



THE LAST BATTLE OF GARRIGOU-LAGRANGE

Fr. Albert, O.P.

On October 11, 1962, Pope John XXIII pronounced in his discourse inaugurating the Second Vatican Council these words so heavy with consequences:

Our duty is not only to guard this precious treasure [of the doctrine of the faith], as if we were concerned only with antiquity, but earnestly and fearlessly to dedicate ourselves to the work our age demands of us....The salient point of this Council is not, therefore, a discussion of one article or another of the fundamental doctrine of the Church which has been repeatedly taught by the Fathers and by ancient and modern theologians, and which is presumed to be well known and familiar to all. For this a Council was not needed. But from renewed, serene, and tranquil adherence to all the teaching of the Church... the Christian, Catholic, and apostolic spirit of the whole world expects a leap forward toward a doctrinal penetration and a formation of consciences....

The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another. And it is the latter that must be taken into consideration-with patience if need be-while weighing everything in the forms and statements of a teaching activity that is predominantly pastoral in character)¹

When he relates this text, Fr. Giuseppe Alberigo, in his History of the Council perceives its importance, for he comments:

This was an important methodological guideline, since it situated the work of the Council Fathers at the heart of the Christian message, while at the same time urging them to present this message to the world in an updated way.²

This, then, is the famous "pastoral character" of the Council which is recognized today as being one of its most important elements. This is the opinion, for example, of G. Ruggieri in an article on the discussion of the schema *Defontibus revelationis* in November 1962, discussion that was the turning point of the whole Council:

1 Translation taken from History of Vatican II, Vol. II, The Formation of the Council's Identity, First Period and Intersession, October 1962-September 1963, edited by Giuseppe Alberigo, English version edited by Joseph A. Komonchak (Maryknoll/LeUven: Orbis! Peeters, 1997), P. 17.

2 *Ibid.*, He adds the immediate reaction of Fr. Chenu, who points out in the discourse of the pope "its strong protest against the pessimists" and "its rebuke of discussions about established doctrines, the truth of which must of course be reasserted, but formulated to meet the needs of the age" (*ibid.*, p. 18). A. Wenger quotes a similar reaction of Jean Guilton, noted French writer and friend of Paul VI: "As for the feeling of Jean Guilton, M. Pelissier had reported it in *La Croix* of October 14-15, 1962. 'This discourse,' said M. Guilton, 'has an historical importance. It indicates the axis of the Council and fixes, perhaps not its matter, but at least its form.' How is that? 'The substance of the ancient doctrine of the deposit of faith is one thing, and the way in which it is presented is another.' M. Guilton discerned in this passage a secret relationship with his own thought formulated some time before the Council in an interview given to *La Croix*: 'There is,' he said, 'an effort of language to be made. Language isn't truth, but it envelops the truth. It is necessary to ask ourselves whether, in the habitual, usual, traditional language by which we express the eternal truths, there aren't historical elements which shock needlessly, that scandalize painfully, that alienate durably.' And he added: 'These thoughts are also those of Cardinal Bea.'" A. Wenger, *Vatican II: Premire session* (Paris, 1963), pp. 48-50.

The principal point at stake during the debate on the document *Defontibus* wasn't this or that aspect of the relations between Scripture and tradition, or the interpretation of Scripture, its inerrancy, historicity, etc., but the character of doctrine itself in the Church, that is to say, using the terms of Pope Roncalli, its "pastorality."³

The purpose of this present article is to present a text, or rather a series of texts, of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance that treat precisely of this idea that one can, or even one must, "re clothe"⁴ the truths of the faith with a language that is acceptable to modern man, idea that was at the basis of the *aggiornamento* that took place at Vatican II. The first of these texts is the famous article: "The New Theology: Where Is It Going?" which appeared in the review *Angelicum* in 1946, and was followed by seven others in the same review where Fr. Garrigou defended himself against attacks provoked by this first article.

We will see: **1)** the history of the first article: its origin and the story of the controversy it sparked; **2)** the substance of the ensuing debate, which concerns precisely this question of the "pastorality" of doctrine; and **3)** finally, a summary conclusion of the debate and the consequences of the defeat suffered at the Council of the position defended by Garrigou-Lagrance in these articles.



The "Atomic Bomb" of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance

In the period just after the end of World War II in the Church in France there appeared a progressivist movement more and more openly opposed to the official magisterium in Rome. With the growth of the audaciousness of the reformers, a confrontation became inevitable: it will finally happen with the publication of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance's article.

The incident that led to this outbreak of open war was an article published in April 1946 by Fr. Danielou (whom Paul VI later created cardinal) in *Les Etudes*, the review of the French Jesuits. It contains, indeed, some very daring statements. Modernism, according to Fr. Danielou, had proposed bad solutions to real problems that must still be dealt with, in particular the problem of the gap between the modern world and the Church: and in order to resolve these problems it is necessary to finish once and for all with the "rigidity" caused by the reaction against Modernism which paralyzes everything. He writes:

The feeling of a rupture between theology and life was experienced in an acute way not long ago by the generation in which was born the movement that was called Modernism. As in all religious crises, what was questionable about Modernism was not the problem it raised but the solution it gave to it. For this problem was certainly

³ Giuseppe Ruggieri, "La discussione sullo schema Constitutionis dogmaticae *Defontibus* revelationis," in the book edited by Etienne Fouilloux, *Vatican II commence...: Approches Francophones* (Leuven, 1993), P. 315

⁴ The key phrase in the discourse of John XXIII says, in fact, in the original Italian, that it is a matter of changing, not the substance of Catholic doctrine but simply: "la formu1azione del suo rivestimentci-the formulation of its re clothing."

“These two abysses, historicity and subjectivity... oblige theological thought, therefore, to dilate itself. It is very clear, that Scholastic theology is foreign to these categories. Its world is the immobile world of Greek thought in which its mission was to incarnate the Christian message.... it leaves no room for history...it is ignorant of the dramatic world of persons, of concrete universals that transcend all essences... .Now theology has begun to align itself to these dimensions of modern thought.”

-Fr. Danielou

which, he says, must “dilate itself” “by contact with modern thought.” To be noted in particular is the idea of a distinction between truth and its “vestment,” which John XXIII will take up later and that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange will call the fundamental error of the new theology.

real.... By its very excesses, as is often the case, [Modernism] impeded, rather than helped, the renewal of religious thought. Instead of a renewal, it brought on a stiffening. Before the danger of agnosticism, neo-Thomism displayed a theological rationalism. Moreover, the excesses of the critics, of Loisy in particular, created around Biblical studies an atmosphere of suspicion that only the recent encyclical (*Divino afflante Spiritu*) has finally begun to dissipate. Now one must say it, this atmosphere of fear, this perpetual danger of denunciation, is paralysing the work of Christian researchers; several men who are the honour of the Church since the beginning of this century have been, during their lives, more or less under suspicion, and the so regrettable misunderstanding between the Christian intellectual elite and the hierarchy is far from being totally resolved.

To tell the truth, this provisional severity was necessary. It was a matter of warding off the dangers created by Modernism. Neo Thomism and the Biblical Commission were these safety railings.⁵

But it is very clear that safety railings are not answers. I will quote here again a phrase of Father de Montcheuil: “Modernism will not be eliminated as long as satisfaction will not have been given in theological methods to the exigencies from which Modernism was born.”... Theology will be living only if it responds to these aspirations.

After having explained the efforts to respond to this need by a living theology in exegesis, patrology and liturgy, he treats of speculative theology,

⁵ This phrase expresses the same thought that Cardinal Ratzinger, Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, will enounce 50 years later in his introduction to a document on the magisterium and theologians published by his congregation in 1990: “Here [in the document he is prefacing] it is affirmed—perhaps for the first time so clearly—that there are some decisions of the magisterium that don’t constitute the last word on a particular subject as such, but a substantial encouragement with regard to the question, and above all an expression of pastoral prudence, a sort of temporary measure. Their substance remains valid, but the details upon which the circumstances of time exercised an influence can need ulterior rectifications. In regard to this, one can think of the declarations of the popes in the last century on religious liberty, as well as the anti-modernist measures at the beginning of this century, in particular the decisions of the Biblical Commission at that time. As a cry of alarm in the face of hasty and superficial adaptations they remain fully justified; a personality like Johann Baptist Metz has said, for example, that the anti-modernist decisions of the Church rendered him the great service of preserving him from sinking into the liberal- bourgeois world. But in the details relative to their content, they have been left behind, after having accomplished their pastoral duty at a precise moment.” *L’Osservatore Romano en Langue Francaise*, 10 July 1990, p. 9. At the beginning of this same text he says, speaking of the period before the Council: “The liturgical, biblical, and ecumenical movements, as well as a strong Marian movement, created a new cultural climate which gave birth to a new theology that brought forth its fruits for the whole Church at the Second Vatican Council.” *Ibid*, p. 1. The usage of the precise term “new theology” by the Cardinal is certainly voluntary. As for the “strong Marian movement,” he would have more accurately called it “a strong anti-Marian movement” if he is referring to anything that “gave birth to the new theology” (cf. for example, Yves Congar’s complaints about “mariolatry” in his journal of the Council).

