of God in the hearts of his faithful. In such a conviction, some have seen obvious links with Newman's thought—his notion of the illative sense, the consensus of the faithful, and the development of doctrine.¹⁷² Yet it is a notion that Tyrrell develops distinctively¹⁷³ in two works that he entitles with the maxim attributed to Prosper of Aquitaine. In the preface of *Lex Credendi*, which links the two volumes, he makes the following assertion:

If "the heart has its reasons" it has also its language, often at strife with that of the lips—eloquent when these are silent, dumb when they are busiest. No explicit utterance of the Christian Faith can ever hope to equal the implicit utterance it finds in that Prayer which burst forth from the depth of Christ's heart and which is the embodiment of the spiritual life in its concrete fullness. There in truth we have the supreme rule and criterion of Faith, the divinely sanctioned *Lex Credendi*—no ready solvent indeed for theological controversies, but a law that lifts the heart to a higher plane where it can abide in peace, unaffected by the alternations of intellectual light and obscurity.¹⁷⁴

171. Tyrrell, "The Relation of Theology to Devotion," 425.

172. See Schultenover, "George Tyrrell: Devout Disciple of Newman," 37.

173. "In 1899, as Tyrrell composed 'The Relation of Theology to Devotion' and pondered the essence of religion, he began to have problems with Newman's conception. In defining revelation as 'not merely a symbol or a creed' but 'in some sense more directly a *lex orandi* than a *lex credendi*,' Tyrrell introduced a criterion—the spiritual experience of prayer—by which the *expression* of revelation is to be criticized. Newman saw the criterion of criticism the other way round: spiritual experience is always to be criticized by the record and its authentic elaborations in doctrine." *Ibid.*, 39. Perhaps even as early as this, we can hear tones of Salvatore Marsili's argument with Cipriano Vagaggini about the primacy of the liturgy.

By the time this passage was published, Tyrrell knew the difficulties of “abiding in peace unaffected by the alterations of intellectual light and obscurity.” As a result of an imprudent article on hell he had been sent to the Jesuit house in Richmond, Yorkshire, where he was forbidden to preach and teach.¹⁷⁵ In the next nine years, conscious of failing health, he wrote feverishly. By the time *Lex Credendi* was published, he had been dismissed from the Jesuits, and the year after, as a result of his public protestations against *Pascendi*, he was denied the sacraments. Tyrrell’s temperament was not an insignificant factor in all this,¹⁷⁶ but neither was his isolation and spiritual anguish without importance in the shaping of his final works. In the foreword to *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, Alec Vidler suggests that “many regretted . . . that his [Tyrrell’s] involvement in ecclesiastical controversy deflected him from concentrating on the deepest things of the spirit,” but maintains that his works must be considered against that background of crisis.¹⁷⁷ Albert Cock captures something of that context when “in company with Tyrrell wandering restlessly around Clapham Common through the small hours of the morning he witnessed the spiritual anguish of a priest without an altar.”¹⁷⁸

The question of where Christ could be encountered was now one of immediate importance. In *Lex Credendi*, Tyrrell’s purpose had been

174. G. Tyrrell, “Preface,” in *Lex Credendi: A Sequel to Lex Orandi* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1906), xiii.

175. G. Tyrrell, “A Perverted Devotion,” *Weekly Register* 100 (1899): 797–800; reproduced in *Essays on Faith and Immortality*, ed. Maude Petre (London: Arnold, 1914), 158–71.

176. “He was convinced that his opponents were censuring his views from a standpoint which identified Roman theology with Catholic orthodoxy and, worse still, with Christian revelation. He made no effort to control his impatience with an assumption he regarded as arrogant and ultimately destructive of a living Catholic truth. Thus he matched arrogance with arrogance. He chose to fight where others compromised, capitulated, or retired hurt. He never left the Church—a fact that we today are in a better position to appreciate than his contemporaries. Always isolable by temperament, he was effectively isolated by events.” G. Daly, “Some Reflections on the Character of George Tyrrell,” *The Heythrop Journal* 10, no. 3 (1969): 268.

177. A. Vidler, “Foreword,” in Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, 7.

178. A. Cock, quoted in T. M. Looe, “‘Revelation as Experience’: An Unpublished Lecture of George Tyrrell,” *The Heythrop Journal* 12, no. 2 (1971): 123.

to make plain to his audience what participating in the Spirit of Christ, by praying as he did, could mean for them. To pray with a spirit of devotion would mean that the *credo* they would come to utter would come from the depths and be true. According to *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*,

In us Christ, the Spirit, lives and utters Himself in the ever-changing forms of thought and language. In this sense St. Paul says that, if we have known Christ after the flesh, we shall know him so no longer, but only after the Spirit as the Heavenly Adam, the Son of Man, the Spirit of God. We have long since outgrown those apocalyptic forms of religious thought in which the Spirit of Jesus first uttered itself as the Son of man—the Jewish Messiah. But the spirit itself we have not outgrown, and in us it seeks ever new forms wherein to clothe the same revelation.¹⁷⁹

If, by this, it is felt that the “ditch” that Tyrrell has dug around the primitive revelation of God in Christ, in order to establish “the distinction between truth in itself and truth as possessed by the human mind,”¹⁸⁰ has grown perilously deep, then the role he asserts for the church should be remembered:

But the Church of St Paul is the mystical body of Christ—an extension of that human frame through which His spirit and personality communicated itself to His disciples, as it were sacramentally, i.e. in the way that a personality makes itself felt, as opposed to the way in which a teacher imparts doctrine. In both cases signs are necessary; but in the latter thought speaks to thought, in the former spirit to spirit; in the latter an idea, in the former a force is transmitted. Through the mystical body, animated by the Spirit, we are brought into immediate contact with the ever-present Christ. We hear him in its Gospel, we touch and handle Him in its sacraments. He lives on in the Church not metaphorically but actually. He finds a growing medium of self-utterance, ever complementing and correcting that of His mortal individuality. Thus it is through the instrumentality of the Church and

179. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, 174.

180. Provencher, “Modernism,” 721.

its sacraments that his personality is renewed and strengthened in us; that the force of His spirit is transmitted and felt. The Church is not merely a society or school, but a mystery and sacrament; like the humanity of Christ of which it is an extension.¹⁸¹

That an adequate evaluation of Tyrrell's thought could be given here is unthinkable. But neither is that the intention. Others have given scholarly analysis of his struggle "to formulate a theology of revelation which would accommodate without nullifying the apocalyptic perspective of the New Testament as he saw it."¹⁸² The point is that when reading *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, even if only the passage above, the preemptive echoes of later theology, especially that of Vatican II,¹⁸³ necessitate a constant reminder of the date of publication. In the crucible of crisis, Tyrrell brought together and went some way to resolving ideas and theological difficulties that would occupy the Church for decades to come. As he said himself, "My own work—which I regard as done—has been to raise a question which I have failed to answer. I am not so conceited as to conclude that it is therefore unanswerable."¹⁸⁴

181. Tyrrell, *Christianity at the Cross-Roads*, 178.

182. Looime, "Revelation as Experience," in Daly, *Transcendence and Immanence*, 140–64, 141–42; J. Lewis May, *Father Tyrrell and the Modernist Movement* (London: Burns Oates and Washbourne, 1938); J. Ratté, *Three Modernists* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1968); N. Sagovsky, *On God's Side: A Life of George Tyrrell* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990); T. M. Looime, *Liberal Catholicism, Reform Catholicism, Modernism: A Contribution to a New Orientation in Modernist Research* (Mainz: Grünewald, 1979).

183. See M. Hurley, "George Tyrrell: Some Post-Vatican II Impressions," *The Heythrop Journal* 10, no. 3 (1969): 243–55; F. M. O'Connor, "Notes and Comments: Tyrrell's Cross-Roads," *The Heythrop Journal* 5, no. 2 (1964): 188–91; C. J. Mehok, "Hans Küng and George Tyrrell on the Church," *Homiletic and Pastoral Review* 72 (1972): 57–66; T. Foudy, "George Tyrrell and Modernism," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1982): 1–18. With regard to Loisy, see also Burke, "Was Loisy Newman's Modern Disciple?" 151.

184. G. Tyrrell to Boutwood, 13 January 1909, in *George Tyrrell's Letters*, 1920, quoted in Looime, "George Tyrrell: 'Revelation as Experience,'" 123.

Looking Forward to Vindication

The Modernists were doing “theology under the lash,”¹⁸⁵ and, once the strictures of *Lamentabili* were imposed, every effort was made to silence not only the questioners but the questions. Yet, before suppression engulfed imaginative thinking in the Church for a decade and more, overtures for change had been heard loud and clear, so much so that Roger Haight could say that Modernism “was one of the most important movements in Roman Catholic Theology between Trent and Vatican II.”¹⁸⁶ Coming before the liturgical movement had taken root, and before the rise of the *nouvelle théologie* and the encouraging encyclicals of Pius XII, this was the first move to establish a theology of revelation and church that was credible to the modern mind. The spirit of their questions was kept alive in movements that matured through the war years, so that the theological themes that have been heard to echo from *Aeterni Patris* could come together with a new resonance. Hence Karl Rahner, at the beginning of his theological career and on the eve of the Second World War, could begin to posit an answer to the problem of immanence and transcendence with the help of a richer and more mature theological vocabulary.¹⁸⁷ In his book *Understanding Karl*

185. J. H. Newman, Letter to Miss Bowles 4 January 1863, quoted in J. Coulson, *Newman and the Common Tradition* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1970), 100.

186. R. Haight, “Unfolding of Modernism in France,” *Theological Studies* 35 (1974): 632.

187. “The theologian Thomas is concerned with man as the place in which God shows himself in such a way that he can be heard in his word of revelation, *ex parte animae*. In order to be able to hear whether God is speaking we must know that he is; so that his word does not come to one who already knows, he must be hidden from us; for him to speak to human beings his word must reach us where we already are, in our earthly place, in our earthly time. In that man is in the world *convertendo se ad phantasma*, the disclosure of being generally and in it the knowledge of the existence of God has always already taken place, but at the same time this God is always already hidden from us as being beyond the world. *Abstractio* is the disclosure of being which places man before God, *conversio* is entering into the here and now of this finite world which God makes the distant unknown. *Abstractio* and *conversio* are the same thing for Thomas: man. If man is understood in this way he can hear whether God does not say something because he knows that God is; God can speak because he is the unknown. And if Christianity is not

Rahner: An Introduction to His Life and Thought, Herbert Vorgrimler indicates a shift not only in Rahner's intellectual development, but more generally in theology. Such a text identifies Rahner as the first of the "second generation theologians":

The first generation, whose social, spiritual and ecclesial life-work came to a climax in the period between the two world wars introduced the new mentality into theology in a more general way with a good deal of courage and constant threats from church officials. This new spirit could not yet have an effect in coping with the content of particular theological problems. In Germany, theologians like Peter Lippert, Romano Guardini, Erich Przywara and others opened up this new period in the sphere of theology. They represented the new spirit, but hardly went into individual questions of dogma, so the theological textbooks of the time took no notice of them.¹⁸⁸

This new spirit had arisen in different circumstances. "In its philosophical and theological youth this generation had experienced the intrigues and heresy hunts within the Church and the harsh official reactions, for example against the so-called Modernists."¹⁸⁹

the idea of an eternal ever-present spirit but Jesus of Nazareth, then Thomas's metaphysics of knowledge is Christian if it calls a man back into the here and now of his finite world, as the eternal also entered into it, so that man finds it and himself again in it." K. Rahner, *Geist in Welt* (Innsbruck: Felizian Rauch, 1939), 407, in H. Vorgrimler, *Understanding Karl Rahner: An Introduction to His Life and Thought* (London: SCM, 1986), 60–61.

