THE DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTION
OF RELIGIOUS SISTERS

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RELIGIOUS LIFE

VI
THE DOCTRINAL INSTRUCTION OF RELIGIOUS SISTERS

Being the English Version of
Formation Doctrinale des Religieuses
Translated by a Religious of the Retreat of the Sacred Heart

NEWMAN PRESS
WESTMINSTER MARYLAND
1956

First published in English 1956

NIHIL OBSTAT: Joannes M. T. Barton, S.T.D., L.S.S.
Censor deputatus

IMPRIMATUR: Eduardus Myers
Archiepiscopus Beroensis et
coadiutor Westmonasteriensis.

Westmonasterii, die 18a Augusti, 1955.

Made and Printed in Great Britain by
The Burleigh Press Ltd., Lewins Mead, Bristol 1

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FOREWORD

THE study-days, organized by the indefatigable Père Plé for the assistance of nuns in France, are always profound as well as practical. In the sessions represented by the papers in this volume the clergy and sisters discussed the type of instruction that the modern nun requires in face of the progress in woman's education today. The subject is a most important one and Père Plé himself sums up some of the conclusions in the last chapter. The modern sister is to be encouraged in the double way of wisdom, infused and acquired, but she is not to be treated exactly as a church student, as her vocation is a different one. Each sister requires a doctrinal training adapted to her intellectual level and to her form of life. But trained in doctrine she must be, and throughout her religious life.

English reading religious will find a great deal of value in these pages. The specifically French contributions have been, as in the rest of the translated series, omitted, and the resultant translation presents the nuns and those responsible for their training with material applicable to religious women today the world over.

Les Editions du Cerf, who published the original French edition, the authors of the various chapters, and Père Plé, the editor, have all generously assisted in the production of this English version. This has been an invaluable mark of the whole series, in its English form, which began with the volume *Religious Sisters* and has continued with those on vocation and the three vows, etc. The English editor and publisher are therefore anxious to express their gratitude to Père Plé and his expanding team of collaborators as well as to Les Editions du Cerf for their generosity in the production of the series and in particular this volume, which appeared originally as *Formation Doctrinale des Religieuses.*

C.P.

INTRODUCTION

OUT of a hundred students enrolled in the Faculties and Institutes of France to-day, thirty-five are girls. This simple number suggests a development which is turning woman, before our eyes, into an adult being with an active role in professional, social and even political life.

This fact which is so important from a sociological and psychological point of view is unquestionably at the root of one of the problems that religious have to face at the present day. Among other consequences, it sets the question of their doctrinal training.

The solution of this relatively new problem will not be simple.

During the Study Days which prepared this volume, we endeavoured to state the problem clearly. To what a degree and under what conditions is it possible for the study of sacred doctrine to find a place in women's religious life? What ought we to think, in the light of the papal teaching and of sociology, of woman's promotion in the Church and in society? Does not the case of contemplative nuns involve a special problem? These general questions had to be asked first.

Then we had to draw up a list of the efforts being made nowadays to provide doctrinal training for nuns, both in France and elsewhere. Interesting as these realizations are, we do not think them sufficient, and that not only because so few nuns will be able to benefit by them, but also on account of the curriculum itself.

We think that new programmes should be drawn up because it would be a mistake to give nuns a doctrinal training exactly like that given to seminarists. Even if it were perfect in itself, it would not be suitable for nuns: they are not priests, but women, consecrated women. These factors demand a deep-reaching adaptation of the programmes, the pedagogy, the aims, and the means of realizing them.

There could be no question of solving so rapidly all the problems raised by this very necessary adaptation. Much work and groping will be necessary before we have found completely satisfactory solutions. During the days of study we contented ourselves with marking two lines of investigation.

First that of adapting to women's intelligence and psychology, the curriculum of profane studies drawn up for and by men: here the 'Classical Sections for Women' offer ample and valuable help.