If present theological thought roots itself once more in the solid and nourishing soil of the Bible, the Fathers, and liturgy, still, in order to be a living theology, it will also have to enrich itself by contact with contemporary thought. It is the proper function of the theologian to pass, like the angels on Jacob's ladder, between eternity and time and to weave between them links that are always new. Now the human universe that Nietzsche, Dostoevsky and Kierkegaard have revealed to us, the material universe that opens to our imaginations the depths of the history of the earth and outer space, oblige theological thought to dilate itself according to their measure. And the temptation here would be the laziness that makes us take the vestment of truth for the truth itself, and because the words of Christ do not pass away, would persuade us to dispense ourselves from modifying the forms in which we must express them.

Consequently, explains Fr. Danielou, theological thought can no longer restrict itself to Scholasticism, which is immobile and doesn't take into account the two principal aspects of modern thought: historicity and subjectivity. He cites, as an example of what should be done, the work of Teilhard de Chardin.

These two abysses, historicity and subjectivity., oblige theological thought, therefore, to dilate itself. It is very clear, in fact, that Scholastic theology is foreign to these categories. Its world is the immobile world of Greek thought in which its mission was to incarnate the Christian message. This conception retains a permanent and always valid truth in so far, at least, as it consists in affirming that the decision of the liberty of man or the transformation he accomplishes of his conditions of life are not an absolute beginning by which he creates himself, but a response to a vocation from God of which the world of essences is the expression. Nevertheless, it leaves no room for history. And, at the same time, by putting reality more in essences than in real subjects, it is ignorant of the dramatic world of persons, of concrete universals that transcend all essences and are distinguished only by existence, that is, no longer according to what is intelligible and intellection, but according to value and love, or hate.

Now theology has begun to align itself to these dimensions of modern thought. And first of all in what concerns the sense of history. This is the service rendered here by Fr. Teilhard de Chardin by audaciously tackling the problem and endeavouring to think Christianity while taking into account the perspectives opened up by evolution. Even if one or the other of his views appears contestable, still his work was a ferment, hidden but active, whose influence on the theology of our times was considerable. And the great outlines of his system, according to which history progressively rises from the world of life to that of thought, and from the world of thought to that of Christ, and which also fits with the views of the Fathers, has now become something undisputed.

The first reaction to this manifesto of Fr. Danielou comes from the Dominicans of Toulouse, who publish a series of articles in the *Revue Thomiste* in order to defend Scholasticism. The adversary that the innovators are truly worried about, however, is Rome, and so, as a precautionary measure, the Jesuits at the Gregorian do not put in circulation the issue containing the article.⁶ The pope, nevertheless, soon hears about it, and the historian Etienne Fouilloux even poses the question of whether the article "could have incited Pius XII to intervene and to make Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange intervene."⁷

The plot thickens when, in May, the Archbishop of Toulouse, Cardinal Saliege,

6 Information furnished by the journal of Congar, cited by Etienne Fouilloux, *Une Eglise en quête de liberté: La pensée catholique française entre modernisme et Vatican II (1914-1962)* (Paris: Desclée de Brouwer, 1998), p. 280.

7 Etienne Fouilloux, *Les catholiques et l'unité chrétienne du XIXe au XXe siècle: Itinéraires européens d'expression française* (Paris: Centurion, 1982), p. 890. He admits, however: "We have no other proof than the chronology and the published texts."

visiting Rome with Bruno de Solages, rector of the Catholic Institute of Toulouse, gives a talk at the French embassy in which he praises the Jesuits of Fourvière and “French Catholic thought”:

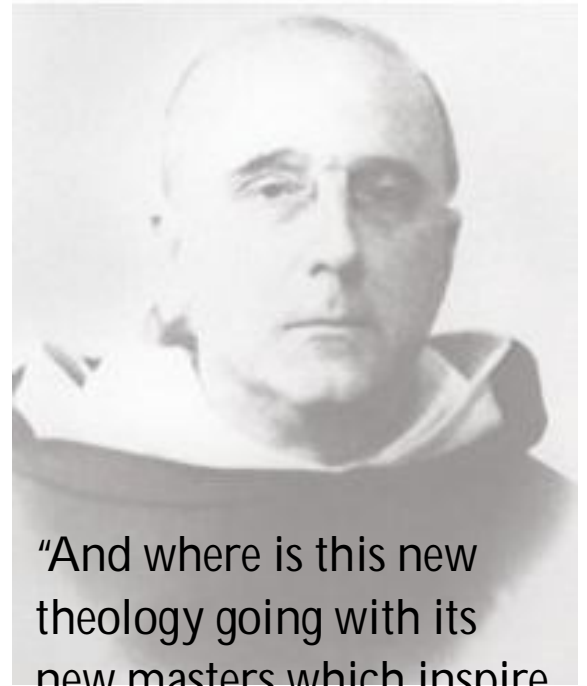
Theology is easily accused of being separated from life, of occupying itself with antique problems and neglecting problems of the present time. It isn't completely true. There are groups of theologians that I know who are doing good work: the group at Lyons, composed of professors of the theological faculty of the Catholic Institute and the scholasticate of Fourvière, the group at Saulchoir. . . .The way of presenting religious truth renders it impossible to assimilate for many minds.... There is an adaptation that must be made which calls for a deepening of doctrine: this is what French Catholic thought is doing.⁸

This talk did not pass unnoticed by the Vatican, as is proved by a letter of Cardinal Saliege to Fr. de Lubac (one of this “group” at Fourvière) where he writes: “Did you know that the nuncio isn't happy that at Rome I cited ‘the scholasticate of Fourvière,’ whose doctrine he claims is questionable?”⁹

The pope finally reacts in two discourses, September 17 and 22, to the general congregations of the Jesuits and the Dominicans respectively.¹⁰ He issues a warning against these novelties:

Too much has been said and in a way that is not sufficiently researched, with regard to the “new theology” which must evolve as everything evolves, and be always in progress without ever fixing itself. If one had to embrace such an opinion, what would become of the immutable doctrines of the Catholic Church, what would become of the unity and stability of the faith?.. .That which in theology has the sound of something entirely new must be examined with precaution and vigilance.

It is at this point that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange takes his pen and writes the article whose effect was so explosive that his Dominican confrères at Rome called it “an atomic bomb.” M. Fouilloux suspects that Fr. Garrigou was even associated in the redaction of the interventions of the pope. What is certain is that, basing himself on these words of the pope, he sounds the alarm against the grave danger represented, in his eyes, by this new theology, which he doesn't hesitate to call by its name:



“And where is this new theology going with its new masters which inspire it? Where is it going, if not in the way of skepticism, fantasy and heresy?.. Where is the new theology going? It is going back to Modernism.”

-Fr. Garrigou Lagrange

8. Fouilloux, Une Eglise, p. 280.

9 Henri de Lubac, Mémoire sur l'occasion de mesecrits, p. 241, quoted by E. Fouilloux. The nuncio he refers to is Msgr. Roncalli, apostolic nuncio in France at that time. One sees by this that the future Pope John XXIII had a first hand knowledge of this whole controversy and thus knew perfectly well what he was talking about in his discourse at the beginning of the Council.

10 Documentation catholique, November 24, 1946, col. 1313- 1324. Etienne Fouilloux writes that these discourses “were perhaps not sufficiently noted by observers, but retrospectively they would reveal all their meaning some years later when the urgent and solemn warning of Humani Generis took place.” Les catholiques, p. 887. He also underlines their very Thomistic and “pessimistic character” (“it doesn't enlarge the possibilities of adaptation of the message”).

Modernism. Citing the texts of the innovators themselves, he shows the similarity between their doctrine and that condemned by St. Pius X and concludes:

And where is this new theology going with its new masters which inspire it? Where is it going, if not in the way of skepticism, fantasy and heresy?...Where is the new theology going? It is going back to Modernism.¹¹

This shrill cry of alarm is not at all the normal style of this great Dominican, who is usually so calm in his way of speaking, even if he is engaged in controversy. If he cries out like this, it is because he sees a grave danger to which he feels he must draw attention. "It is a strict obligation in conscience," he writes, "for traditional theologians to respond. Otherwise they gravely fail in their duty and will have to answer for it before God."