188. Vorgrimler, *Understanding Karl Rahner*, 55. Significantly, James F. White posits such a generational distinction of the liturgical movement: "Our position is that the two liturgical movements had different objectives and that quite different personnel were involved. For the first liturgical movement, the term 'restoration' is crucial. It looked back to restoring treasures lost or overlooked but not to changing the liturgy itself. For this reason we can call the first movement the romantic liturgical movement. . . . The second liturgical movement revolved around the word 'reformation' and planned significant changes in the liturgy. Its chief promoters were diocesan priests and a considerable number of lay people who dreamed of things that the first liturgical movement never dared. It could justly be labelled the reformist or parish liturgical movement. Obviously, both movements overlap at a number of points: participation is mentioned in the nineteenth century and restoration is championed after World War II. But there seems to be a clear shift as *Mediator Dei* marks the end of one era in 1947 and new ideas and leaders take over." J. F. White, *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today* (New York: Paulist, 1995), 71.

189. Vorgrimler, *Understanding Karl Rahner*, 56.

This was the time from *Pascendi* to *Humani Generis*, ostensibly difficult and unproductive years for Catholic theology, but in fact years when the ingredients of “second-generation” theology were coming together. These are the years of a rising interest in historical criticism and biblical analysis, of a return to the sources,¹⁹⁰ and the awakening of a sense of mystery in theology. Such factors were the common inspiration and driving force of the liturgical movement and the *nouvelle théologie*, and in order to understand the theological fruits of the “second generation,” it is necessary to appreciate their inception in the first.

Sources of Renewal: The Parallel Rise of the Liturgical Movement and the *Nouvelle Théologie*

The “paradigm shift” to which the post-war theologians and architects of the Second Vatican Council were heirs had its origin in the romantic movement. It was a change that touched liturgy and theology equally, as the modern understanding of these disciplines met at its source. “The romantic liturgical movement had a long pre-history in Germanic lands where theologians had been discussing the nature of the Church.”¹⁹¹ Tempered by a certain scientific rigor, the product of both a scholastic and a rationalist heritage, nineteenth-century theology welcomed feeling, dynamism, and imagination. While J. Adam Möhler and the Tübingen School advocated a Spirit-centred, charismatic, and organic understanding of the church,

190. The return to the sources was not entirely a positively motivated movement, but for some a safe haven in a difficult period for theologians. “In its own way scholastic theology, too, represented such an evasion. If a dogmatic theologian had no desire to converse with contemporary educated people within the Church or despisers of religion outside it, he concentrated on editing the texts of old theologians; he worked on a backward-looking history of dogma and left official scholastic theology as it had been before.” Vorgrimler, *Understanding Karl Rahner*, 56.

191. White, *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today*, 76.

typical of Romantic thought, Prosper Guéranger (1805–1875) was seeking to revive monasticism, to place the liturgy at its center, and to rediscover a medieval simplicity.¹⁹² Around the same time, John Henry Newman left the church of his baptism after reflecting on notions of doctrinal development.¹⁹³ Yet these beginnings of renewal were shaky. Möhler was criticised for *Einheit in der Kirche* and himself came to think he had somewhat overstated his position,¹⁹⁴ Newman was dismayed at the theological inertia of the church he had embraced, and Guéranger was condemned by many for his “amateurish kind of scholarship” and his naïve belief that “to go back to the authentic liturgy meant to go back to medievalism.”¹⁹⁵ While Möhler and Newman were men before their time, who to some extent made progress despite their context, it was partly to Guéranger’s purpose to collude with the spirit of centralized uniformity and ultramontanism that marked the age.¹⁹⁶ Guéranger is somewhat too ambiguous a figure to be classed with Möhler and Newman. Without doubt, he and his followers stimulated a respect

192. For a fuller discussion of this relationship, see G.-M. Oury, “Le romantisme de Dom Guéranger: un faux problème?” in *Collectanea Cisterciensia* 48 (1986): 311–23, and also T. F. O’Meara, “The Origins of the Liturgical Movement and German Romanticism,” *Worship* 59 (1985): 326–42.

193. “The generally accepted launching of the liturgical movement was the formation of a new Benedictine community at Solesmes, France, by Prosper Guéranger in 1833. The timing was significant. John Henry Newman marked the beginning of the Oxford Movement in the Church of England as a sermon preached by John Keble on July 14, 1833, and for a dozen years Newman provided vigorous leadership before leaving the Anglican communion. In Bavaria, Wilhelm Loehe began a long pastorate in Neuendettelsau in 1837, devoted to making frequent confession and communion a reality among Lutherans. Nikolai F. S. Grundtvig led a sacramental revival in the Lutheran church of Denmark. Already on the American frontier, the Disciples of Christ had been formed in 1831 and had made the first success in making weekly communion for all the baptised a permanent norm for worship. Something dynamic was in the atmosphere worldwide in the 1830’s. This was the truly liturgical decade exceeded only by the 1960’s.” White, *Roman Catholic Worship: Trent to Today*, 76. See also J. Leclercq, “Le renouveau solesmien et le renouveau religieux du XIX siècle,” *Studia monastica* 18 (1976): 157–98.

194. Cf. M. Himes, “Introduction,” in J. Möhler, *Symbolism* (New York: Crossroad, 1997), xii.

195. See L. Bouyer, *Liturgical Piety* (Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame, 1966), 65.

196. Pius IX gave papal approbation to the suppression of neo-Gallican rites and strengthened the Solesmes programme with the encyclical *Inter Multiplices*. See *Acta Pii IX*, 1, 1853, 439–48.

for medieval liturgical texts that precipitated their sound scientific study, and, though they did instill a sense of the importance of the liturgical life of the church and work for its correct celebration, the early work of Solesmes was too much concerned with a rediscovery of the medieval period, and that always linked to an excessive ultramontanism that sought to smother alternatives to the Roman model. While Guéranger was an inspirational figure, who was responsible for “a community whose spiritual life was above all centred in experienced contact with the prayer of the Church”¹⁹⁷—an experience that encouraged a renewal of fervor that went beyond monastic circles—one must nevertheless agree that Lambert Beauduin (1873–1960) is the true father of the liturgical movement.¹⁹⁸ For only with him was a true alliance made between the nascent new theology and the liturgical movement: an alliance founded on a pastorally motivated fervor for renewal, and a spirit of *ressourcement* that reached its consummation at Vatican II.

Beauduin tried to bring the renewal out of its monastic setting and adapt it so as to achieve the active participation of the people in liturgical celebration, an aim that was to mark the movement thereafter. The approach he took was theologically more robust than

197. O. Rousseau, “The Liturgical Movement from Dom Guéranger to Pius XII,” in *The Church at Prayer*, vol. 1: *Introduction to the Liturgy*, ed. A. G. Martimort (Shannon: Irish University Press, 1968), 51. See also J. D. Crichton, *Lights in the Darkness: Forerunners to the Liturgical Movement* (Dublin: Columba, 1996).

198. John Fenwick and Bryan Spinks wonder if the publication of Lambert Beauduin’s *La Piété de l’Église* might not mark the beginning of the liturgical movement and claim for its author the title *Father*, and whether the title rightly belongs to Guéranger. See Fenwick and Spinks, *Worship in Transition: The Twentieth Century Liturgical Movement* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1995), 13, 17, 23. Cf. B. Botte, “Birth of the Movement,” in *From Silence to Participation* (Washington, DC: Pastoral, 1988), 9–17. For a more detailed and comprehensive account of Dom Guéranger’s involvement in the liturgical movement, see O. Rousseau, *Histoire du mouvement liturgique, Esquisse historique depuis le début du XIX siècle jusqu’au pontificat de Pie X* (Paris: Édition du Cerf, 1945), 3. English trans. by the Benedictines of Westminster Priory, *The Progress of the Liturgy: An Historical Sketch from the Beginning of the Nineteenth Century to the Pontificate of Pius X*, (Westminster, MD: Newman, 1951).

his predecessor's with *Piété de L'Église* clearly identifying his desire to find an underlying fundamental theology that would give shape to his enterprise. Essentially, it was this search that marked the difference between the Tridentine liturgical reforms and the reforms and the aims of the twentieth-century liturgical movement.¹⁹⁹ The dogmatic decrees of Trent, especially those concerning the sacraments, never intended to establish a theology of the liturgy. For this reason they remained rubrical and superficial. As Kevin Irwin says,

It was especially after the Council of Trent (1545–63) that a clear separation developed between the liturgy and sacramental theology. In the wake of the Tridentine concern for rubrical precision in the doing of liturgy—demonstrated by the printing of rubrics in the Roman Missal and Ritual—liturgy became equated with the external performance of the Church's rites. Sacramental theology was incorporated into manuals of dogmatic theology, which paid little attention to the rites themselves as a theological source. The sacramental discussions in such manuals focused on the Reformation debates about causality, the number of the sacraments, and their institution. The divorce between the *lex orandi* and *lex credendi* was exemplified in the division of what had been a single area of study into two: liturgy and sacramental theology. It was only somewhat later that the study of liturgy in the West began to focus on the historical evolution of the rites and the theological interpretation of these rites.²⁰⁰

Fundamentally, the liturgical movement in its later stage was working to reunite the two aspects of the Latin tag ascribed to Prosper of Aquitaine and more fully rendered: *legem credendi lex*

199. P. Jounel expresses this difference in an alternative way when he asserts, "The half-century of liturgical renewal preceding the Second Vatican Council developed in a direction quite the opposite of that following the Council of Trent. In the sixteenth century liturgical reformers began by revising their books, in order to instil a new liturgical life into the clergy and Christian people. In the twentieth century, the first step was a pastoral effort which would result in a revision of rubrics and liturgical books. The influence of Popes Pius X and Pius XII, essentially pastoral popes, was certainly not without effect on this orientation." Jounel, "From the Council of Trent to Vatican II," in Martimort, *The Church at Prayer*, 47.