Next, we desire to help future seekers to throw off routine by suggesting that the classical plan of seminary studies is not the only possible programme of doctrinal training. The history of the great theological syntheses and contemporary efforts to arrive at a 'catechetic theology' may be useful when it comes to re-adjusting the curriculum of sacred studies to make it suitable for nuns who cannot have such a systematic and speculative training as that given at the University and the seminaries.

We are aware that we are raising more questions in this volume than we are able to answer, but this first stage seemed indispensable and promising for the future.

In conclusion we have proposed some solutions that take into account the need for adjustment we have mentioned. These are, needless to say, merely vague suggestions which we are offering diffidently to the initiative of Superiors and to the wisdom of the Hierarchy.

At Rome, in France, in the United States and in Great Britain, steps have just been taken to give nuns a more advanced doctrinal training, and these prove that we are confronted here with a current problem at which the whole Church is working with us. The collective attempt we are publishing here has no other aim than to define the problem, examine its essential data, make known the solutions already attempted and suggest others that might seem desirable.

A. Plé, O.P.

PART ONE

The Problem is Set

Chapter I

THE PLACE OF STUDY IN A WOMAN'S RELIGIOUS LIFE

By Sister Jeanne D'Arc, O.P.

BY STUDY we here mean the study of doctrine only. The following outline will show what we are aiming at, and how we are planning to deal with our subject:

A. We do not propose to deal with secular studies. It may, however, be helpful for the sake of clearness, to show how such studies may be fitted in varying degrees into the religious life, according as they are more or less akin to the study of doctrine.

1. It may be found necessary to give a religious a complete education from the beginning up, if she has not the minimum necessary for the purpose of her institute. Such would be an exceptional case, for this degree of instruction is normally one of the conditions for admission to the noviciate.

2. In most congregations, on account of the work they undertake, there are examinations to be prepared for, or special qualifications to be acquired: e.g., diplomas or certificates for nursing or social work, etc. These special studies form part of the life of a religious only because they are a useful means for carrying out the end of her vocation, and because they are imposed on her by obedience.

3. Next come studies in view of the transmission of doctrine. In itself their object is not essential to our spiritual life: they belong to missionary and catechetic technique. Nevertheless, they are all focussed on spiritual knowledge for they are intended to enable the student to pass on such knowledge to others, and they pre-suppose the study of theology.

4. Lastly, there are the branches of instruction explicitly orientated to sacred doctrine: philosophy, Latin, biblical

languages, Bible history, etc. These form an essential part of doctrinal study, for they are of direct use not merely for its transmission, but in its acquisition or even its elaboration.

B. Above all these sciences, whether supplementary or of a different order, there is doctrine itself, dogma and ethics, studied both in its source, revelation, and in its theological elaboration. It is accompanied, to an extent varying with its theological level, by the branches of instruction mentioned in 4. Its object is the same as that of our faith, so that its importance is unparalleled: it is at the very heart of our lives both as Christians and religious.

When we use the word study in the course of this work we mean doctrine and not any of the other subjects we have mentioned.

C. To be entirely accurate we must also set apart as outside the scope of our work, that doctrinal food necessary for a nun's life of faith and prayer. This is not study: it comes in many ways, hearing sermons and spiritual conferences, reading alone or in community. On the whole its object is certainly the same as that of the study of doctrine, the difference is subjective; it is in the way we set about it and in the end we are aiming at: in spiritual reading we look for a certain savour or unction, and normally we choose the books that help us to be recollected and to pray. The profit of study, on the contrary, is not necessarily immediate; it is by definition a work implying a certain technical skill, demanding effort on our part and its spiritual results may not be immediately perceptible. What we expect of it is training to be achieved in the future, and not a spiritual sustenance to be used just as it is for to-night's mental prayer.

Our aim is thus to determine the function in a nun's life of this doctrinal study as we have defined it.

First of all we shall have to consider it from the point of view of the individual and then with regard to the collectivity, where its insertion introduces special problems. In the former case, we need to show its necessity and also its possible dangers.