Fighting against Modernism wasn't anything new for Fr. Garrigou. On the contrary, Louis Jugnet will write in *Itinéraires* just after his death: "All his life, the dear and regretted Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange considered Modernism as the number one danger for the Catholic Church." He quotes as evidence an article in *L'Ami du clerge* (May 7, 1964) in which the author writes of him:

He felt called in conscience to refute Modernism and all its applications. . . . It would be false to say that he was inclined by nature to combat. But he had such a love of truth that he could not see it put in danger without going to battle for it with all his courage and all his talent.

The reaction of his adversaries wasn't long in coming. In the *Bulletin de littérature ecclésiastique* of April- June 1947, Msgr. de Solages writes an article entitled "For the Honour of Theology: The Misinterpretations of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange" in which he accuses him of wielding "Thomism constantly as a sledge hammer to crush his enemies." He declares, in conclusion, that the Dominican "is in the camp of those who had St. Thomas condemned."

He also sends a letter to Cardinal Ottaviani to complain about the article, which he closes a bit pompously by saying: "Moreover, I cannot hide from you, Your Excellency, that articles like that of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, professor at Rome in a pontifical university, singularly damage the prestige of Rome in the circles that create opinion."

Garrigou-Lagrange defends himself:

It is said, apparently, that if we had lived in the thirteenth century we would have condemned Saint Thomas! That presupposes that this or that modern theologian, whose conclusions we cannot accept, is the Saint Thomas of our time. We will see in a century or two what the judgment of history will be about that. At any rate, these two Saint Thomases will hardly agree with each other.¹²

Others respond, in their turn, to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, and thus begins a battle that will continue right up until 1950 when the encyclical *Humani generis* will come down on the side of the Dominican and silence, for a time, his adversaries.

Moreover, the article of Garrigou-Lagrange sparks the outbreak of a war of large-scale proportions. The Dominicans of Toulouse continue their debate with the scholasticate of the Jesuits of Fourvière who respond, in their turn, with the help of

11 "Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, OP, "La nouvelle theologie: ouva-t-elle?" *Angelicum*, XXIII (1946), pp. 134, 143.

12 75.115 mmerite et immutabilite du dogme," *Angelicum*, XXIV (1947), p. 137.

their friends.

“The aggression against Fourvière,” writes M. Fouilloux,

precipitates a bipolarisation: the Jesuits receive the support of men who share their views...or do not resign themselves to capitulate before what Fr. Chenu calls “the totalitarian demands of speculative theology.” Mentor and spokesman for French theology, B. de Solages intervenes again [by exchanging letters with Fr. Nicolas of the *Revue Thomiste*]. In a Catholicism that has not yet accepted a veritable pluralism of theological approaches and methods, it is their right to speak and to exist intellectually that the theologians involved defend. Since Saint-Maximin doesn’t let up.. .the fight becomes general.¹³

Indeed, the fight becomes general, and even world-wide. In Rome, in September 1948, an entire “theology week” is consecrated to the refutation of the theses of the “new theology”; a year later, another similar one takes place in Spain: it is attacked in Great Britain and in the United States. The response of the accused, as usual in such cases, is to pretend that no one adheres to this new heresy: Fr. Congar speaks of a “tarasque,” a mythical animal that no one has ever seen.¹⁴

Etienne Fouilloux underlines the importance of these disputes in which, for the first time since the condemnation of Modernism, those who had Modernist tendencies dared raise up their heads in public and defend themselves:

All these polemics opposed those who held to a “speculative” theology based on Thomism, to which Rome had once more given its support, and those who held to a “positive” theology based on the sources of Revelation or the tradition of the Church, including St. Thomas: theology judged to be more useful in the dialogue with contemporary thought than the new Scholastic Thomism. This debate, which excites and divides not only a restricted group of specialists but many intellectual circles, is the first great theological debate in France since the outlawing of Modernism: it took thirty years of silence and work so that a real pluralism could reappear at this level.

The Crux of the Debate

This brief history suffices to put in their context these articles of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange and show their extreme importance. It is obvious that the question treated in these texts is at the very heart of the crisis that has tormented the Church for over 50 years now: let us try now to understand exactly what they say. We cannot see everything, but we will quote at length several of the most pertinent passages in order to benefit from the light of one of the greatest theologians of the 20th century on a subject that he considered (and rightly, as subsequent history showed) the most important problem of his time.¹⁵ In order to fight against the neo-Modernism that is triumphant today, we need the help of the great veterans like Garrigou-Lagrange who had fought and refuted it at the time of its apparition. If we follow closely this controversy we will learn a lot about how to fight it now in our time.

¹³ *Les catholiques*, p. 891.

¹⁴ *Les catholiques*, pp. 892-893. Louis Jugnet describes this maneuver very well in the article quoted earlier. Speaking of Loisy, who claimed that the Modernism condemned in Pascendi was a construction of Roman syllogistic deductions, he writes: “This procedure has been known since the heresies of the first centuries. Anus, as everyone knows, wasn’t Arian, neither was Nestorius Nestorian. And the jansenists weren’t Jansenists. Why should it surprise us, then, that there were never any Modernists?” *Itinéraires*, September-October, 1964, p. 41.

¹⁵ Let us repeat the affirmation of Louis Jugnet that Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange “all his life, considered Modernism as the number one danger for the Catholic Church... .He felt called in conscience to refute Modernism and all its applications.” *Itinéraires*, Sept.-Oct. 1964, p. 53.

The first article (the "atomic bomb") begins with a quote from Fr. Henri Bouillard, S.J.:

When the mind evolves, an immutable truth cannot be maintained except thanks to a simultaneous and correlative evolution of all its notions, which maintain among themselves the same relation. *A theology that wouldn't be current would be a false theology.*

Now, according to Fr. Bouillard, the notions of the Aristotelian system are no longer current because it has been necessary to renounce the physics of Aristotle. It appears, then, says Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, that the theology of St. Thomas, who uses these notions, is no longer current, and therefore is false.

It is this conclusion (which Fr. Bouillard is careful not to state explicitly, but which follows from his premises) that Garrigou-Lagrange attacks first, recalling the fact that the popes and canon law impose the theology of St. Thomas as mandatory for all theologians. Then he goes to the bottom of the question and refutes the philosophical error contained in the claim of Fr. Bouillard that dogmatic affirmations can remain immutable in their substance, even if one replaces the notions they contain, as long as the same relation which existed between the old notions is maintained:

How can "an *immutable truth*" be maintained if the two notions it unites by the verb is are essentially variable?

An immutable relation is conceivable only if there is something immutable in the two terms that it unites. Otherwise, one might as well say that an iron clamp can immobilise the waves of the sea.

No doubt the two notions that are united in the immutable affirmation are first confused and then distinct, like the notions of nature, person, substance, accident, transubstantiation, real presence, sin, original sin, grace, *etc.* But if in that which is fundamental in them these notions are not immutable, how can the affirmation that unites them by the verb is be immutable? How can we maintain that the real presence of the substance of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist requires transubstantiation if these notions are essentially variable? How can we maintain that original sin in us depends on a voluntary fault of the first man if the notion of original sin is essentially unstable? How can we maintain that the particular judgment after death is irrevocable for eternity if these notions are called to change? And how, finally, can we maintain that all these propositions are immutably true if the very notion of truth must change, and if it is necessary to substitute for the traditional notion of truth (the conformity of our judgment to external reality) the definition proposed these last years by the philosophy of action: the conformity of our judgment with the exigencies of action or the life of man that is constantly evolving?

Fr. Bouillard himself gives an example to illustrate what he means:

The Council of Trent, sess. 6, cap. 7, can. 10, for example, used, in its teaching on justification, the notion of formal cause. Did it not, by that very fact, consecrate this usage and confer to the notion of grace-form a definitive character? *Not at all.* It was certainly not in the intention of the Council to canonize an Aristotelian notion, nor even a theological notion conceived under the influence of Aristotle. It simply wanted to affirm, against the Protestants, that justification is an interior renovation. . . . It utilised for this purpose notions common in the theology of that time. *But one can substitute*

others for them without modifying the sense of its teaching.¹⁶

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange responds:

No doubt the Council did not canonize the Aristotelian notion of form with all its relations to other notions in the Aristotelian system. But it approved it as a *stable human notion*, in the sense in which we all speak of that which formally constitutes something (here, justification). In this sense it speaks of sanctifying grace as distinct from actual grace, saying that it is a supernatural, infused gift that inheres in the soul and by which man is formally justified (Cf. Denzinger, 799, 821).

But how can we maintain the sense of this teaching of the Council of Trent that "sanctifying grace is the formal cause of justification" if "one substitutes another notion for that of formal cause"? I do not say "if one substitutes a verbal equivalent"; I say with Fr. H. Bouillard, "if one substitutes another notion."