200. K. Irwin, *Liturgical Theology: A Primer* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1990), 13.

statuat supplicandi.²⁰¹ By concentrating attention on the role and purpose of the liturgy, those interested in the pastoral renewal of worship were bound to discover foundational theological principles that would serve to refresh their efforts. This rationale showed obvious parallels with the emerging new theology. In the first place, those involved in the liturgical renewal were all too aware of the increasing separation between the faithful and the liturgy in the post-Tridentine Church. The root cause of this separation was quickly identified as the theological estrangement of word and sacrament. Ritual accretions, the (often polemical) regulations of dogmatic theology, allegorical parallels, and an increasing clericalism all threatened to push the directly evocative value of the sacraments as human events into the background.²⁰² Thus the sacramental symbol, the defining and constituent medium of the divine manifestation, was seemingly severed from its content. The event that raises the word of God beyond the merely cognitive or notional to the “psychosomatic substrata of human knowledge, experience, and meeting”²⁰³ had been reduced to ritual ceremonial. Hence the aim to reunite the faithful in active participation with the sacramental symbols is in itself an effort to rediscover the ways of God’s personal self-communication to humanity. As Beauduin maintained, “The active participation in the liturgical life of the Church is a capital factor in the supernatural life of the Christian.”²⁰⁴ The modern liturgical renewal cannot therefore be regarded as a movement apart, one that was concerned merely with the aesthetics of worship. Its solid theological basis is the revaluation of the relationship between word and sacrament in

201. For a useful analysis of the history and meaning of this phrase see: P. De Clerk, “Lex orandi, lex credendi,’ sens original et avatars historiques d’un adage equivoque,” in *Questions Liturgiques*, 59 (1978), 193–212.

202. See L. G. M. Alting von Geusau, “Word and Sacrament,” in *Liturgy in Development*, ed. L. G. M. Alting von Geusau (London: Sheed and Ward, 1965), 13–14.

203. *Ibid.*, 18.

204. L. Beauduin, *Liturgy: The Life of the Church* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1926), 8.

the transmission of revelation. This was to be the ultimate source of liturgical renewal, and the notion most effective in securing it would be the concept of mystery theology, an idea that was simultaneously emerging in the ecclesiological developments of this period.²⁰⁵ Here again, Lambert Beauduin might be seen as an originator, his *Piété de L'Église* identifying an understanding of the church as mystical body and the priesthood of all believers as the basis of renewal.²⁰⁶

Mystici Corporis, Mediator Dei, and the Liturgical Movement

Gregory XVI had made Guéranger abbot of Solesmes and head of the French Benedictine Congregation in 1837. Maurus and Placid Wolter visited there and refounded the German Abbey of Beuron in its likeness. From Beuron were founded the daughter houses of Maredsous in Belgium and Maria Laach in Germany. Physically and spiritually, there was close connection between the revived Benedictine monasteries of Europe, and this encouraged a uniformity that some consider to be a negative aspect of Guéranger's reform. Yet at least this situation made possible the cross-fertilization of ideas, most importantly between Mont César (a foundation of Maredsous) and Maria Laach. If the liturgical movement really did begin with the address that Lambert Beauduin gave at Malines, Belgium in

205. As with hindsight, Raymond Vaillancourt could succinctly say, "We must add that this sacramental renewal, both liturgical and theological, is far from being the result of a spontaneous generation. It goes back to Dom Guéranger in the last century and has continued to sink its roots with the help of numerous theologians like Dom Odo Casel. These theologians gave the impetus to a theological movement that went beyond the juridical and canonical aspects of the liturgy and located the liturgy in the very heart of the mysteries of Christ. The two theologians I have named also laid heavy emphasis on the theology of the mysteries. In short, their desire was to move beyond juridicism and place themselves on a level of meaning that lay within the mystery of man in Christ. It is against this background that the liturgical and theological renewal of Vatican II is to be understood." Vaillancourt, *Toward a Renewal of Sacramental Theology* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1979), 33.

206. See Crichton, *Lights in the Darkness*, 152–53.

1909, then it came to full strength when Odo Casel (1886–1948) solemnized the relationship between liturgy and theology with his notions of liturgical mystery. By way of his *Kultmysterion*, Casel brought a liturgical consciousness to a then-contemporary development in theology, one in which a number of recent religious trends had crystallized, such as a renewed interest in the Bible, a growing awareness of communion in the church, and new ideas on the transmission of God's self-communication. In the light of mystery theology, Pius XII was to take up each of these questions in the papal encyclicals *Divino Afflante Spiritu*, *Mystici Corporis*, *Mediator Dei*, and *Humani Generis*, and one way or another bring these themes to full consciousness in the post-war era.²⁰⁷

Even at the time of the First Vatican Council, theologians had sought to introduce an understanding of the church as the mystical body of Christ into the document *De Ecclesia*.²⁰⁸ Rejected as too romantic at this point, its absence, along with other elements, meant that the Council's teaching suffered from an imbalance that theologians throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries worked to redress.²⁰⁹ As noted above, prior to the First Vatican Council the origins of this ecclesiological movement can be traced in the Tübingen School of Drey, Möhler, and Kühn. Their aim was to develop the notion of the body of Christ as a

207. Cf. G. Philips, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: History of the Constitution," in *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, ed. H. Vorgrimler, vol. 1 (London: Burns and Oates, 1967), 105–37, 105.

208. "Through the efforts of Passaglia, who was much influenced by these ideas, and of his disciples, Franzelin and Schrader, the theology of the mystical body found new vigour. It was introduced into the first schema of *De Ecclesia* at Vatican I, but to most of the fathers it appeared too romantic a notion." Cf. M.-J. le Guillon, "Church 1. History of Ecclesiology," in *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise Sacramentum Mundi*, ed. K. Rahner (New York: Crossroad, 1991), 208.

209. When the Second Vatican Council made the theme of the mystery of the church its primary interest, "it went back explicitly to the programme of the Council of 1870 and determined to take it further. That programme had remained incomplete, and to give it a proper dogmatic balance, it needed to be supplemented." G. Philips, "Dogmatic Constitution on the Church," 105.

people animated by the Spirit. Seeking to shift the emphasis away from a visible and hierarchical institution that possessed the gift of magisterium, Möhler and the Tübingen School stressed the idea of the people of God and their organic life together. In the twentieth century, these ideas gained strength in the Church, both as a reaction to a period of extreme institutionalism, and as the result of the life's work of the Belgian Jesuit Émile Mersch (1890–1940). In 1933, after intense study and much revision, Mersch published *Le corps mystique du Christ*,²¹⁰ in which he detailed the historical development of the doctrine of the mystical body in Scripture and tradition. Essentially, this was a prelude to his major work, *La théologie du corps mystique*,²¹¹ which was published posthumously in 1944, though completed by 1939. Effectively, Mersch's work provides an extensive commentary on *Mystici Corporis*, the encyclical of Pope Pius XII that he never read. Like Pope Pius, Mersch recognised in the mystical body a concept key to modern theology. As Marie-Joseph le Guillon points out,

The encyclical *Mystici Corporis* which saw in the Church—with Christ as its Head, constituting it in existence, sustaining and ruling it—a social, visible and living reality whose ultimate principle of action is the Holy Spirit, gave the stamp of official approval to the fundamental rediscovery of the vision of the Church. From then on theological studies developed in complementary directions: the Church as Sacrament, the Church as fellowship, the Church as Mystery. And this development of ecclesiology took place under the combined influence of the biblical and liturgical revivals.²¹²

What is of pertinence here is Pius XII's recognition of the unity that exists between a number of theological themes, and his assertion that

210. É. Mersch, *Le Corps mystique du Christ* (Louvain: Museum Lessianum, 1936); English trans. J. R. Kelly, *The Whole Christ* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1938).

211. Mersch, *La Théologie du corps mystique* (Louvain: Museum Lessianum, 1944); English trans. C. Vollert, *The Theology of the Mystical Body* (New York: Herder, 1952).

212. Le Guillon, "Church 1. History of Ecclesiology," 209.

the means of their confluence is the overarching concept of mystery or sacrament. It is this meeting that went some way to shaping a consistent theology between *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, *Lumen Gentium*, and *Dei Verbum*, but which also was to mark postconciliar theology even more significantly.

The christological focus, which resulted from a mystical-body ecclesiology, had obvious consequences for sacramental and liturgical theology. No longer, for instance, could the church be regarded as the arbitrary distributor of the sacraments, for actions of the mystical body were actions of Christ—the church being the permanent and active presence of the risen Lord. Such a fundamental shift in principle demanded a rethinking of the relationship between the faithful believer and Christ encountered in the sacramental mysteries of the church, that is to say, a deepening of the theology of grace according to the categories of historicity and subjectivity. If the liturgy was to be the locus of the active participation of the faithful in the very life of God, then grace, the self-communication of that life, could no longer be regarded as a scarce and distant gift reserved for the privileged few. The encyclicals *Mystici Corporis* and *Mediator Dei* are significant in giving expression to the theological adjustment that the various strains of twentieth-century scholarship demanded.

If the two encyclicals are compared, some idea of the effect of the doctrine of the mystical body on developing notions of ecclesiology, liturgy, and grace will become immediately obvious. Because in *Mystici Corporis* Pius XII had identified the church as a unity with Jesus Christ as its head, and because he regarded this living body as empowered and sustained by the Holy Spirit, it followed naturally that he could say of the liturgy in *Mediator Dei*,

The liturgical year, animated throughout by the devotion of the Church, is no cold and lifeless representation of past events, no mere historical record. It is Christ himself, living on in his Church, and

still pursuing that path of boundless mercy which “going about and doing good” (Acts 10:38), he began to tread during his life on earth. This he did in order that the souls of men might come into contact with his mysteries and, so to speak, live by them. And these mysteries are still now constantly present and active, not in the vague and incomprehensible way which certain writers describe, but as Catholic doctrine teaches us. The Doctors of the Church tell us that the mysteries of Christ’s life are at the same time most excellent models of virtue for us to imitate and also sources of divine grace for us by reason of the merits and intercession of the Redeemer. They live on in their effects in us, since each of them is, according to its nature and in its own way, the cause of our salvation.²¹³

Though the sources for this text are not solely to be found in the ecclesiological movement, and any examination of its background would involve some comment on Odo Casel’s theory of mystery theology, the passage does reveal the convergence of themes and something of the gradual theological clarification that was taking place directly before the Second Vatican Council. While Émile Mersch had been laboring over his work on the theology of the mystical body, Dom Odo Casel, had begun a study of *Das christliche Kultmysterium* that was first published in 1932. Tracing this theme through Scripture and tradition, most notably in St. Paul and St. Leo the Great, Casel expounds a theology of the biblical notion of μυστήριον and of Christ as the revelation of God.²¹⁴ Transposing this theology into a liturgical key, he had concluded that Christ, having

213. “Quapropter liturgicus annus, quem Ecclesiae pietas alit ac comitatur, non frigida atque iners earum rerum repraesentatio est, quae ad praeterita tempora pertinent, vel simplex ac nuda superioris aetatis rerum recordatio. Sed potius est Christus ipse, qui in sua Ecclesia perseverat, quique immensae misericordiae suae iter pergit, quod quidem in hac mortali vita, cum pertransiit benefaciendo, ipse pientissimo eo consilio incepit, ut hominum animi mysteria sua attingerent ac per eadem quodammodo viverent; quae profecto mysteria, non incerto ac subobscuro eo modo, quo recentiores quidam scriptores effutiunt, sed quo modo catholica doctrina nos docet, praesentia continenter adsunt atque operantur; quandoquidem, ex Ecclesiae Doctorum sententia, et eximia sunt christianae perfectionis exempla, et divinae gratiae sunt fontes ob merita deprecationesque Christi, et effectu suo in nobis perdurant, cum singula secundum indolem cuiusque suam salutis nostrae causa suo modo existant.” Pius XII, *Mediator Dei*, 580; Smith, *Christian Worship* (London: CTS, 1954), 65.

returned to the Father, has left to his church the mysteries of worship as the means of revelation and grace that in this present time allow immediate contact with God's saving acts. Though other aspects of Casel's work proved problematic, his central doctrine was taken up by *Mediator Dei*,²¹⁵ which in turn influenced *Sacrosanctum Concilium*.