It would seem that there are two distinct moments at which doctrinal study is necessary, and this already gives us an idea

of our conclusions: first at the training stage, in order to search more deeply into the truths of our faith, form the judgment and throw light on all activity; later, in view of apostolic work, it is indispensable in order to be able to communicate divine truth to others, and supremely useful in order to counsel prudently.[1]

I

Man is an intelligent animal, but at birth he is the most helpless of all. He has everything to learn and to make, and he has first to be given everything: his education is very long and very difficult, just because he is an intelligent being, and the higher a man is to rise the longer and more difficult it will be. A workman's training ends with his adolescence, a leader or a scientist still needs twelve or fifteen years' work after that before he is ready to play his part in the community.

On the supernatural plane it is the same. God's child needs instruction and training. God showed us that when he did not hesitate to spend two thousand years on educating his people, teaching them his plans for their salvation and clarifying their moral sense.

We are called to travel this road from the beginning. We have to receive the truths of faith—*fides ex auditu*—make them our own by our personal efforts, and understand their essential moral demands.

Many Christians get no further than this rudimentary stage —without any detriment to themselves however: if they are faithful they know enough to sanctify themselves. They can bear witness by martyrdom to the faith of which they have such a slight knowledge. Sanctity is a matter of fidelity in love, and the Holy Ghost may give them an instinctive knowledge to make up for the light they lack.

We are not recommending them to stop at this. Just as on

[1] We are using apostolate in the strict sense of the word: the communication of doctrine: 'Go teach . . . ' not including the preliminaries or methods of approach, nor the works of mercy, not any of the means sometimes attached to the word 'apostolate' by certain modern and perhaps incorrect practice.

the natural plane, the greater the responsibility to be borne, the further the training must be carried. With this difference however: on the human plane this condition is indispensable, whereas in the domain of grace, God distributes his gifts freely and can make up all our deficiencies; he can choose for any task whatever instrument he wills, even the one most lacking in the apparently necessary preparation. This is not meant to be an incentive to laziness: we ought on our part to do our utmost to prepare for the task awaiting us.

Now religious life tends specifically to perfection. Early rules define the monastery as a *school* of perfection. Therefore it requires a long, sound and complete training. The wisdom of the Church imposes this in her canon law, and in the approved constitutions of the various institutes.[1]

This training, to be complete and effectual must act upon the whole human being; it is not sufficient to mould us into the pattern of our new environment, nor even to give us good habits of virtue,[2] it must also equip with everything necessary those who are aiming at nothing less than perfection.

Every nun has, in strict justice, a right to be trained: her

[1] Canon Law imposes a minimum of four and a half or five years for this training. It does not speak directly of doctrinal training: it prescribes a weekly religious instruction for lay brothers and speaks at some length about the studies of clerics. Between the two it leaves complete liberty to the particular constitutions. Moreover, it goes into detail only about the canonical noviciate, and in the Church's present legislation, this year is treated as a long retreat. But it is interesting to note, according to those who have had access to the documents, that the first drafts of can.565 provided for intellectual training during that time. St Pius X was in favour of this. Nothing remains of the project but the indication about the study of the Rule and the constitutions, the teaching concerning the vows, and the virtues.—This complete change in the attitude of the legislators is due, it would seem, to their desire to secure an essentially spiritual character for the training, and by the determination to put an insuperable obstacle in the way of those institutes that try to make use of their subjects prematurely. However many changes have come about since the beginning of the century. An instruction of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, dated 25 November, 1929 (AAS xxii, 1930, p. 28. R.C.R. 1930, p. 81 ss) has prescribed courses in religion for all postulants and novices. No one may be admitted to profession without passing an examination to prove that she knows Christian doctrine and can explain it sufficiently to others. The noviciate moreover is only a stage in a training that lasts for years. And in institutes in which this training must be fairly advanced, its best place will be after the temporary vows.