If it is *other*, it is no longer that of *formal cause*. Then it is no longer *true* to say with the Council: "sanctifying grace is the formal cause of justification." One must content oneself with saying that grace was conceived of at the time of the Council of Trent as being the formal cause of justification, but today we must conceive of it differently, this past conception is *no longer current* and therefore *it is no longer true*, for a doctrine that is no longer current, it has been said, is a false doctrine.

It will be responded: one can substitute for the notion of formal cause *another equivalent notion*. Here one plays with words (by first insisting on *another* and afterwards on *equivalent*), because it is not simply a matter of verbal equivalence, since it is *another notion*. What becomes of *the very notion of truth*?

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange takes another example of the new notion of truth in a new definition of theology (taken from a writing of Marie-Dominique Chenu, an old student of his, whom he refrains from naming however):

"Theology is nothing but a spirituality or religious experience that has found its intellectual expression.... If theology can help us understand spirituality, spirituality, in turn, will, in many cases, burst our theological categories and oblige us to conceive of other types of theology... To every great spirituality corresponds a great theology." Does that mean that two theologies can be true, even if they contradict each other in their primary theses? One will answer no, if one maintains the traditional definition of truth. One will say yes, if one adopts the new definition of truth conceived, not in relation to being and its immutable laws, but in relation to different religious experiences. That brings us very close to Modernism.¹⁷

In the rest of this first article, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange gives several examples of the consequences of this new theology that are basically the same as those that will be condemned by the encyclical *Humani generis* in 1950 and also by the document *De fide custodiendo* prepared by the theological commission for the Second Vatican Council: errors concerning original sin, the distinction between nature and grace, the incarnation, the Eucharist, *etc.*

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 128.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 131. With regard to this, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange quotes two propositions condemned by the Holy Office in 1924 (DC, Vol. 13, No.283, March28, 1925, pp.771-773): "5. The truth is not found in any particular act of the intellect which is conformed to its object, as the Scholastics say, but truth is always becoming, and consists in the progressive adequation of the intellect and life, that is to say, in a certain perpetual movement by which the intellect evolves and strives to express that which experience brings forth and action requires ; this occurs, however, in such a way that in this whole progression one never arrives at anything definitive or fixed." "12. Even after having received the faith, man must not rest in the dogmas of religion and adhere to them in a fixed and immutable manner, but he must always remain anxious to progress to an ulterior truth, by an evolution that finds new meanings for what he believes and even corrects what he believed before."

On this last point, he quotes a text of one of the innovators about the term transubstantiation:

This word is not without causing problems, just like the expression “original sin.” It corresponds to the way in which Scholastics conceived of this transformation and their conception is inadmissible.¹⁸

After having remarked that the Council of Trent said that this term expresses “*aptissime*” the mystery of the conversion accomplished at Mass, Fr. Garrigou quotes again from the same text:

“In the perspective of the Scholastics where the reality of a thing is ‘the substance,’ the thing cannot really change unless the substance changes...by transubstantiation. In our present perspective...when, in virtue of the offering made of it according to the rite established by Christ, the bread and the wine have become the efficacious symbol of the sacrifice of Christ, and, consequently, of his spiritual presence, their religious being has changed.... That is what we can designate by transubstantiation.”

Fr. Garrigou comments:

It is clear that this is no longer the transubstantiation defined by the Council of Trent: “*conversio totius substantiae panis in Corpus et totius substantiae vini in Sanguinem, manentibus dumtaxat speciebus panis et vini*” (Denz. 884). It is obvious that the sense of the Council is not maintained by the introduction of these new notions. The bread and wine have become merely “the efficacious symbol of the spiritual presence of Christ.” That brings us very close to the modernist position that does not affirm the real presence of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist, but just says from a practical and religious point of view: act towards the Eucharist as you would act towards the humanity of Christ.

And then he sums up his criticism saying:

[The faith] is reduced to constantly varying opinions that no longer have any value. What remains of the word of God given to the world for the salvation of souls?¹⁹

In conclusion he underlines the fact that at bottom it is a question of the definition of truth itself²⁰:

Where is the new theology going? It is going back to Modernism because it has accepted the proposition that was made to it: that of substituting for the traditional definition of truth—*ad tequatio rei et intellectus*²¹—as if it were chimerical, the subjective definition: *adequatio realis mentis et vitae*....

The truth is no longer the conformity of the judgment with external reality and its immutable laws, but the conformity of the judgment with the exigencies of action and human life which is constantly evolving. In place of the philosophy of being or ontology is put the philosophy of action that defines truth no longer in function of being, but of action.

Thus we return to the Modernist position: “*Veritas non est immutabilis plus quam ipse homo, quippe quae cum ipso, in ipso et per ipsum evolvitur*”²² (Denz. 2058). Also, Pius X used to say of the Modernists “*ietermam veritatis*

18 *Ibid.*, pp. 140-141.

19 *Ibid.*, p. 137.

20 In this regard he quotes a theologian who writes: “The debate is centered, indeed, on the very notion of truth and, without realizing it, one returns to Modernism *Ibid.*, p. 142.

21 “The conformity between the thing and the intellect.”

22 “Truth is no more immutable than man himself, inasmuch as it evolves with him, in him and through him.”

notionem pervertunt” (Denz. 2080) ²³

The controversy that followed the publication of this article gives Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange the occasion to supply several useful explanations in responding to the objections made to him by his adversaries. Let us see some of them that are related to this central question of the new notion of truth.

In the second article of the series of eight that he wrote during this controversy, Fr. Garrigou attacks, first of all, M. Blondel. We will just cite his response to the criticism about Blondel’s new definition of truth:

Our criticism remains: can one call “chimerical” the traditional definition, and must we “substitute” for it another: the conformity of the mind with the exigencies of life and action?...

The traditional definition of truth according to the conformity to reality and to its immutable laws is commonly accepted for the truth of the first principles, for the conclusion of the proofs of the existence of God,²⁴ for the affirmation of the fact of revelation and the conclusive force of miracles, for the truth of revealed dogmas.²⁵ If this traditional definition of truth is declared “chimerical” and if one must “substitute” another one for it, what value do the conciliar definitions that presuppose it have? Must one be satisfied for all these truths with the conformity of the mind or the judgment with the exigencies of life and human action that are always evolving?

There is then a very important section entitled “The Immutability of Dogmatic Formulas” that leads us to the heart of the whole debate.²⁶ It begins with a quote of Msgr. de Solages, who writes to defend Fr. Bouillard:

“[Fr. Bouillard] does not in any way affirm this monstrosity that a theology that was true at any given moment becomes objectively false ‘when the mind evolves,’ but that it would be *subjectively false*, that is to say, *interpreted in a false sense* by a mind that would no longer give the same sense to the various notions used by this theology.”

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange responds that the statements of Fr. Bouillard are not so anodyne as that:

I reply: If Fr. Bouillard didn’t want to say anything but that, he expressed himself very badly in a very grave matter where it is necessary to be very careful about the correctness of the terms one uses. Moreover, that would end up just stating the obvious: a theology that is no longer current is badly understood by those who don’t comprehend its notions. In reality, Fr. Bouillard, page 22, says: “In order that a theology continue to offer a meaning to the mind, and fecundate it and progress with it, it is necessary that it renounce these notions.” He means: as we have renounced the astronomical system of Ptolemy.

In a defense of this position in *Recherches de sciences religieuses*,²⁷ Fr. Bouillard will insist that it is Msgr. de Solages who understood what he meant to

23 *Ibid.*, p. 143. He adds: “This is what our teacher Fr. M. B. Schwalm had foreseen... But many thought Fr. Schwalm was exaggerating...” Similarly, he said earlier that the same lot was likely to befall him: “No doubt it will be said that we are exaggerating...” (p. 134). And in fact, that is just what happened.

24 They do not just have a subjective certitude that is subjectively sufficient, like the Kantian proof of the existence of God, but a certitude that is objectively sufficient by the strength of the argument itself independently of the exigencies of action. (Author’s note)

25 It is affirmed propter auctoritatem Dei revelantis (on the authority of God who reveals) that Jesus is God and not only because we have to comport ourselves towards Him as if He were God. (Author’s note)

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 131-134.

27 Vol. XXXV, April-May 1948, pp. 251-271.

say and not Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance: "If an author is qualified to judge his interpreters, I can say that I recognize precisely my thought in the explanations of Msgr. de Solages."

He does not respond, however, to the arguments of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance that demonstrate the opposite. For in reality, as the Dominican will show, Fr. Bouillard does not just say that it is necessary to change the expression of the same notions so that they might be understood, but that it is necessary to change the notions themselves.