Despite what is at times an unhelpful and unfair comparison with *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, Aidan Nichols identifies three important theoretical contributions in the evaluation of the liturgical movement that Pius XII offers in *Mediator Dei*. They are "the false antimony between 'objective' and 'personal' devotion, the honouring of the whole history of development in the appreciation of a sound liturgical tradition, and a consciousness of the realised and future eschatological dimensions of the liturgy."²¹⁶ Obvious parallels can be made between the issues that Pius XII recognizes as central to the liturgical movement and themes that other theologians had been seeking to emphasize from the 1930s onwards that were collectively being termed *nouvelle théologie*: that is to say, the active engagement of the Christian subject in the historical reality of the world, a rejection of a disconnected and overly objective theology, a return to the biblical sources and the whole doctrinal tradition, and the

214. "The Christian thing, therefore, in its full and primitive meaning of God's good word, or Christ's, is not, as it were, a philosophy of life with religious background music, nor a moral or theological training; it is a *mysterium* as St Paul means the word, a revelation made by God to man through acts of God-manhood, full of life and power; it is mankind's way to God made possible by this revelation and the grace of it communicating the solemn entry of the redeemed Church into the presence of the everlasting Father." O. Casel, *Das christliche Kultmysterium*, first ed., 1932; fourth ed., 1960, enlarged by various texts chosen by B. Neunheuser; English trans. *The Mystery of Christian Worship*, (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1962), 12–13.

215. For a brief but accurate summary of Casel's theology and its reiteration in *Mediator Dei*, cf. I. H. Dalmais, "Liturgy and the Mystery of Salvation," in *Introduction to the Liturgy* (Baltimore: Helicon, 1961), 190–211, especially 203. Also see C. E. O'Neill, *Meeting Christ in the Sacraments* (Cork: Mercier, 1964), 67–69. The preface of Neunheuser's edition of *The Mystery of Christian Worship* is also relevant here.

216. See A. Nichols, *A Pope and a Council on the Sacred Liturgy* (Farnborough, UK: St Michael's Abbey, 2002), 15–25.

development of an anthropology that was determined as much by a supernatural as by a natural end.²¹⁷ Borrowing a passage from Stephen J. Duffy is helpful in explaining the grounds for this association:

These then are the . . . factors that loomed large in reawakening interest in the relationship between God's grace and the human being. However, it ought to be noted that all three factors are themselves permeated by and function within the context of a certain contemporary spirit which itself was a stimulus in this direction. The desire today is for a synthetic understanding of humanity, a holistic picture that integrates the many aspects of human being made known to us by "regional" fields of study. Further, perhaps due to a more existential and/or empirical approach to life, people today want to experience grace in experiencing themselves and their communities, ecclesial and non-ecclesial. Such a mentality obviously influenced theologians. Hence the effort of some theologians to show that in concrete existence and experience grace cannot be neatly sealed off from the so-called "natural" levels in a person, but that it must penetrate all activities, both conscious and unconscious.²¹⁸

While liturgy needed to shed ceremonial accretions and a spirit of rubricism in order better to appreciate the very mystery it contains, so

217. "There was a common interest in what was called Kerygmatic theology, the theology that must be taught to non-theologians and must therefore begin with the mood and convictions actually obtaining in the milieu. The scene was the France of the 30's and 40's, when French thought was in confusion, and when the famed French rationalism was being attacked by the French as irrelevant and harmful. It was the time of French existentialism, and the 'new' theologians experienced existentialism as a fact, though they were cold to it as a theory. They knew that existentialism was a deep reaction to a kind of thinking which they found prominent in Catholic theology, and which for two reasons they wished to drop. First, they themselves were the sons of their time, and the prevailing discontent with the tactic of solving problems by reducing the terms of the problems to logical constructions worked in them no less than in the non-Catholics. Second, if theology was necessarily and exclusively a matter of rationalistic formulation, there would be no way to establish contact with the new generation which heartily despised such an approach." G. Weigel, "The Historical Background of the Encyclical *Humani Generis*," *Theological Studies* 12 (1951): 220–21. See also J. Komonchak, "Returning From Exile: Catholic Theology in the 1930s," in *The Twentieth Century A Theological Overview*, ed. G. Baum (New York: Orbis, 1999), 35–48.

218. S. J. Duffy, *The Graced Horizon: Nature and Grace in Modern Catholic Thought* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1992), 53. An example of this can be seen in M.-D. Chenu's desire to "incarnate the life of grace in the social milieu"; see C. Potworowski, "Dechristianization, Socialization and Incarnation in Marie-Dominique Chenu," *Science et Esprit* 43 (1991): 17–54.

the theology of grace needed to shed its disdain for the mundane and the cold objectivism of scholastic theology. If the objectives of the liturgical movement and the *nouvelle théologie* can be seen as distinct, the means of their accomplishment remain the same, and for this reason their contribution to the Council was as one.²¹⁹ It is time to pay attention to what were still seen as the theological disciplines proper and the innovations that were happening there.

Nouvelle Théologie and *Humani Generis*

The necessity of dialogue with modern society and its philosophies, made more immediate by the conflicts of the World Wars,²²⁰ an increasing consciousness of the importance of the Scriptures in theology, the movement of *ressourcement*, patristic and medieval, and its concomitant rejection of scholasticism,²²¹ were factors that, emerging in the first half of the twentieth century, remained unsystematized. Speaking of Henri de Lubac, the inspiration of the *nouvelle théologie*, Hans Urs von Balthasar gives us an insight into the limitations that reawakening Catholic theology still experienced in this period:

Together with some good friends—such as B. De Solages, Father Congar, Father Chenu, Moureux, Chavasse, and others—he [de Lubac] conceived the plan of a comprehensive theological work “that would have been less systematic than the manuals but more saturated with tradition, integrating the valid elements in the results of modern exegesis, of patristics, liturgy, history, philosophical reflection. . . . The lightning bolt of *Humani Generis* killed the project.”²²²

219. See R. W. Franklin, “Humanism and Transcendence in the Nineteenth-Century Liturgical Movement,” *Worship* 59 (1985): 342–53.

220. For an excellent summary, see T. M. Schoof, “The Challenge of the World in France,” in *A Survey of Catholic Theology 1800–1970* (New York: Paulist Newman, 1970), 93–102.

221. See A. Nichols, “Thomism and the *Nouvelle Théologie*,” *The Thomist* 64 (2000): 1–19.

Important to notice here is not only the frustrating influence of the Roman authorities with regard to the crystallizing of a new theology, but the frustration experienced by its innovators in their efforts to offer a system pertinent to their times.²²³ Von Balthasar quotes from a letter sent to de Lubac by Étienne Gilson soon after he had read de Lubac's *Surnaturel*:

You are a theologian of great stature but likewise a humanist in the great tradition of humanist theologians. Humanist theologians usually do not love scholastics, and they are almost always hated by the scholastics. Why? In part, it seems to me, because the latter understand only univocal propositions and those that seem to be univocal. The former, by contrast, are more interested in the truth that the proposition attempts to formulate and that always partly escapes it. Then the latter no longer understand; they become restless, and because they cannot be certain that what escapes them is not false, they condemn it as a matter of principle, because that is more secure.²²⁴

222. Balthasar quoting de Lubac directly in H. U. von Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1991), 10–11.

223. Emerging from prolonged isolation, Catholic theology had to come to terms with the many disparate aspects that dialogue with the world demanded (cf. Komonchak's comments on M.-D. Chenu, in "Returning From Exile," 39–42). Yet neither did the content and method of the new theology yield to easy description or systematization; as Gustave Weigel says, "Like many historical things, the 'new theology' was a casually gradual realization of an idea, but the idea was never grasped clearly or totally by one man, nor did any one man proceed step by step in order to achieve the whole." Weigel, "The Historical Background of the Encyclical *Humani Generis*," 220.

224. Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, 14.

In *Humani Generis*, Pius XII sought this security for the Church,²²⁵ a security de Lubac was willing to forego while pursuing a larger truth. The Jesuit teacher was concerned that theology “allow the self-revealing God his freedom to disclose his truth in the way which pleases him.”²²⁶ He pursued a broader understanding of revelation than the narrow logic of the neo-scholastics, allowing for imaginative sensibility, abstraction, and religious exigence as means of understanding revelation and as tools that can be used in its articulation. As a result de Lubac was charged, in a similar way to Newman,²²⁷ with suggesting an ongoing revelation that did not cease with the death of the last apostle but is actualized in the present.

Catholicisme and Surnaturel

In the thought of Henri de Lubac, the question of the relationship between grace and nature was inextricably linked to the question of the relationship between theology and apologetics. Hence, de

225. “The contempt for terms and notions habitually used by scholastic theologians leads of itself to the weakening of what they call speculative theology, a discipline which these men consider devoid of true certitude because it is based on theological reasoning.” (Despectum autem vocabulorum ac notionum quibus theologi scholastici uti solent, sponte ducit ad enervandam theologiam, ut aiunt speculativam, quam, cum ratione theologica innitatur, vera certitudine carere existimant.) Pius XII, *Humani Generis*, 567; Knox, *False Trends in Modern Teaching*, 9. Cf. also *Humani Generis* paragraph 21, where Pius XII says, “It is also true that theologians must always return to the sources of Divine Revelation for it belongs to them to point out how the doctrine of the living Teaching Authority is to be found either explicitly or implicitly in the Scriptures and Tradition.” (Verum quoque est, theologis semper redeundum esse ad divinae revelationis fontes: eorum enim est indicare qua ratione ea quae a vivo Magisterio docentur, in Sacris Litteris et in divina traditione.) The primary movement of theology for Pius is backward—only armed with the truths of the deposit is speculative theology fruitful. However, the power to explain what is contained in the deposit of faith, obscurely and implicitly, belongs “not even to theologians but only to the Teaching Authority of the Church.” See *Humani Generis*, 568; Knox, *False Trends in Modern Teaching*, 11–12. For an insightful overview of the reaction of *Humani Generis* to the themes of the new theology see, Duffy, *The Graced Horizon*, 59–65.

226. Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, 208.

227. Cf. I. Ker, “Newman’s Theory—Development or Continuing Revelation,” in *Newman and Gladstone: Centennial Essays*, ed. J. D. Bastable (Dublin: Veritas, 1978), 145–59.

Lubac's first book, *Catholicisme*,²²⁸ attempts to give a credible vision of the church by refreshing ecclesiology with the "social aspects of dogma." The Christian gospel, working for the complete restoration of creation and history that has been wrought in Christ, takes objective shape in the communal and historical framework of the church. There the alienating and disassociating effects of sin are overcome, and all things are united in Christ. After the war, however, de Lubac became more and more concerned with what he would later term "a sort of unconscious conspiracy"²²⁹ between forces that led to secularism and a shabby theology that placed the supernatural beyond the reach of nature. The ecclesial vision he had set forth in *Catholicisme* needed to be underpinned with an anthropology that, on the grounds of solid tradition, vigorously rejected attempts to confine humanity to a fulfillment restricted to its natural powers. In *Surnaturel*,²³⁰ De Lubac sketched out such an anthropology. As T. M. Schoof says of the book, "In it de Lubac adopted a new position in an historical debate, but at the same time laid down the foundation of a Christian humanism—by virtue of creation, that is on the basis of his being, man is effectively called to community with God, the transcendent fulfillment of his longing for happiness."²³¹

Immediately, and to varying degrees, this new position was attacked as a limitation of the sovereignty of God and the gratuity of grace, in some circles primarily because it was believed to be

228. H. de Lubac, *Catholicisme: Les aspects sociaux du dogme* (Paris: Cerf, 1938); English trans. by Lancelot C. Sheppard, *Catholicism: A Study of Dogma in Relation to the Corporate Destiny of Mankind*, (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1958). For a useful summary and analysis of this book, see P. McPartlan, *The Eucharist Makes the Church: Henri de Lubac and John Zizioulas in Dialogue* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1993), 3–14.

229. H. de Lubac, "Internal Causes of the Weakening and Disappearance of the Sense of the Sacred," in *Theology in History* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1996), 232, quoted in Komonchak, "Returning From Exile," 44.

230. H. de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études historiques* (Paris: Aubier, 1946). New edition with preface by Michel Sales, H. de Lubac, *Surnaturel: Études historiques* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1991).

231. Schoof, *A Survey of Catholic Theology 1800–1970*, 113.

an attempt to discredit St. Thomas.²³² To many the specter of Modernism seemed to have returned and, though de Lubac maintained an impressive, scholarly, and Christian courtesy throughout, and though he was not and could never have been styled a rebellious leader, the misunderstanding from which he suffered was not insignificant.²³³

De Lubac recognised a difficulty in his own system, but nevertheless preferred his approximations to the secure arguments of the neo-scholastics. As Aidan Nichols suggests,

Our problem admits no resolution until such time as we reformulate—so de Lubac contends—our very idea of revelation itself. Here too we may discern the hand of Rousselot, who had suggested exactly the same thing. To call the original content of revelation a “series of propositions” is not, de Lubac complains, to designate it “exactly or sufficiently.” The content of revelation is that divine redemptive action which is summed up in God’s gift of his Son. The mystery of Christ is the “*Objet globale*” of revelation. The mystery of Christ is “*le Tout de dogme*,” dogma in its unified entirety.²³⁴

The problem that exercised the minds of the exponents of *nouvelle théologie* was not a distinct question about the theology of grace. For them there could be no such thing. Fundamentally, it was a matter concerned with the idea of revelation itself. The heart of the theological question at issue was the manner of God’s self-

232. For a detailed discussion of the position of de Lubac, largely from the negative perspective of his various opponents, see articles by P. Donnelly: “On the Development of Dogma and the Supernatural,” *Theological Studies* 8 (1947): 471–91; “The Supernatural of Henri de Lubac,” *Theological Studies* 9 (1948): 554–60; “The Gratuity of the Beatific Vision and the Possibility of a Natural Destiny,” *Theological Studies* 11 (1950): 374–404. A more positive appraisal can be gained from S. Moore, “The Desire of God,” *Downside Review* 45 (1947): 246–59.

233. Cf. the personal address of Pope John Paul II that was read at de Lubac’s funeral in 1991. There the pope explained that the honor of the cardinalate had been granted de Lubac “to acknowledge the merits of a tireless scholar, a spiritual master and a Jesuit who was faithful during the various difficult moments of his life.” *L’Osservatore Romano* (English edition), 16 September 1991, 12.

234. Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, 210.

communication in Christ and its present significance for believers. For de Lubac, the problem was one of apologetics as much as it was one of grace, and that is why his contribution is crucial to an understanding of the actualization of revelation in the mystery of Christ's body, the church. Rather than reducing the question of grace to the domestic level of church and believer, he raised it to a dramatic one within the economy of salvation. And rather than offering an answer, he, "together with some good friends," returned to the position of the Master many saw him as opposing: *Sed quia de Deo scire non possumus quid sit sed quid non sit.*²³⁵ Hence von Balthasar could say of his contribution, "De Lubac is not only the great author who understood and experienced all his completed works as an approximation to an ever-unattained centre. This form gives the reader the chance of seeing how seemingly disparate elements converge upon a centre and thus of grasping them in their secret intention."²³⁶

At a more mundane level, the work of Henri de Lubac was significant on two counts. It gave inspiration and a vocabulary²³⁷ to the further development and systematization of the then-prominent themes in theology, especially as they featured in the Council, and more particularly it presented an opportunity and a challenge to de Lubac's fellow Jesuit, Karl Rahner.

235. "Now we cannot know what God is, but only what he is not." Thomas Aquinas, *ST* 1a. 3, pref., English trans. T. McDermott, *Summa Theologiae*, vol. 2: *Existence and Nature of God* (London: Blackfriars, 1963), 18.

236. Balthasar, *The Theology of Henri de Lubac*, 12.

237. "There [in *DV*] we read that, through divine revelation, the most profound truth about God as well as about human salvation shines out for us in *Christo . . . qui mediator simul et plenitudo totius revelationis existit*: Christ . . . who is at one and the same time the mediator and the plenitude of the whole of revelation. And, in his 1968 commentary on *Dei Verbum*, *La Révélation divine*, de Lubac remarks, with surely a degree of personal satisfaction, "The Council could say no better than this." Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, 212.

Karl Rahner and Transcendental Thomism

If Karl Rahner is representative of the “second generation” of theologians, his direct forebears were Jacques Maritain (1882–1973), Étienne Gilson (1884–1978), and Joseph Maréchal (1878–1944). In the wake of Blondel, the Modernist Crisis, and the new theology, when the return to the Fathers was at its height, these three took advantage of the weakening of the political right in Rome, brought about as much by the excesses of the anti-Modernists as by the changed climate of post-War Europe,²³⁸ and in quite different ways put new life into the flagging Thomist cause. G. McCool is correct in saying,

Their contribution to scholasticism can be summarised as follows: the enrichment and development of the commentators’ traditional Thomism, the historical recovery of St. Thomas’ own philosophy, and the establishment of transcendental Thomism. Although many distinguished scholastics worked at these tasks, a single name has become associated with each one of them. Maritain’s name is associated with the first, Gilson’s with the second, and Maréchal’s with the third.²³⁹

Maritain remained an old-fashioned Thomist, traditional in his conviction that the strength of St. Thomas lay in objectivity and abstraction. However, he shed the narrowness and rigidity of his ilk by embracing the notion that the metaphysics and epistemology of Thomism was singular in the clarification and integration that it could offer human experience. Maritain extended his philosophy to the imagination, art, poetry, and mystical experience. Though approaching his study from a differing angle, Gilson also endeavored to set Thomism in a much wider context. He brought to Thomism

238. G. McCool sees Pius XI’s condemnation of Action Française and Don Luigi Sturzo’s development of Christian Democracy as other influential factors in changing the Roman political climate. See McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 251.

239. *Ibid.*, 252.

the historian's skills of textual analysis and synthesis, and enlarged significantly knowledge of St. Thomas by exploring medieval history and culture. In yet a different way, Joseph Maréchal sought to reinterpret St. Thomas within the wider vision that the modern world affords, achieving this specifically through dialogue with the philosophy of Kant.²⁴⁰ In this Maréchal followed Blondel and Pierre Rousselot, but differed from them in his desire to establish a Kantian realistic metaphysics that would be identical to the metaphysics of St. Thomas. McCool gives a succinct summary of the position Maréchal adopts:

The *a priori* condition of possibility for every speculative judgement is the existence of the Infinite Pure Act of *esse* as the term of the mind's dynamism. And in every judgement a universal form is united to a sensible singular and then placed in existence by the objective affirmation. Consequently, the extra-mental correlate of the objective judgement must be matter, form and existence. But matter, form, and existence are the metaphysical constituents of the sensible singular in the philosophy of St. Thomas.²⁴¹

By the end of the Second World War, Thomism had certainly been revitalized by these three men, but in three distinct and differing directions. The unified method for Catholic theology envisaged by Leo XIII in *Aeterni Patris* was already yielding to the forces of the philosophical pluralism that was to mark later twentieth-century theology. Historical research, higher biblical criticism and the newly rediscovered method of patristics brought to crisis point the need for scholasticism to shed its traditional approach. The Modernists had failed in their methods, and the *nouvelle théologie* had been embarrassed by *Humani Generis*, yet Karl Rahner was to inherit many

240. See the famous *Cahier cinq*, the fifth volume of *Le Point de départ de la métaphysique* (Paris: Aclan, 1922–26), where Maréchal, having set Thomas within the history of philosophy, establishes a dialogue between him and Kant.

241. McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 256–57.

of its most valuable insights and achieve a theological synthesis of St. Thomas that “was receptive to a theological pluralism based on a plurality of conceptual frameworks.”²⁴²

The transcendental Thomism of Karl Rahner is adequately explained elsewhere.²⁴³ Of more significance here is the effect such a method had on Rahner’s fundamental theology, especially his understanding of revelation. As Aidan Nichols points out at the beginning of the section on Rahner in his book *From Newman to Congar*,

Much of the intrinsic interest, as also the problematic quality, of Rahner’s work lies in the interplay between these two very different sides of his inheritance—the philosophical element, itself not only Scholastic and, to a degree, as with all “Transcendental Thomists,” Kantian, but also Heideggerian, and the mystical-contemplative element, which is not only patristic but also Ignatian. As to the former, it is worth recalling that Heidegger himself considered any philosophical reflection worthy of the name to issue from *alêtheia*, the unveiling of the truth of being—the self-same metaphor, of course, that the term “revelation” also contains.²⁴⁴

As has been seen, the idea of the mystical element was having great effect generally on the wider background of theology. Such an influence can be seen in the details of Rahner’s work. Mystery is an essential element within his system, because it constitutes the furthest pole from the human being, and as such is the reality that establishes

242. *Ibid.*, 260. For a full discussion of the background and development of Rahner’s ideas, see G. McCool, “Twentieth Century Scholasticism,” *The Journal of Religion* 58 Supplement (1978): S198–21.

243. See G. McCool, “Karl Rahner and the Christian Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas,” in *Theology and Discovery: Essays in Honour of Karl Rahner, SJ*, ed. W. J. Kelly (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 1980), 63–93. Cf. also the relevant sections of McCool, *Catholic Theology in the Nineteenth Century*, 241–67. An interesting alternative view that Rahner did not really remain within the Thomist tradition is offered by C. Fabro, *La svolta antropologica di Karl Rahner* (Milan: Rusconi, 1974).

244. Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, 215.

a tension with world history. This tension is fundamental to Rahner's theology and, as John O'Donnell says,

Perhaps the key term in Rahner's philosophical anthropology is transcendence. This term indicates that the human being is a dynamic propulsion beyond himself toward the Infinite. Like St Thomas Aquinas, Rahner understands the human subject according to the two faculties of intellect and will. . . . Hence knowledge is a dynamic process, a process in principle without a terminus. For Rahner this implies that knowledge is essentially ordered to Infinite Mystery.²⁴⁵

Revelation then, by virtue of its constantly transcendent goal, always remains a problematic concept. The mysterious horizon of the infinite, though permanently present, is always beyond. Natural revelation always brings an individual to a point of questioning, of awesome wonder as to whether God is seeking communion with the creatures he made. The Christian believer deems the incarnation of Jesus to be the definitive answer to this question.

For Karl Rahner the incarnation is the crux of supernatural revelation: to begin to understand God's disclosure of himself to human beings, we must begin with the hypostatic union.²⁴⁶ The mystery of the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ lies at the heart of the problem of how God relates to the world.²⁴⁷ As Rahner himself says, "The difference between God and the world is

245. J. O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1988), 27–28. Or as Rahner himself puts it, "If God creates something other than himself and thereby creates it as something finite, if God creates spirit which recognises the other as finite through its transcendence and hence in view of its ground, and if therefore, at the same time it differentiates this ground as qualitatively and wholly other from what is merely finite, and as the ineffable and holy Mystery, this already implies a certain disclosure of God as the Infinite Mystery." Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1978), 170.

246. This Rahner sees as foundational as early as his "Current Problems in Christology," in *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, 149–200.

247. "Rahner perceived that at the heart of this problem is the conundrum of how we are to understand the unity of Christ, or in the language of Chalcedon, the unity of the divine and human natures in Christ. Rahner also sees that this problem is not unique to Christology. It also underlies the problem of the doctrine of creation and God's relation to the world." O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 30.

of such a nature that God establishes and is the difference of the world from himself, and for this reason he establishes the closest unity, precisely in the differentiation.”²⁴⁸ On the basis of the hypostatic union, the humanity can be understood as something distinct from the divine Logos only when it is thought of in unity with the Logos. The unity must always constitute the diversity. In the incarnation, God did not give to the world something distinct from himself, but his very self. Just as the humanity of Jesus is the revelation of the divinity, so in the incarnation of Jesus the giver and the gift are one. Later in his theology, this interplay of philosophical and mystical concepts takes its fullest expression in the language of symbol.²⁴⁹ The idea of unity and distinction that underpins the theology of revelation, ecclesiology, grace, and the sacraments, and that is most perfectly expressed in the christological doctrine of the hypostatic union, is effectively explained through the concept of symbol:²⁵⁰

Jesus . . . is the absolute symbol of God in the world, filled as nothing else can be with what is symbolised. He is not merely the presence and revelation of what God is in himself. He is also the expressive presence of what—or rather, who—God wished to be, in free grace, to the world, in such a way, that this divine attitude once expressed, can never be reversed but is and remains final and irreversible.²⁵¹

It is by means of his understanding of revelation as symbolic communication that Rahner avoids the accusation, leveled at Tyrrell, Newman, and others who “dug a ditch” between revelation in Jesus Christ and its subsequent revealing in the church, suggesting that

248. Rahner, *Foundations of Christian Faith*, 62.

249. See Rahner, “The Theology of Symbol,” in *Theological Investigations*, trans. K. Smyth, vol. 4 (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1966), 221–52.

250. The notion of symbol and the part it plays within Rahner’s system is complex and will be discussed more thoroughly as the book develops. An article useful in providing a general overview and orientation can be found in G. Vandervelde, “The Grammar of Grace: Karl Rahner as a Watershed in Contemporary Theology,” *Theological Studies* 49 (1988): 445–59.

251. O’Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 31–32.

there is an ever-new revelation in the church subsequent to that of Christ. Christ is the symbol of the Father and the church of Christ. The church continually shows forth the word—nothing new but a speaking of the completed revelation of Christ through history.²⁵²

This revelation of the word is not merely propositional. It is the word proclaimed by the church, most typically in the sacraments. In seeking to express the plenitude of this revelation, Rahner finds in the church, the mystical body of Christ, the fullness of mystical vitality that allows it to equal the revelation of the living word:

Revelation is not the communication of a definite number of propositions . . . to which additions may conceivably be made at will, or which can suddenly and arbitrarily be limited. Rather is revelation an historical dialogue between God and man in which something happens, and in which the communication (*Mitteilung*) is related to the happening, the divine action (*das Geschehen, das Handeln Gottes*). . . . Revelation is a saving happening, and only then in relation to this a communication of truths.²⁵³

Rahner differs from Tyrrell and the Modernists by rejecting the idea that the church can enjoy the saving reality of revelation in the present moment by somehow transcending, experientially, the original divine message: “The believing Church possesses what she believes: Christ, his Spirit, the earnest of eternal life and its vital

252. Peter Knauer, a German Jesuit cited by O'Donnell, provides an effective gloss on Rahner's theology. Speaking of revelation as a Word-event, he draws together the Rahnerian themes of unity and diversity, symbol and the fullness of revelation being in Christ. Knauer writes, “This being addressed by God in a human word is itself the event of community with God. Therefore the concept ‘Word of God’ in its genuine sense is so to be understood, that it comprehends the entirety of God's saving act and concerns the entire reality of man. Therefore, it is not to be completed through any further divine action, but it itself accomplishes what it says. In fact, salvation consists in being spoken to (Heb 2:3). Therefore the ‘Word of God’ is not speech *about* the love of God to man but it is itself the completion of this love; i.e. a Word-event.” Knauer, *Der Glaube kommt vom Hören* (Frankfurt am Main, 1982), 75, in O'Donnell, *The Mystery of the Triune God*, 24–25.

253. Rahner, “The Development of Dogma,” *Theological Investigations*, vol. 1, 48, in Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, 221–22.

powers. She cannot leave the Word behind in order to grasp this reality. But no more does she possess a word about the thing instead of the thing itself.”²⁵⁴

This is an extremely difficult concept to comprehend, if it can be grasped at all. The reality of revelation in the church is hidden and present, and it is a reality that takes part in its own understanding.²⁵⁵ As Aidan Nichols rightly insists, this aspect of Rahner’s thought is rooted in the mystical theology he had studied so closely. This is a strong theme in his work both pre- and post-Council, and, associated as it is with ecclesiological and liturgical themes, it witnesses to a confluence of ideas that would occupy theology for some years to come. Indeed, more than any other dogmatic theologian, Rahner promotes the paradigm shift that effected the change in the doctrine of revelation that can be seen in a simple comparison between *Dei Filius* and *Dei Verbum*. The understanding of revelation as an extrinsic, propositional, and purely intellectual body of evidence has, by the end of the Second Vatican Council, given way to a far more nuanced and profound concept. Revelation is the self-disclosure of God made to the community, to the human person as a whole, in view of their salvation. Revelation is understood no longer as the simple process of the communication of supernatural knowledge, but as a complex theological nexus that incorporates anthropology, ecclesiology, sacramentology, and soteriology. Only such a combination could begin to help unfold the mysterious relationship that exists between God and his people. With the help of the many and varied theological contributions from the late nineteenth and the twentieth century, such was the conviction reached by the eve of Vatican II. To extend, at the risk of cliché, the metaphor with which this chapter opened, the overtures for change were now to be taken

254. Rahner, “The Development of Dogma,” 50.

255. *Ibid.* See also Nichols, *From Newman to Congar*, 223–24.

up by the symphonic movements of the four Constitutions. There the theological themes of renewal are played out and interconnected within the particular foci of *worship, word, church, and world*.

The Council, Revelation, and the Sacraments

As Thomas O'Meara points out in a useful summary of recent trends in revelation theology, "In short, during the years leading up to Vatican II, revelation was a field which exemplified the theological changes for which this period would become famous, and so it was no chance of the agenda that the crucial debates of the Council's first session centred around *De fontibus revelationis*."²⁵⁶

Indeed, revelation was a topic that remained central beyond the First Session. *Dei Verbum* was not promulgated until 18 November 1965, only twenty days before the close of the Council, which meant that the self-communication of God was, to varying degrees, the focus of debate throughout Vatican II.²⁵⁷ And, while through this "long odyssey" of reformulation a significantly new theology of revelation was defined,²⁵⁸ so too was the hermeneutical key²⁵⁹ to the whole Council. Hence, in introducing his *relatio* on 30 September 1964, Archbishop Florit declared, "Because of its inner importance, as well as the many vicissitudes that it has undergone, the history of the draft of the Constitution on Divine Revelation has fused with the history of the Council into a kind of unity."²⁶⁰

256. T. F. O'Meara, "Toward a Subjective Theology of Revelation," *Theological Studies* 36 (1975): 401–27, 401.

257. Cf. Rino Fisichella's article on the history of the document, Fisichella, "Dei Verbum," in Latourelle and Fisichella, *Dictionary of Fundamental Theology*, 214–18.

258. Latourelle summarises the principal novelties of the Constitution in *Comment Dieu se révèle au monde: Lecture commentée de la Constitution de Vatican II sur la Parole de Dieu* (Québec: Éditions Fides, 1998), 93–99.