[2] I am purposely using this word with its meaning suggestive of a well-running machine; for if we do not bring the intelligence into play, a training is reduced to the mere creation of good habits and will not reach the level at which a 'habitus' is produced.

institute owes her that. A great deal is said about the duties of religious, and rightly, for we enter religion to give ourselves unconditionally, down to the very roots of our personality. But on the other hand, the institute which accepts such a gift is bound to give all the necessary training.[1] A certain amount of doctrinal study, up to the level needed by the special end of the institute, forms an integral part of such training.

This may be proved in two ways: from the very nature of faith, and from the requirements of human behaviour.

A. The nature of faith

God who created man an intelligent being addressed himself to his intellect when he associated him with the plan of salvation. From the earliest times he spoke in many ways: *multifariam, multisque modis*. And in these later days, the Word became incarnate, the living Word of God became man to make God's secrets known to us. Faith answers this revelation, expressed in human words. From the very first moment (with the necessary impulse of the will which alone can release the faculty of assent) faith lives in the intellect, which it moulds to the mystery of God.

But this gift of faith, known thus in a rudimentary way, will produce if taken seriously, a permanent leaven of search and investigation. The utter weight of the mystery arouses in us a need to understand it better. The close-packed substance of its light, too strong for us, is indeed our best joy—for we know that in it we possess a wealth of truth to which we could never attain by our unaided efforts; but at the same time we suffer because it is impossible for us to fathom its depths; this is the productive strain which keeps our hope alive: our desire plunges into the supernatural, into the immense impenetrability of God. But here on earth we long to understand this

[1] Cf. the 'Recommendations to the Rev. Mothers General of Women's Congregations' by the Assembly of Cardinals and Archbishops—Session of March 1949. 'The congregations must never forget that nothing must take precedence of the spiritual welfare of their religious. Each of them has a right to an interior life sufficient to enable her to maintain intact the total consecration made at her profession. It is not fitting that, for want of doctrinal training, some nuns should have to admit that their religious knowledge is less than it would have been had they remained in the world and that they felt less useful to souls'. Catholic Documentation, No. 1044. 5 June, 1949, col. 733.

spark of light better and all our reasoning powers are set to work at scrutinizing the mystery, decomposing its elements and drawing nearer and nearer to the secret of their union. The believing intellect tries to think the datum of faith intelligibly: *fides quaerens intellectum*—a lively faith necessarily tends to build itself up in a scientific way.

A religious training should respond to this demand by teaching theology, on a level adapted to its needs. Reason must be guided in its enquiries as to the object of faith, the datum must be made clear; it must be shown that mysteries are not impossibilities, that they have their suitableness and their harmonious relations. Even in the simplest believer the adhesion of the intellect produces a certain sense of the harmony of the faith; but the work of the mind gives an ever-deepening knowledge of the admirable relations between revealed truths, gives a synthetic view of the hierarchy of the mysteries and their rightful place in revelation as a whole,[1] and thus 'sets our thoughts about faith in the very order of the objects of our faith'.[2]

An important remark must be made here: it is not only the faith in us that asks for this intellectual effort, but also charity: love of itself tends to better knowledge of the beloved. Our life of love of God urges us to 'find out the depths in God's nature' (1 Cor. 11, 10). Whoever loves, desires to know all about his beloved.[3]

This is found to be true in the proportion as the charity is intense and the faith lively. A good average Christian seldom tries to fathom the truths of dogma. Without even noticing it,

[1] Note how beneficial theological study is to piety. It makes God's point of view predominant over our emotivity, and measures our devotion by the true value of its objects. In this way certain 'devotions' are put in their place, for though they may be excellent in themselves, even legitimate and approved, they ought not to encroach at the expense of the essential acts of worship and of the great mysteries of the Liturgy.

[2] R. Bernard: *Treatise on Faith* in *Summa Theologica*. Note 20, p. 243.