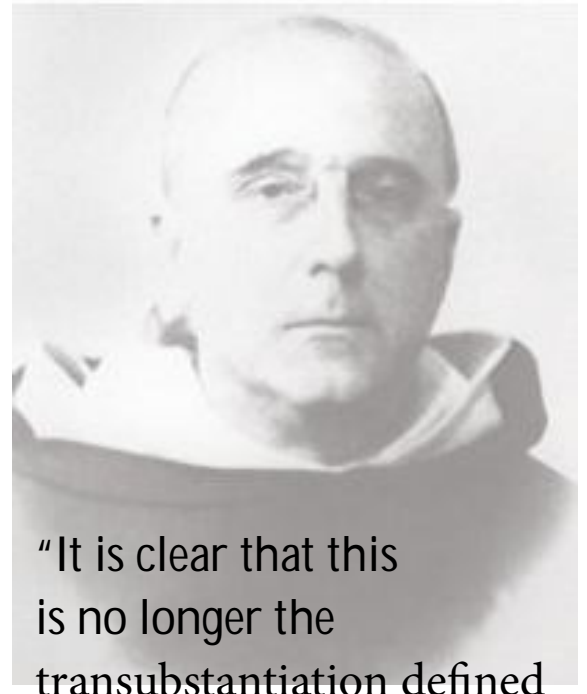
A passage in his article manifests the extent of the confusion in the mind of the Jesuit on this key point. After having affirmed already several times that the notions of dogmatic truths change,²⁸ he attacks Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance for having accused him of saying that these notions are "essentially changing":

But I have never said that the notions are essentially changing. It is perfectly obvious that the various notions to which different theologians have recourse in order to express the same truth are equivalent notions, otherwise they would not be apt to sustain the same affirmation.

Nevertheless he goes on immediately to write (the italics are ours):

I wrote: "When the spirit evolves, an immutable truth is not maintained except thanks to a simultaneous and correlative *evolution of all the notions*, maintaining between them the same relation." This relation is not the verb "is"... but what St. Thomas calls the *proportio*, the foundation of analogy. It refers precisely to the invariable element common to *the diverse notions* used by theologians in order to express the same truth... .Declare that the same affirmation can subsist through *notions that evolve* is to declare at the same time that through *the change on the surface*, a profound element, the essential element, remains. In other words, the reality that is aimed at always remains the same.²⁹

All the elasticity of a modern mind was required to be able to write these lines which seem, at the beginning, to recognize the truth at the bottom of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance's criticism (saying that, obviously, the notions must be "equivalent" notions, otherwise



"It is clear that this is no longer the transubstantiation defined by the Council of Trent....

It is obvious that the sense of the Council is not maintained by the introduction of these new notions. The bread and wine have become merely 'the efficacious symbol of the spiritual presence of Christ.' That brings us very close to the modernist position that does not affirm the real presence of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist...."

—Fr. Garrigou Lagrange

²⁸ For example, on p. 253 he writes: "If the notions...change with time, the affirmations they contain remain."

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 254-255

they would not be apt to sustain the same affirmation) and then reaffirming, immediately after, that “an immutable truth” is maintained “thanks to a simultaneous and correlative evolution of all the notions.” Before such intellectual disarray one is tempted to renounce all discussion. We will see what must be thought about this idea that affirmations can be equivalent even if the notions that compose them vary, but let it be clear at least that that is, indeed, what Fr. Bouillard is affirming, even though he writes, at the beginning, here that the notions are equivalent.

In reality, the change that Fr. Bouillard envisages is much deeper than his “authorized interpreter” claims. To prove it, Fr. Garrigou Lagrange returns to the example of formal causality and justification.

He speaks to us of the relativity of the notion of formal cause that “modern thought has abandoned when it gave up Aristotelian physics” (p. 224).

But if one had to give up this notion which is found everywhere in the theology of St. Thomas, this theology would be objectively false, and not only in several of its most important parts, but in its totality, for according to St. Thomas, no nature would then be conceivable, neither that of sensible beings, nor that of angels, nor that of God. One could no longer speak of what constitutes them formally...

And he explains that the solution proposed by Fr. Bouillard in order to conserve the immutable sense of dogmas, while at the same time renouncing “obsolete” notions like “formal cause,” is not acceptable because it is based on a false notion of analogy:

How can one maintain the meaning of this teaching of the Council: “sanctifying grace is the formal cause of justification” if one must renounce the notion of formal cause and if one substitutes for it another, even if it is analogous to it (the uncreated gift of the Holy Ghost is analogous to the created gift,³⁰ nevertheless one cannot say that habitual grace is the uncreated gift of God).

If one substitutes *another notion* for the one used by the Council, the meaning of the affirmation is no longer the same. One must settle for saying: grace was conceived of as the formal cause of justification at the time of the Council of Trent, but today we must conceive of it differently. . . This former conception is no longer current, and therefore it is no longer true, for a doctrine that is no longer current, it was said, is a false doctrine “that no longer offers a meaning to the mind,” that can “fecundate it and progress with it”; it can no longer be accepted, therefore, as an adolescent can no longer wear the clothes of a child, and as we can no longer accept ancient astronomy.

The third article returns once more to this central question of analogy and goes into it more deeply. Fr. Bouillard, in a response to Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange’s article, claims that the successive notions by which dogmatic truth expresses itself are equivalent and analogous. He writes:

This immutable thing is expressed *differently* according to the system one chooses. That is the law of analogy that no Thomist can ignore. When the same revealed truth is expressed in different systems (Augustinian, Thomistic, Suarezian, etc.), the diverse notions utilised in order to translate it are neither equivocal (otherwise, one wouldn’t be speaking of the same thing), nor univocal (otherwise the systems would be identical), but analogical, that is to say they express in a *different way* the same *reality*.³¹

30 That is, the created gift of sanctifying grace.

31 “ Quoted by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, *ibid.*, p. 218. In fact, he is quoting from an unpublished collective text in which each of the Jesuits accused by the, Dominican’s article defend themselves (cf. Etienne Fouilloux, *Les catholiques*, p.889, n. 96). In the article

Garrigou-Lagrance responds:

There is here, according to us, an abuse of analogy. It is now long ago that we have written on this subject, and we can say that, according to St. Thomas, the notions that are truly analogical refer not to the same realities, but to different realities that are similar according to a certain proportion, for example: the being of God and that of a creature, the being of a created substance and that of accidents. St. Thomas cites also the different manifestations of the health of man by his complexion, his pulse, *etc.*

On the contrary, *different notions* of a same reality can differ only as a confused concept and a distinct concept of the same thing, and in that case they are *univocal*...

He stops here and gravely adds a phrase that is almost prophetic: "The problem must be considered in itself very attentively. If it isn't done today, it will be posed again tomorrow and its gravity is evident." ³²

We find in this passage, in technical, philosophical language, all the difference between the traditional doctrine of the development of dogma, which takes place by the clarification of notions that are less distinct into notions that are univocal with these first notions but more distinct than they are, and the Modernist doctrine, according to which this development takes place by *new* notions which are said to be "analogous" with the first notions. According to the Modernist doctrine, therefore, there will be a real difference between the new doctrine and the old one, to the point where the new doctrine will "correct" the old one.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance comes back again to this central point, speaking again of the example of justification as defined by the Council of Trent:

One cannot keep *the sense* of the Council by substituting for the notion of formal cause another notion said to be equivalent or *analogous*. This would already be *another sense*, since the predicate of the conciliar proposition would no longer be the same....

One objects: it is necessary to conceive it in an analogous and equivalent manner, according to the law of analogy.

There is an abuse of analogy here. Two analogous notions do not express in different ways the same reality, but express realities that are different and similar according to a proportion, for example: the being of God and that of a creature, the being of a created substance and that of an accident, or again this sign of health which is the complexion and this other which is the pulse.

When, on the contrary, two theological notions express differently one same reality, they can be *univocal* if there is no other difference between them than that between what is confused and what is distinct. Thus St. Augustine says that the body of Christ is in the Eucharist, not as a body is in a place, but *spiritualiter*, St. Thomas later says much more distinctly *per modum substantiae*, for he had seen that a substance, even a corporal substance, is completely in the whole and in each of its parts. There where St. Augustine had only a confused concept, St. Thomas has a distinct concept. Similarly, St. Augustine conceives of habitual grace from the psychological and moral point of view, while St. Thomas conceives of it also from a metaphysical point of view or the point of view of being, as an accident, an infused quality that inheres in the soul. But the metaphysical concept was already present in a confused way in St. Augustine; there is just the passage here from the confused to what is distinct for the same notion; there

already quoted in *Recherches de sciences religieuses*, Fr. Bouillard will respond to this third article of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrance and publish in extenso the text quoted here.