259. "Malheureusement, la constitution *Dei verbum*, clé herméneutique de tout le Concile, et probablement son plus beau texte, reste trop peu connue." *Ibid.*, 8.

René Latourelle indicates clearly the nature of the methodological shifts that *Dei Verbum* has engendered, and describes the blue print of theological categories around which the main ideas of the Council are structured:

After the period of panic, deceleration, and stagnation resulting from the Modernist crisis, the Constitution *Dei Verbum* seems like a breath of fresh sea air dispersing a heavy fog. The transition to a personalist, historical and christocentric conception of revelation amounts to a kind of Copernican revolution, compared with the extrinsicist, atemporal, and notional approach which prevailed until the 1950's.²⁶¹

Later in the same article, Latourelle spells out the concrete expression of these changes in understanding. Clearly, the Fathers regard the object and nature of the self-manifestation of God as communion.²⁶² The object is the Blessed Trinity,²⁶³ whose being is reflected in the nature of an economy of personal encounter through word, dialogue, and gesture. This essentially personalist dimension to God's self-disclosure is determined by his Trinitarian life—especially as that is expressed through Jesus Christ. Aptly quoting the First Letter of St. John, the bishops assert their motive: "That you may also have fellowship with us, and that our fellowship may be with the Father and with his son Jesus Christ."²⁶⁴ The Son of God is the last word in God's self-communication. He is its fulfilment and completion,

260. Quoted in J. Ratzinger, "Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation: Origin and Background," in Vorgrimler, *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, vol. 3, 155.

261. R. Latourelle, "Dei Verbum," 218. Avery Dulles claims something similar when he says, "Revelation, I would say, is regarded as a real and efficacious self communication of God, the transcendent mystery, to the believing community. The deeper insights of revelatory knowledge are imparted, not in the first instance through propositional discourse, but through participation in the life and worship of the Church." Dulles, *The Craft of Theology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Crossroad, 1995), 18.

262. *DV*, 2, [*972].

263. "This revelation appears in its trinitarian dimension. The description of the object of revelation in its threefold personalist, trinitarian, and christocentric nature gives the text a richness and resonance that contrast with the formulation of Vatican I which spoke of revelation without any explicit and direct mention of Christ." Latourelle, "Dei Verbum," 219.

definitively expressed in the *gesta-verba* of history and the incarnation. Such an invitation to communion is, in itself, an invitation to conversation and friendship, the beginning of an intimate dialogue between the wise and good God and human beings who respond in faith.²⁶⁵ Because of its fundamentally anthropological form, this saving action²⁶⁶ is indescribable outside the human experiences which Scripture and tradition have verified, and this explains the preference given to biblical categories over scholastic formulations.²⁶⁷

These elements, which Latourelle has emphasized as the major points of departure in the understanding of revelation in *Dei Verbum*, are likewise apparent in the other dogmatic constitutions, where they underpin the particular endeavor of each. By drawing out these same issues with reference to the liturgy and to the church, the Council not only showed a congruency and consistency in its teaching, but intimated the need to integrate more successfully the various theological disciplines in order that the truths of salvation be understood in a more nuanced and holistic way.²⁶⁸ To this end, it

264. *DV*, 1. Cf. 1 John 1:3 [*971–72]. “God revealed himself, then, in order to invite human beings to a communion of divine life and with God “to share in the divine nature.” Latourelle, “*Dei Verbum*,” 220.

265. “This is the first time that a document of the extraordinary magisterium has described the actual expression of the economy of revelation—God addresses human beings, creatures of flesh and mind located in time, and communicates with them by means of history and the Incarnation. This is the importance of the *gesta-verba* pairing within the text. Events and interpretation, works and words, form and organic indissoluble whole—an economy which reaches its fullness in Christ.” Latourelle, “*Dei Verbum*,” 220.

266. “In contradistinction to Vatican I, which spoke first of God’s revelation through creation, then of the historical revelation, Vatican II reversed the perspective and began with the personal revelation of God and salvation in Jesus Christ. . . . Having affirmed the fact of revelation, the Council stated that it was essentially a divine initiative and a pure act of grace like all the rest of the work of salvation: ‘We announce to you the eternal life which was with the Father, and has appeared to us.’ (*Dei Verbum* 1).” *Ibid.*, 218–19.

267. “To define the object of revelation, the Council makes generous use of biblical categories, especially those of Paul. Instead of speaking like Vatican I, of the decrees of the divine will, it uses the Pauline term ‘mystery’ (*sacramentum*). ‘God chose to reveal himself and to make known to us the hidden purpose (*sacramentum*) of his will. (*Dei Verbum*, 2; Eph. 1:9).” *Ibid.*, 220.

268. This, in essence, is behind the prescription of *SC*, 16 [*824–*25]: “The study of sacred liturgy is to be ranked among the compulsory and major courses in seminaries and religious houses of

is helpful to map out in the other documents some implications of the theological categories that Latourelle recognized as somewhat novel in *Dei Verbum*. In essence, the values of the liturgical renewal evidenced by *Sacrosanctum Concilium* echo the shifts in revelation theology that *Dei Verbum* was gradually defining.

The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy had “several aims in view,”²⁶⁹ yet the primary objective was to foster that communion in Christ, the sharing of which is a participation in the divine life.²⁷⁰ If increased vigor for the Christian life and the adaptation of reformable aspects of the liturgy to modern times seem a priority, these too are undertaken to effect a deeper sense of communion in the church.²⁷¹ Exactly for this reason, the reform gave a privileged place to an understanding of participation.²⁷² Of paramount importance for a correct understanding of the liturgy was the personalist and anthropological categories that reflection on the nature of revelation had engendered. These dimensions, particularly pertinent to

study; in theological faculties it is to rank among the principal courses. It is to be taught under its theological, historical, spiritual, pastoral, and juridical aspects. Moreover, other professors, while striving to expound the mystery of Christ and the history of salvation from the angle proper to each of their own subjects, must nevertheless do so in a way which will clearly bring out the connection between their subjects and the liturgy.” (*Disciplina de sacra liturgia in seminariis et studiorum domibus religiosis inter disciplinas necessarias et potiores, in facultatibus autem theologicis inter disciplinas principales est habenda, et sub aspectu cum theologico et historico, tum spirituali, pastorali et iuridico tradenda. Curent insuper aliarum disciplinarum magistri, imprimis theologiae dogmaticae, sacrae scripturae, theologiae spiritualis et pastoralis ita, ex intrinsicis exigentiis proprii uniuscuiusque obiecti, mysterium Christi et historiam salutis excolere, ut exinde earum connexio cum liturgia et unitas sacerdotalis institutionis aperte clarescant.*)

269. Remarks here are based on the excellent and concise overview of the liturgical reform of *SC* given in Vaillancourt, *Toward a Renewal of Sacramental Theology*, especially 1–35. This is an English trans. of *Vers un Renouveau de la théologie sacramentaire* (Montreal: La Corporation des Éditions Fides, 1977).

270. *SC*, 1 [*820].

271. The liturgy is to be that which “daily builds up those who are within into a holy temple of the Lord, into a dwelling place for God in the Spirit, to the measure and fullness of Christ” (*Unde, cum liturgia eos qui intus sunt cotidie aedificet in templum sanctum in Domino, in habitaculum Dei in Spiritu, usque ad mensuram aetatis plenitudinis Christi*). *SC*, 2 [*820].

272. *Ibid.*, 14, 48 [*824, *830].

liturgical celebration, are fundamental to an understanding of its renewal. Adopting the same quotation from the Letter to the Hebrews as *Dei Verbum*, the Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy identifies as its first general principle of restoration and reform the rooting of every aspect of God's self-communication in the words and actions of Jesus Christ.²⁷³ Hence the fundamental premise of the liturgical reform is the restoration of an understanding of the liturgy as that event that effects the fulfillment of the human person through encounter with, and communion in, Christ.²⁷⁴ As with revelation,²⁷⁵ so the ultimate object of the liturgy is communion with God.

An interesting example may be given of how notions of revelation founded on a christological anthropology are fundamental to the reshaping of liturgy. Paul Post points to the significance of *Dei Verbum*, 13 (with footnote 11)²⁷⁶ in a "diagnosis of the ritual-liturgical

273. *Ibid.*, 5 [*821]; *DV*, 4 [*972].

274. "Thus by baptism men are plunged into the paschal mystery of Christ: they die with Him, and are buried with him, and rise with Him; they receive the spirit of adoption as sons 'in which we cry Abba, Father' (Rom 8:15), and thus become true adorers whom the Father seeks. In like manner, as often as they eat the supper of the Lord they proclaim the death of the Lord until he comes." (Sic per baptismum homines paschali Christi mysterio inseruntur: commortui, conscripti, conresuscitati; spiritum accipiunt adoptionis filiorum, "in quo clamamus: abba, Pater" (Rm 8, 15), et ita fiunt veri adoratores, quos Pater quaerit.) *SC*, 6 [*821].

275. *DV*, 2 [*972].

276. "Hence, in sacred Scripture, without prejudice to God's truth and holiness, the marvellous 'condescension' of eternal wisdom is plain to be seen 'that we may come to know the ineffable loving-kindness of God and see for ourselves how far he has gone in adapting his language with thoughtful concern for our nature.' (St. John Chrysostom, *In Gen.* 3, 8 [hom.17, 1]: *PG* 53, 134. *Attemperatio* corresponds to the Greek *synkatábasis*.) Indeed the words of God, expressed in the words of men, are in every way like human language, just as the Word of the eternal Father, when he took on himself the flesh of human weakness, became like men." (In sacra scriptura ergo manifestatur, salva semper Dei veritate et sanctitate, aeternae sapientiae admirabilis *condescensio* "ut discamus ineffabilem Dei benignitatem, et quanta sermonis attemperazione usus sit, nostrae naturae providentiam et curam habens." Dei enim verba, humanis linguis expressa, humano sermone assimilata facta sunt, sicut olim aeterni Patris Verbum, humanae infirmitatis assumpta carne, hominibus simile factum est.) The English translation of *DV*, 13, used here is in A. Flannery, ed., *Vatican Council II: The Conciliar and Post-Conciliar Documents*, vol. 1 (Dublin: Dominican, 1987), 758. Latin orig. in N. Tanner, ed., *Decrees of the Ecumenical Councils*, vol. 2: *Trent-Vatican II* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1990), 977.

environment” as an anthropological movement between God and humanity centred on Christ:

Here we touch on the double movement of *katabasis* and *anabasis* for which we can use the principle of the *synkatabasis*, a telling, though little known patristic term from the Vatican II documents. The term was coined by John Chrysostom and is really untranslatable. It is therefore, the only time that the Vatican II documents do not instantly have a Latin translation of Greek heritage, but leave the Greek term unchanged. Literally, the term can be translated as “go down with someone to the place where he or she is staying.” This attitude is attributed to God and may therefore be referred to as “God’s humaneness.” Liturgy is inextricably linked to the anthropological, ritual and cultural environment. It is not that a divine matter is geared to or handed over to purely human matters or categories. . . . No, it is cherishing the “gentle kindness of God”: God turns to his people by using means that are accessible and suitable. The diagnosis of that environment now puts the sacramentality of our environment on the line.²⁷⁷

It is the economy of revelation that determines the way in which the Council understands both the essence and action of the church. Three separate references in both *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and *Lumen Gentium* describe the revealing of God, and the salvation inherent in that disclosure, in terms of sacrament. Fundamentally, the three differently nuanced references in the Constitution on the Church make clear that the salvation that consists in union with God cannot exist apart from unity revealed in humanity. Articles 1, 9, and 48 comment in some way on the intimate communion that God brings about by his self-manifestation.²⁷⁸ The same must be said of the three

277. P. Post, “Life Cycle Rituals: A Ritual-Liturgical Perspective,” *Questions Liturgiques/Studies in Liturgy* 83, no. 1 (2002): 25.