[3] One might show (with John of St Thomas) that the part played by charity in knowledge goes further still. Not that it has a direct cognitive function, but it absorbs us into the object: when I am more united to God by love, my intelligence becomes fitter for God and for divine things; an object that is familiar, near and tried by experience is at the same time more knowable; charity is a medium of knowledge on account of the close friendship it establishes between God and us. Cf. R. P. Lemonnyer, *Notre vie divine* (Ed. du Cerf), p. 282 *sqq*.

he bears the weight of mystery that is a torment to a saint. In fact the desire to know more about the matters of faith, to try to instruct oneself, to read sound books is a fairly sure sign of deepening spirituality. Why should not this criterion be applicable in religious life itself? If a sister were to do without all doctrinal sustenance, easily and habitually, without seeming to miss it, one surely might ask oneself whether she was entirely interested in God, whether she was entirely absorbed in seeking God. One might wonder whether this were not a sign that her life of devotedness or of faithful observance was rooted in a natural need for activity or in a taste for ascetic feats. If the only source of all that were the living, sensitive, real love which alone gives value to all good works, the love would tend impetuously to God in himself and would suffer from the obligation of applying itself to anything else. We do all our work for God, but we must be careful that by dint of always putting God in the dative case we do not let our hearts be held back by the immediate object of our activity. Obedience and duty keep us busy with good works, which thus become tokens of our love, but only if there is a continuous pull between our desire for God only and our application to what he asks of us. If we are moved only by anxiety to please the Lord, we should normally desire to know him better, to hear more about him and to nourish ourselves with his Word: a certain need of study, or, speaking more generally, of doctrinal sustenance.[1]

This desire to know God does not in general call for study in the strict sense of the word, with its technique, its scientific requirements, its organization by means of programmes and special branches of study.

This latter study is necessary for everyone (except in exceptional cases)[2] as a fundamental intellectual training and it will

[1] This need may vary greatly according to the particular vocation, and even within the same vocation, according to the degree of the spiritual life. It normally diminishes with progress in infused contemplation, but its total disappearance would not be a reassuring sign.

[2] Evidently an illiterate sister may make an excellent lay-sister, very contemplative and entirely surrendered, but she is entering a state of life which will never include any responsibilities and her environment will give her through her hearing the doctrinal sustenance which is indispensable to her as well as to the others. Religious life would be impossible in a community where everyone was illiterate.

give solidity to readings done later.[1] It allows one to judge them and put them in their right place: every new contribution is inserted in a balanced, doctrinal synthesis.

But after that, it is not necessary in itself, at any rate not for everyone or at all ages. It might, for example, not be indispensable in a contemplative life as such (I mean by this a contemplative life including no apostolate). There may be exceptional cases: a special vocation, an intellectual temperament (rare in a woman), or again for use in a struggle with obsessions or temptations. But normally when the amount of training indispensable for each is assured, the life of faith and prayer sustains itself with divine office, hearing sermons, spiritual reading, rather than by study properly so called.

It would be interesting—but that is not our object—to show the indispensable role of doctrinal sustenance where contemplation is concerned: we should first have to insist on the close relations between theology and contemplation: their object is the same—God and his mysteries; they have the same light—faith; they exercise the same faculty—the intellect; only the mode of activity is different: in the one case, a simple look; in the other, reasoning. But having said that, one would have to make many distinctions from the psychological point of view. One would need first of all to differentiate between the two degrees of contemplation, according to whether the effort and activity of the subject predominates, or, on the contrary, passive reception of a gift.[2]

[1] One fact is especially striking: the sisters who lack this training and who would therefore have most need of solid, doctrinal reading, are the very ones who look for sentimental books, edifying stories, private revelations, etc. They make the great success of a whole type of literature on the level of shop girls' novels transposed into a key of affected piety. Those on the contrary who have had a good doctrinal training go straight to the best books. Another sign of the utility of a solid basic training.