32 He then refers the reader to the very important phrase of Vatican I which says: "The sense of sacred dogmas that is always to be preserved is that which Holy Mother Church has once declared and from which one must never deviate under the pretext and in the name of a deeper understanding." (Denz. 1800)

are not two notions that are different and analogous, it is the same notion that has become more explicit and distinct.

In the fifth article of the series³³ Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange comes back yet again to this question:

If the notion of formal cause is obsolete, then the affirmation that is based on this notion is also obsolete. If one must “give up” this notion, it is necessary, whether one wants to or not, to give up as well this assertion, just as we gave up the astronomical hypothesis of Ptolemy that wasn't a true conception, conformed to reality, but merely a practical representation that gave a provisional classification to the phenomena that had been observed up to that time.³⁴

And he adds in a note another prophetic statement:

To give up the notion of formal cause, or of what constitutes a thing formally, would be to give up the notion of essence and the first principles that suppose this notion. It would be to fall into relativism, and the teaching Church herself would fall into it, if it wanted to follow this road which her discernment stops her from taking.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange indicates to us here the philosophical error that is at the basis of the doctrinal crisis which began to enter officially into the Church with the discourse *Gaudet Mater Ecclesiae* on October 11, 1962. Let it be remembered that it was precisely the discovery of the formal cause by Plato and the deepening and correction of his doctrine by his student Aristotle in his *Metaphysics*, that permitted philosophy to emerge from the swamp of materialism where it was floundering.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange continues to pursue his prey:

Fr. H. Bouillard, does he or does he not think that the “notion” of formal cause “remains” after the ruin of what was decrepit in Aristotelian cosmology? . . . Is it a stable philosophical notion approved as such for ever by the superior light of the Council? Or is it not just an hypothesis like those of the positive sciences, accepted provisionally by the Council as long as it will be accepted by philosophy and theology, acceptation that will no longer be valid when this hypothesis, judged as obsolete, will no longer be accepted by philosophers and theologians? In the second case it will be necessary for the Church to accept then provisionally another notion [called analogous], and then the sense of the Council that accepted the first notion will no longer be maintained, since the Church will no longer accept it. But she will make another judgment to accept another notion which will be equally temporary. In this way, the teaching Church will never know exactly what the role of sanctifying grace is in sanctification. This role never varies in itself, but one will be able to know it only in a variable way.³⁵ This role will have been called “formal cause” at a certain epoch and at another epoch it will be designated by “another notion” and not just by words that are equivalent. One must carefully distinguish between the changing of “notions” and the recourse to other equivalent words in order to express the same notion.³⁶

We return, then, to this very important point. Fr. Bouillard, as we saw,

33 “L'immutabilité des vérités définies et le surnaturel,” *Angelicum*, XXV (1948), pp. 285-298, which responds to the article of Fr. Bouillard in *Recherches de sciences religieuses* mentioned earlier. The fourth article, consecrated to the question of the definition of truth in Blondel, is less important for our purpose and can be omitted here.

34 *Ibid.*, p. 290.

35 Fr. H. Bouillard writes in his book, p.220: “A new concept is introduced that will preside at the organization of a new system. Divine truth is never accessible within any contingent notion. It is the law of incarnation.” This whole page 220 is to be read attentively. (Note of the author).

36 *Ibid.*, pp. 290-291.

confuses these two things: the changing of notions and the use of other words to express the same notion. The worst of it is that he seems to do this in good faith, not understanding what is going on, no doubt because he is much more an historian than a philosopher. That a man with a philosophical formation that is so patently defective dare confront in public debate a theologian who has passed his whole life studying these questions is a sign of that ridiculous pride that St. Pius X identified as the foundation and root of Modernism.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange then explains that one can find equivalent words in order to explain technical theological terms because these technical terms are the same concepts clarified by the work of theologians carried on for centuries. He adds, nonetheless, that it is theological precision that must take precedence (a refutation in advance of the “pastorality” of Vatican II):

There are verbal equivalents that make comprehensible the term “formal cause” but this notion is maintained, it is not replaced by another. All that is accessible to intelligences of every age.

One understands very well that apologists occupied above all in the communication of Christian and Catholic doctrine to our contemporaries are especially attentive to the adaptation of concepts to the cultivated men of our time. They are sometimes bothered by several concepts of classical theology, like transubstantiation, hypostatic union; nevertheless, this difficulty is not at all insurmountable if in the study of traditional philosophy and theology one makes the effort to pass methodically from the confused concept expressed by the nominal definition to the distinct concept that has been made more precise with the progress of philosophy or that of sacred science.

Moreover, one must not forget that theology has as its first mission, above any apologetic endeavours, to determine and conserve the exact sense of the truths revealed by God. In order to do that, it must use concepts that are truly universal, valid everywhere and always, like those necessary for the understanding of the first principles. It must be very vigilant, then, to avoid slipping towards even unconscious relativism, to which nominalism would lead it.³⁷

A final text of Fr. Bouillard quoted here and its refutation by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange manifest perfectly the complete opposition of these two positions:

Fr. H. Bouillard in the same book, page 213, writes in speaking of the authors of theological manuals and more erudite works: “If the authors know that theology has not always existed in its actual state in the knowledge of theologians, they at least unconsciously imagine that it was already given as such in the domain of eternal truths and that the discursive intelligence just has to discover it, to reconstruct it bit by bit. A historical study reveals, on the contrary, to what an extent theology is bound to time, to the flux of the human mind.” But traditional theologians are not mistaken in thinking that the perfect theological knowledge exists in the domain of the eternal truths in the divine intelligence, in that of theologians who have arrived at the beatific vision, and that this theological knowledge was in an imperfect state, but already immutable on many points, in the intelligence of a St. Thomas Aquinas and many other theologians already while they were still here below.³⁸

In the seventh article,³⁹ which treats of relativistic philosophical systems, two passages are particularly important because they speak of the two doctrines which

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 292.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 293-294.

³⁹ “Le relativisme et l’immuabilité du dogme,” *Angelicum*, XXVII (1950), pp. 219-246. The sixth article of the series, which we have had to omit in order not to be too long, treats of the doctrine of Gunther and its condemnation by Vatican I.

are at the base of Modernism: agnosticism and immanentism. The first passage explains that the immutability of dogma can not be maintained if one denies that the dogmatic formulas veritably express the reality of God, even if this truth that they express is imperfect.

The question then presents itself: Would one maintain the immutability of dogma as it was conceived of by the Church if one simply said: In our analogical and always imperfect knowledge of God, the *adaequatio rei et intellectus*, the correspondence between the dogmatic formula and the divine reality, is nothing but a limit towards which one tends, but which one never attains here below, for to attain it, it would be necessary to have the immediate vision of the divine essence that only the blessed possess?⁴⁰

Is it sufficient to say: the immutable truth of dogma is a limit towards which the Church is always tending, but which she never attains here below? Gunther in the nineteenth century accepted that in his relativism, and the Vatican Council found that it was not sufficient.

No doubt our analogical concepts are always inadequate and incapable of expressing the divine reality as it is in itself. But, let us not forget, the truth is formally, not in the concepts, but in the judgment. The truth consists in affirming that which is and in denying that which is not. In this sense the truth of a judgment is the correspondence between the judgment itself and the thing that is judged.⁴¹

That is to say, the truth of dogmatic formulas does not consist in the fact that the concepts they use are perfectly conformed to the divine realities they refer to, but in the conformity of the judgment formed by the union of these concepts to the divine reality. These concepts are certainly very imperfect, but the judgment formed by their conjunction is already true, even if it doesn't express all the divine reality which is its object.

And then it is a matter of knowing (something that is at the same time very simple and very profound, like the *Pater Noster*) if the truth of the judgments, of the dogmas infallibly proposed by the Church as revealed by God, *is a truth that is already absolutely certain and immutable, and not just a limit that is aimed at*, towards which the intelligence of the believer is always tending but which it never attains here below. It is a matter of knowing if the judgments or dogmatic propositions, in spite of the imperfection of our analogical concepts, *are certainly conformed already now to the divine reality by an infallible certitude, because of the authority of God who reveals them*.

It is clear that for us believers to ask the question is to answer it affirmatively. For this it is necessary also that the analogical *notions* that express the immutable dogmatic truth have a real validity (onto- logical and transcendental) and that they be themselves immutable and not only provisional.