278. “And since the Church is in Christ as a sacrament or instrumental sign of intimate union with God and of the unity of all humanity, the council, continuing the teaching of previous councils, intends to declare with greater clarity to the faithful and the entire human race the nature of the Church and its universal mission.” (Cum autem ecclesia sit in Christo veluti sacramentum seu signum et instrumentum intimae cum Deo unionis totiusque generis humani unitatis, naturam missionemque suam universalem, praecedentium conciliorum argumento

occasions on which *Sacrosanctum Concilium* uses this description.²⁷⁹ These texts plainly teach that “the human element becomes the manifestation and revelation of the divine.”²⁸⁰ That is to say, sacrament is to be understood as the instrument of *synkatabasis*.

What this notion of miraculous condescension achieves for sacramentology is an effective restoration of a sense of the intrinsic relation between God, the cosmos, liturgy, and human persons. In this way, the seven sacraments are seen “as uniquely revelatory of the immanent and transcendent God we believe in.”²⁸¹ Therefore, the Fathers note, “the liturgy, ‘through which the work of our redemption is accomplished,’ most of all in the divine sacrifice of the eucharist, is the outstanding means whereby the faithful may express in their lives, and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church.”²⁸² The bishops show great solicitude that the liturgy be an authentic human expression related to life, and that it be fully and actively participatory and effect communion with God: “For all too many, liturgy can still be regarded as a cult of fixed forms, as impenetrable because it is derived from arcane sources and as hard to decipher given its terse phrasings and (often regrettably in

instans, pressius fidelibus suis et mundo universo declarare intendit.) *LG*, 1 [*849]. “God has called together the assembly of those who look to Jesus in faith as the author of salvation and the principle of unity and peace, and has constituted his body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation.” (Deus congregationem eorum qui in Iesum, salutis auctorem et unitatis pacisque principium, credentes aspicunt, convocavit et constituit ecclesiam, ut sit universis et singulis sacramentum visibile huius salutiferae unitatis.) *LG*, 9 [*856]. “Christ, when he was lifted up from the earth, drew all people to himself; rising from the dead, he sent his life-giving Spirit down on his disciples and through him he constituted his body which is the Church as the universal sacrament of salvation.” (Christus quidem exaltatus a terra omnes traxit ad seipsum; resurgens ex mortuis Spiritum suum vivificantem in discipulos immisit et per eum corpus suum quod est ecclesia ut universale salutis sacramentum constituit.) *LG*, 48 [*887].

279. *SC*, 2, 5, 26 [*820, *821, *826]. See Y.-M. Congar, *Un peuple messianique: L'Église sacrement du salut et libération* (Paris: Éditions du Cerf, 1975), 31.

280. Susan Wood, *Sacramental Orders* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2000), 21.

281. K. Irwin, “Liturgical Actio: Sacramentology, Eschatology and Ecology,” *Questions Liturgiques/ Studies in Liturgy* 81, nos. 3–4 (2000): 174.

282. *SC*, 2 [*820].

celebration) its minimalism in human expressiveness and in symbolic engagement.”²⁸³

For the liturgy to achieve its aim, which is above all else the fostering of “full, conscious and active participation,” it requires of sacramental celebrations a dynamism and creativity that express the human desire for self-realization in the divine. This desire comes gradually to completion when the individual comes into communion with Christ through the symbolic *synaxis* of the paschal mystery. In the invitatory dialogue of the *gesta-verba* of Christ, the liturgy actualizes revelation and encourages a response. “For in the liturgy God speaks to His people and Christ is still proclaiming His Gospel. And the people reply to God both by song and prayer.”²⁸⁴ Yet this is no private conversation, as through the mystical communication of the Holy Spirit, Christ “constitutes as his own body those brothers of his who are called together.”²⁸⁵ Hence, the dynamism and creativity that exist between the proclamation of the word of God and its fulfillment as the sacramental expression of the church in the lives of men and women. As Avery Dulles maintains,

Sacrament, as we have been saying, is a sign of grace realising itself. Sacrament has an event character; it is dynamic. The Church becomes Church insofar as the grace of Christ, operative within it, achieves historical tangibility through the actions of the Church as such. The Church becomes an actual event of grace when it appears most concretely as a sacrament—that is, in the actions of the Church as such whereby men are bound together in grace by a visible expression.²⁸⁶

283. Irwin, “Liturgical Actio: Sacramentology, Eschatology and Ecology,” 173.

284. *SC*, 33 [*827].

285. “The same idea reappears in the chapter on eschatology in the *Constitution on the Church*, where we are reminded that the deepest vocation of the Church is fulfilled when her children come together as one family and partake, by way of anticipation, in the liturgy of heavenly glory (LG 51). The implication of these passages is that the Church is neither a mere token nor a mere means; it already possesses in itself, in seminal form, the reality that it signifies and seeks to bring it to maturity.” A. Dulles, “Vatican II and the Church’s Purpose,” *Theology Digest* 32, no. 4 (Winter 1985): 341–52, 346.

286. A. Dulles, *Models of the Church* 2nd ed. (London: Doubleday, 1987), 64.

Even in this brief exposition of the three Dogmatic Constitutions, a consonance in the underlying major themes can be discerned, and, though each document has its particular emphasis, the Council's rediscovery of the meaning and significance of revelation is fundamental to each of them. In the words of Dulles, "These variations notwithstanding, one may distil from the Council documents as a whole a rather unified body of doctrine which addresses our question."²⁸⁷

The question is one of a liturgy that arises from the unification of the realities of revelation and salvation and that can be recognised as their theological source.

The Postconciliar Period

In his article "A New Image of Fundamental Theology," René Latourelle provides a concise and interesting summary of the nature of the discipline and of the church's understanding of revelation at the end of the Second Vatican Council. For him, this point marks the completion of the "phase of expansion"²⁸⁸ that the nascent subject, freed from its manualistic and apologetic past, had experienced. Fundamental theology at the close of the Council was a vibrant but somewhat unwieldy subject that lacked consolidation and internal organization, and had not yet achieved universal recognition.²⁸⁹ Having traced the development of many of the themes that made up the new interests of this topic, it is possible to see how they came to a confluence in the years just after the Council, and how this became

287. A. Dulles, "Vatican II and the Church's Purpose," 350.

288. R. Latourelle, "A New Image of Fundamental Theology," in *Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology*, ed. R. Latourelle and G. O'Collins (New York: Paulist, 1982), 37–58, 42.

289. R. Latourelle, "Absence and Presence of Fundamental Theology at Vatican II," in *Vatican II Assessment and Perspectives*, ed. R. Latourelle, vol. 3 (New York: Paulist, 1989), 378–415.

a critical time for the discipline. The meeting of these themes at and around the Council accounts for the relatively sudden emergence of fundamental theology as a distinct discipline. However, this coming to birth in the climate of theological buoyancy that Vatican II had engendered meant that, in the years that immediately followed, the subject was additionally vulnerable.²⁹⁰ The great convergence of theological themes that has been seen as a feature of the Council bordered dangerously on a “sacred pantology,”²⁹¹ in which the specificity of the individual theological discipline was no longer respected. Another and simultaneous tendency that affected the security of the subject was the compartmentalization of the study of revelation into other disciplines such as Christology, biblical exegesis, and hermeneutics. Both these movements contributed to the theologians’ need to search for the focal point of revelation studies, which explains why Latourelle aptly names the postconciliar period the “Phase of Focusing.”

Such a period of sustained centering, however, was not a task peculiar to fundamental theology. Developments in understanding the foundations of revelation and faith had their consequences for dogmatics too. As Raymond Vaillancourt says of the sacramental theology of this period,

We have been seeing how the realities—Christ, the Church, and man—which form the basis of the sacramental system are the ones that have profited most from the conciliar renewal. So true is this that the coherence with the rest of Christian thought which sacramental theology had earlier acquired has now been extensively undermined, and this at the level both of vocabulary and of approach and content.

290. That is additional to the vulnerability that Latourelle points out when he describes the “insecurity” that is the very nature of the subject. Cf. R. Latourelle, “A New Image for Fundamental Theology,” in R. Latourelle and G. O’Collins, eds., *Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology*, 37.

291. R. Latourelle, “A New Image for Fundamental Theology,” in Latourelle and O’Collins, *Problems and Perspectives of Fundamental Theology*, 51.

The present task of the theologians is to give sacramental theology a new coherence in relation to and as part of the Christian mystery.²⁹²

The postconciliar period is one in which the fruits of the previous theological expansion have to be appropriated. New discoveries have to be systematized and made intelligible, and, when a degree of focus has been achieved, the way in which these new insights affect the relationship between one theological discipline and another can be discussed. It is to such a discussion that this book is oriented.

In subsequent chapters, and by way of an examination of the work of four theologians, the effects of a transformed understanding of revelation on the liturgical celebration of the sacraments will be discussed. To this end, it was thought appropriate to examine authors who, while all postconciliar, vary both chronologically and in theological discipline. In his article “Liturgy and Fundamental Theology: Frameworks for a Dialogue,” Jeremy Driscoll describes his particular enterprise when he says,

In many ways much of the work which can make a dialogue between the two disciplines fruitful has already been done. In part what I want to do here is draw the attention of liturgists to Fundamental Theology and of fundamental theologians to Liturgical Theology. I would like to develop suggestions for both disciplines from work that has already been done. The importance of the dialogue presents a challenge in two directions.²⁹³

By examining the work of René Latourelle, Avery Dulles, Salvatore Marsili, and Gustave Martelet, it is hoped that this study will respond to the two-way challenge that Driscoll mentions.

292. Vaillancourt, *Toward a Renewal of Sacramental Theology*, 67.

293. J. Driscoll, *Theology at the Eucharistic Table* (Leominster, UK: Gracewing, 2003), 100.