[2] The term 'acquired contemplation' as contrasted with 'infused contemplation' was not generally accepted until after Thomas a Jesu c.d. (ob. 1627) wrote his book *De Contemplatione Divina*. At that time the distinction was perhaps needed: precise distinctions had to be established in order to defend St John of the Cross against accusations of illuminism. Whatever one's opinion of the opportuneness of this may be, one cannot help thinking that the term is not really well chosen: 'acquired' seems to suggest possession or stability. Moreover, this 'acquired' contemplation is supernatural and needs an infused element as a basis, since it presumes at least the exercise of the theological virtues, and, in some cases, of the gifts. Cf. on all this R. P. Garrigou-Lagrange, especially his *Christian Perfection and Contemplation*, ch. iv and note, vol. II, p. 745 *sqq*. Ed. of 'La Vie Spirituelle', St Maximin, 1923.

As far as the former case is concerned, a solid doctrinal sustenance plays an important part in our life of prayer. It deepens our faith while it expands at the same time the field of truth assimilated, affording at once food and security.

Infused contemplation is a contract made in silence, a gratuitous gift of God. Here, spiritual reading, *lectio divina*, continues to act as a precious protection. On this level, however, it does not lead directly to contemplation. It belongs to a different order and it would be a mistake not to emphasize this, for Christian contemplation must not be brought down to the level of an intellectual act reserved for an intelligentsia—a sort of platonism ignorant of the fact that God's gifts are gratuitous.

Moreover, it is not usual for a soul to receive continuously this gift of infused contemplation. A doctrinal nourishment proposes the object, inflames the fervour, focusses thought on divine things and prepares the soul, as far as she can be prepared, for no preparation can of itself bring about the meeting.

B. The needs of human activity

Let us return to the study which is part of a religious training, and consider its indispensability, not from the point of view of knowledge this time, but from that of the needs of human activity.

Human life, religious life, even the most contemplative, does not in this world consist only in knowing and loving but also in doing. I am not speaking of special exterior activity, nursing, teaching or other, but of daily work such as is to be found in every life. Speculative knowledge is not enough by itself nor goodwill alone[1] the practical intellect must also be enriched and adjusted: this is the entire role of the virtue of prudence.[2]

What then is the function of study here? It is only too true that science, even moral science, does not necessarily lead to

[1] Goodwill is enough to show simple people when to ask advice and how to follow it, if it is good (II–II, q.47, a.14, ad 2m). But that is not enough to make adults of them in their faith and conduct. And religious ought to be an elite among Christians, prudent and firm, able to counsel and enlighten those who come to them.

[2] Notice the theological meaning of this word: it is *not* cautious avoidance of all risk. Prudence is the virtue that orders our whole life in view of its end, and in the light of reason illumined by faith. We shall speak of this again.

virtue. It is possible to meet very learned people who lack prudence and do not know how to make the best of their lives. Their judgment has not been formed by all their years of study.

Three remarks must be made here:

Firstly, there are different kinds of knowledge. Not every branch of study will be suitable for us, we need Sacred Science, a wisdom to shape us entirely. General views of the plan of our salvation, of the mystery of Christ, lights on Christ life, grace and beatitude cannot but spur us on to tend towards our end. This should reshape us, by making us focus all our being on the one object to which we have consecrated our whole life, God.[1]

Again, as we are talking of religious, we are entitled to presuppose a general good will, lacking perhaps to the above-mentioned scientist. Here the problem is rather how best to enlighten their goodwill, and study brings light to bear upon it.