The second passage shows the consequence of this agnosticism: if the

40 In fact, this certainly seems to be the position of Fr. Bouillard when he says, for example, as we saw: "To declare that the same affirmation can subsist through notions that evolve is to declare at the same time that through the change on the surface, a profound element, the essential element, remains. In other words, the reality that is aimed at always remains the same." (*Recherches de sciences religieuses*, Vol. XXXV, April-May 1948), pp. 254.255) And also: "The divine truth is never accessible on this side of any contingent notion. It is the law of the incarnation." *Conversion et grâce chez saint Thomas d'Aquin*, 1944, p. 220, quoted by Garrigou-Lagrange, "L'immutabilité des vérités définies et le surnaturel," *Angelicum*, XXV (1948), p. 291. It is the same doctrine that is behind the assertion that was just quoted where he rejects the idea that theological knowledge consists in discovering truths which exist already "as such in the domain of eternal truths." For Fr. Bouillard one does not know divine truth by dogmatic formulas and that is why one can replace them by other ones.

41 *Ibid.*, pp. 222-224

dogmatic formulas do not make us know the truth about God, they are but the expression of the immanent experience of man.

As for the revealed mysteries, [according to relativism] our notions of nature, substance, person, cannot make us know even *analogically*, for these notions have only a *phenomenal* validity, they don't have an ontological validity, and even less a transcendental validity... Nevertheless, the relativists tell us, there remains a *certain religious experience*... This religious experience then seeks to think itself out; it expresses itself, then, in popular formulas, then in formulas that are called dogmatic, or approved by the religious authorities.

But these *formulas* without ontological or transcendental validity cannot express God and the divine realities with truth and certitude; they only express *the subjective experience of the believer*, they are a *conceptualisation* of this experience, an intellectual expression of the religious sentiment that evolves. Not having any ontological validity, and even less any transcendental validity, these formulas, termed dogmatic, are *always relative* to the evolution of the religious sentiment, relative also to the actual state of science and philosophy. Thus they are always provisional; the concepts they use can always be replaced by other analogical ones, as long as a certain basis of religious experience remains. This basis is what is called here revelation, which proceeds from the subconscious.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange concludes this long series of articles with one last one entitled: "The Structure of the Encyclical *Humani Generis*," the pontifical document which constitutes the triumph of his doctrine by the approbation of the magisterium of the Church.⁴² He writes:

It is not a matter here of making a simple analysis of this document..., but of bringing out the principal error from which all the others derive and by opposition show the fundamental truth that makes it possible to avoid these deviations. . . . Now, when one examines philosophically and theologically this encyclical, one sees that the fundamental error that it condemns is philosophical relativism, which leads to dogmatic relativism, from which necessarily derives the whole stream of deviations that are mentioned.

He quotes the encyclical against this philosophical relativism:

What does it tell us first about relativism in the philosophical domain and then in that of dogma? It says (III, i): "Reason can arrive at the certain knowledge of the existence of God and the certain signs of divine Revelation." Nevertheless "it will never be able to function in this way rightly and surely unless it has been properly formed; that is to say unless it has been penetrated by this healthy philosophy that we have received as a patrimony from the centuries of Christendom which have preceded us: patrimony that has been constituted over a long period of time, and that has attained to this superior degree of authority precisely because the very magisterium of the Church has submitted *to the norms of divine Revelation itself* its principles and its principal assertions which such grand minds have little by little discovered and defined. This philosophy received and commonly accepted in the *Church defends the authentic and exact validity of human reason, the unshakable principles of metaphysics—the principle of sufficient reason, of causality, of finality—finally the capacity to arrive at a certain*

⁴² "La structure de l'encyclique *Humani generis*," *Angelicum*, XXVII (1951), PP. 3-17. The close study of this whole controversy and the exact correspondence (which at times is even verbal) between the position taken by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange and the doctrine proposed by the encyclical, cannot but lead one to think that the Dominican had a hand in the composition of the papal document or was perhaps even its principal author. This internal evidence would have to be corroborated by external proofs, but already on its own it has a considerable weight.

and immutable truth."

The encyclical *Humani generis* adds (III): "Some hold today that our philosophy affirms wrongly *the possibility of a metaphysics that is absolutely true....*They seem to insinuate that no matter what philosophy, by means, if necessary, of some corrections and additions, can be in harmony with the Catholic faith. This is absolutely false."

Finally, he quotes the encyclical's condemnation of the dogmatic relativism that follows from this philosophical relativism. Pius XII writes:

"It is clear according to what we have said that these (doctrines) do not only lead to dogmatic relativism, but already contain it in act; the contempt of the doctrine commonly taught and of the terms in which it expressed itself are already too close to it... .The expressions that, during the course of several centuries, were established by a common consent of Catholic doctors in order to arrive at some understanding of dogma surely do not rest on such a fragile foundation. They rest, in fact, on principles and notions taken from the true knowledge of created things; in the research of these notions revealed truth enlightened the human mind like a star by means of the Church. That is why it is not surprising that some of these notions have not only been used in ecumenical Councils but have received such a sanction that it is not permitted to distance oneself from them. Thus it is very imprudent to substitute for them floating and vague notions and expressions of a new philosophy that are used today and will disappear tomorrow like the flowers of the field; this would be to make dogma itself a reed shaken by the wind. In fact, unfortunately these lovers of novelty easily pass from contempt of Scholastic theology to a lack of respect for and even contempt of the magisterium of the Church which has so strongly supported this theology by its authority."

Summary: Conclusion of the Debate

Let us try now, finally, to summarize the debate carried on in these articles and draw a conclusion. It is a question, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange tells us, of truth: the fundamental error of the new theology (and, consequently of the Second Vatican Council, where this theology was imposed on the whole Church) is a philosophical error. The new theologians want to replace the traditional definition of truth, the conformity of the intelligence to reality, with a correspondence between the mind and life. For them, the intelligence is incapable of attaining reality directly: its affirmations do not express reality itself, but only its own ideas, sentiments, experiences, etc. That is why these affirmations must be changed when, and in as much as, these sentiments and experiences change. "Truth is no more immutable than man himself, inasmuch as it evolves with him, in him and through him" (Denz. 2058). Applied to theology, this doctrine teaches that dogmatic formulas are merely the expression of the religious experience of believers and, consequently, are as variable as these experiences.

The long dispute with Fr. Bouillard on the question of analogy made it possible to understand more deeply the precise nature of this fundamental error of the new theology and expose its artifices. Fr. Bouillard says that theological notions can and must change with the times, while at the same time he denies that dogmatic affirmations change, maintaining that they remain stable and thus claiming not to reject the traditional definition of truth. When Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange objects that a change in the notions must necessarily result in a change in the affirmations (since

they are composed by the conjunction of these notions) Fr. Bouillard responds that the affirmations stay the same, because these new notions are analogous. He writes:

When the same revealed truth is expressed in different systems (Augustinian, Thomistic, Suarezian, *etc.*), the diverse notions utilised in order to translate it are neither equivocal (otherwise, one wouldn't be speaking of the same thing), nor univocal (otherwise the systems would be identical), but analogous, that is to say they express in a *different way* the same *reality*.

To which Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange responds that analogous notions do not express the same reality, but different realities which are similar according to a certain proportion, as, for example, the analogous notion of "being" expresses the being of substance and the being of accidents, which are not at all the same thing but are similar according to the similar proportion that exists between the substance and its being and an accident and its being, which proportion permits these two different things to be called by the same name analogically.

For Fr. Bouillard this proportion is rather between the *notions*, and he claims that this proportion is the same in the different affirmations that are formed by these different notions.

I wrote: "When the mind evolves, an immutable truth cannot be maintained except thanks to a simultaneous and correlative evolution of all its notions, which maintain among themselves the same relation" (*Conversion et grace*, p. 219). This relation is not the verb "is," the copula, as Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange seems to have understood, but what St. Thomas calls the *proportio*, the foundation of analogy. It indicates precisely the invariable element common to the diverse notions used by theologians to express the same truth.

He doesn't tell us where he got this new theory of analogy, apparently because he invented it for the needs of his polemic. The question of analogy is one of the most difficult and most important questions that is treated in philosophy, and it is sometimes difficult to determine whether it is a matter of a proportion that exists between a reality expressed by a certain term (reality which is called the "first analogate") and other realities expressed by the same term because of this proportion (analogy of proportion or attribution) or rather of a similitude according to a certain proportion between different realities which are called, because of this similitude, by the same term (analogy of proportionality). 'What is nevertheless clear is that no one—until the advent of Fr. Bouillard—says that it is a matter of a proportion between different notions in different affirmations, which affirmations would express the same thing because of this similar proportion between these different notions. It is quite difficult to imagine even what this would mean, and Fr. Bouillard doesn't give any examples other than that of these supposed equivalent dogmatic formulas which he tries to justify by this new theory of analogy: but their legitimacy is precisely what has to be shown.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is much clearer when he says that different notions can express the same reality, not according to a proportion between them which is difficult to define, but simply in a way that is more or less distinct. In this case they are not analogical but univocal, that is to say, they say the same thing but more or less clearly. Thus obscure notions that one has difficulty understanding are clarified

by others: it is a matter of saying the same thing more explicitly.⁴³

This is perhaps all Fr. Bouillard wants to say, finally, by his different notions that have the same proportion between them, but his theory reveals a surprising lack of understanding of the basic principles of logic. An affirmation is not a proportion between the notions which are its predicate and subject; it is their union. And Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange is perfectly right to say that if the notions united in an affirmation by the verb "is" are changed, that is, if the new notions are not the same as the previous ones, if they are not univocal with them, at least according to a greater or lesser clarity, the new affirmation formed by them will not be the same as the previous one. "Otherwise, one might as well say that an iron clamp can immobilise the waves of the sea."⁴⁴

If one uses, as Fr. Bouillard wants to, notions that are truly different (and not just clearer) one doesn't say the same thing: and this is the source of the slipping and sliding in dogmatic formulas which has been going on ever since John XXIII opened the door to this way of seeing things at the beginning of the Council. The development of dogma no longer conserves "the same dogma, the same sense, the same affirmation," according to the consecrated formula of St. Vincent of Lérins, but it has become analogical. This means that there is a real change, since the affirmations made before and those made after are no longer univocal with each other but only analogical, and, therefore, equivocal, since, as any first year logic student knows, analogical notions are a species of equivocal notions. One no longer says the same thing as before, and the door is open to everything.

The examples given by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange show this clearly (without even speaking of what happened after the Council, where the exact same samples show up, in fact). Thus the notion of *transubstantiation* is considered by the new theologians as "an inadmissible conception" and having to be replaced by another according to which in the Eucharist "the bread and wine have become the efficacious symbol of the sacrifice of Christ, and, consequently of his spiritual presence." Similarly, the Incarnation becomes a moment in universal evolution, original sin is the result of the faults of men that have influenced humanity, etc.⁴⁵

But already in the writings of Fr. Bouillard himself during this controversy one finds an example of this changing of meaning in dogmatic affirmations in the case of the example with which the first article of Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange begins, that of justification. To conclude, then, let us recapitulate the dispute on this very revealing point.

Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange quotes the book of Fr. Bouillard where he affirms that the Council of Trent, in saying that the formal cause of justification is grace, had in no way the intention of canonizing an Aristotelian notion, but "it simply wanted to affirm, against the Protestants, that justification is an interior renovation."⁴⁶ Fr. Garrigou Lagrange replies that, obviously, the Council did not want to canonize the notion of Aristotle in so far as it is a part of his philosophical system, but simply approved it as a stable human notion that has a meaning for everyone. In his response, Fr. Bouillard

43 Thus we respond to Fr. Bouillard about the different theological "systems" that, if they are all true, they are univocal, but they are not identical because they are distinguished by a greater or lesser clarity (as in the example given by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange of the explanation of the Real Presence of the Body of Christ in the Eucharist according to St. Augustine and St. Thomas).

44 "La nouvelle theologie ou va-t-elle?" *Angelicum*, XXII (1946), p. 127.

45 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

46 *Ibid.*, p. 128.

comes back and repeats his phrase and insists: "What [the Council] teaches is that justification is an interior renovation and not just an imputation of the merits of Christ."⁴⁷

But the Council, in fact, wanted to say more than that, and the confused philosophy of Fr. Bouillard stops him from seeing it. For, Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange explains, the Council did not just say that justification is an interior renovation, but that this interior renovation is constituted in itself by a very precise reality (that is to say, has this reality as its formal cause), namely, by divine grace: "It is very important to know that this interior renovation is formally constituted not by some interior principle other than grace, but by habitual grace that inheres in the soul, which is a participation of the divine nature and the germ in us of eternal life." And in his response to the article of Fr. Bouillard he drives home his point even more and draws out of this example the general conclusion that is at the bottom of his criticism of the new theology:

It is necessary to note that the Council of Trent did not content itself with using terms found in Scripture; it stated precisely that the formal cause of justification is not only the imputation of the merits of Christ, or the favour of God, nor an interior renovation that would take place merely by infused faith or infused hope that can exist in the state of mortal sin, but an interior renovation that is accomplished by sanctifying grace and charity. How can one maintain the sense of this affirmation of the Council if one must "give up" the notion of formal cause and substitute for it another one that is analogical to it?

One will arrive, in this way, we said, at another affirmation: that of the Council will not be maintained, for the immutable truth of a judgment necessarily depends on the immutable value of the notions it unites by the verb "is."

The Consequences of Doctrinal Relativism

In order to see the consequences of the defeat suffered at the Second Vatican Council by the position defended in these articles of Garrigou-Lagrange which we have just examined and its rejection of the doctrine taught by the encyclical *Humani generis*, it suffices to listen a little to the clerics who occupy positions of authority in the Conciliar Church. One could multiply indefinitely such quotes, but here are a few that give the essential idea:

1) Cardinal Ambrozic, Archbishop of Toronto, Canada, to a seminarian who questioned him about the changes that happened after the Council:

I remember this new idea that was presented to us at the time of the Council, the idea of the "Historical Method."⁴⁸ I remember the day I accepted that principle.

2) A seminarian of the Oblates of the Virgin Mary, who later became the

47 "Notions conciliaires et analogie de la vérité," *Recherches de sciences religieuses*, XXXV (1948), p. 261.

48 It is interesting to read, with regard to this remark, the words of Fr. Marie-Dominique Chenu, one of the greatest promoters of this "Historical Method," in an interview 20 years after the Council: "I still remember the mental shock that I experienced when I situated this historicity, not only in the literary context of this Scholasticism, but in the very object of theology: theology is not a coordinated assembly of principles extracted from the Word of God, it is first of all this Word itself, in act in history... Without doubt that is my fundamental position: God has entered into history, and it is in history that I have the understanding of his mystery. Before conceptualized faith there is lived faith, the first source of theology. It was this position that got me in trouble with the Roman theologians, whose detemporalized theology rejected this substantial relation to history. From there came the accusations made against my pamphlet *Une école de théologie. Le Saulchoir*. I was only rehabilitated by the Second Vatican Council, which, according to the words of Cardinal Marty, gave back to the Church, to the Word of God, its historic dimension. The word *historia*, absent until then in the vocabulary of the magisterium, is pronounced 63 times in the texts of the Council. This is what has gained for me the fact to be listed, not without generosity, among the theologians of the Council." *L'actualité religieuse*, January 1985, pp. 21-22.

Superior-General of this congregation, explaining the position of his community:

We aren't Vatican I, nor Vatican III, we're Vatican II!

3) Another seminarian of this same congregation who also later became its Superior-General, disputing with a confrere who was criticizing certain novelties of Vatican II:

But you can't say that! The Church has changed! (His confrere asks him: "In what exactly?") I don't know! It is the Church that has to tell us that. But at least this is clear, the Church has changed!

4) Finally, a famous phrase of Msgr. Henrici in *Communio* about the book of Fr. de Lubac, which, quoted in full, contains explicitly the doctrinal relativism against which Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange was trying to fight (and which his adversaries pretended didn't exist⁴⁹):

The director of studies [at the seminary at Lyons] counselled those who were the most interested in theology to start by reading the first two chapters of *Surnaturel* by Henri de Lubac—the most forbidden of the "forbidden books"!—then his *Corpus Mysticum*, in order to understand that equivalent theological propositions could, in different times and in other contexts, receive an entirely different meaning.

Here then is the result of the defeat of the position defended so valiantly by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange in the years that preceded the Council: "The Church has changed." The seal is broken, everything becomes possible. It is the "Solve" of the program of the Freemasons, the stage of destruction that had to precede the "Coagula" of the new ecclesiastical order. It was necessary to begin with this philosophical bombardment in order to be able to carry out without resistance the invasion and occupation of the Church which was the purpose of the Council.

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⁴⁹ Testimonies like that of Msgr. Henrici make us doubt the sincerity of the indignant protestations of Fr. Bouillard against the accusations of relativism made by Fr. Garrigou-Lagrange, especially when we hear this same Fr. Bouillard say in an intervention at the inauguration of the Centre d'Archives Maurice Blondel at Louvain March 30-31, 1973, what we read in the following text: "After having recognized the influence on the 'New Theology' of the philosophy of Blondel, who 'contributed in the most decisive manner in the renewal of fundamental theology,' the Jesuit Bouillard declares that 'the thought of Blondel progressively and in its essential theses has become victorious': the theses defeated by Blondel are 'today obsolete' and the errors he held today 'seem to go without saying' ('Journées d'inauguration, March 30-31, 1973: Textes des interventions," p.43)." *La "Nouvelle Theologie" ou "Ceux qui pensent avoir gagné"* (Publication of Courrier de Rome, 1994), p. 29.



OUR LADY OF VICTORIES CHURCH,
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by H.E. Bishop Fellay,
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* * *

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