Our moral life, to be virtuous, must be penetrated with reason and faith and directed by sure principles; but principles can only be a matter of knowledge: to acquire the other virtues practice and repeated acts suffice. But to acquire the prudence which governs all other virtues in the light of the intelligence, we need in addition an indispensable degree of knowledge. Obviously the Holy Spirit can infuse it into the soul directly, but normally we are left to acquire it by our personal investigations, by our experiences or by study.[2] Study does not supply all the wealth given by experience in the undefined world of concrete cases with which our activities deal, but it contributes principles, a solid scaffolding. Moreover, it does not prevent us from making discoveries later on, nor from enriching ourselves by experience; on the contrary it enables us to make better use of what we acquire in these ways, by inserting them into a steady synthesis. Even less does study prevent the Holy Ghost from bestowing his gifts. At the same time it obtains for us a methodical, balanced knowledge of the

[1] An experienced superior remarked in connection with this, that the study of doctrine is a remedy for the somewhat artificial spirituality produced by some kinds of training. The 'forced under glass' type of spirituality engendered in some noviciates finds it difficult to adapt itself later to the activity of a life devoted to good works. A theological training provides a more solid basis which cannot be shaken by any changes of climate or environment.

[2] II–II, q.47, a.15c: per inventionem secundum viam experimenti, vel per disciplinam.

principles viewed as a whole by which we ought to regulate our lives. Nor must we neglect or despise this effect on our moral life of knowledge acquired by study. Given an equal amount of goodwill a more enlightened soul should walk more surely than another less enlightened. On the other hand we must not overrate it: in actual fact the acquisition of moral science makes very little difference to the real level of morality.

Again—this is our third and absolutely essential remark—from this point of view of reforming our activity, the important thing is not so much *what* we learn, as *how* we learn it, and what is the result in depth of training: we shall consider here not so much the moral science that the nuns study in the course of their doctrinal programme; we shall rather examine, on a more psychological level, the whole personal complex produced by study: it does not only furnish a system of sure data with which to enlighten our choice (e.g., a better knowledge of moral or canon law and of its scope), etc. Its irreplaceable advantage is a shaping of the entire personality: by developing the faculty at the head of the others, it contributes, if rightly conducted, to a perfectly harmonious grouping of all our powers.

Everyone needs this readjustment, and we nuns more than anyone, both as women and as nuns. One of the commonest feminine defects and the root of all the others, is the preponderance of impressionability and imagination. Among religious the danger is greater than among others: the absence of any masculine influence, the lack of the maternity which would complete a woman's maturity, emotions acting and re-acting upon one another in a vicious circle, and often the absence of any real responsibility as well, all this may push them down the slippery path to sentimentality and silliness. Some so-called 'holy pictures' give us an idea of this. Many educators of religious, alarmed at this tendency, have vigorously endeavoured to make 'virile' nuns. But if their training does not secure the balance of the human being based on reason, such training only succeeds in hardening the sensibility, thus sterilizing the one and only thing that makes us wholly women. Even if our minds have been trained and we are properly competent for some special task, that is not the irreplaceable

quality, it is not what people come to ask of us.[1] They want a goodness the more generous that it is more enlightened, a tenderness all the more motherly that it is purified by the vow of chastity, a heart all the readier to open to them that it is not filled by anything earthly. A religious education that hardens all that is a caricature—worse still, a mutilation.

Neither little schoolgirl nor dragoon! A harmonious balance is to be found by simply adapting the training to the real structure of the human organism. It is proper to man to govern himself by reason, and prudence is the virtue of such government. Then the different virtues perfect our faculties so that they obey reason as is fitting. Virtue, therefore, must be far more strongly established in the reason[2] since the latter has to judge and order everything. Each of the other virtues leads us to its own good, but if all were not constantly guided by reason they would be nothing but blind impulses, and no act of theirs would be morally good.[3]

Hence the capital importance of prudence which determines all our actions, ordering them to our end in the light of reason illumined by faith. Anyone can see that this is the chief object in the education of all human beings and most of all in that of a religious. This object has sometimes been overlooked in noviciates, on account of an erroneous conception of obedience tending to annihilate a novice's judgment by substituting for her own decision the impulse given by another. Pushed to extremes, this would empty the human being of all that makes virtue possible.

No virtue without prudence. Whence one might conclude (although not absolutely, for God is master of his gifts) that without training of the judgment and the reason, there will be no virtue.

Now study exercises our rational mind. It also leads us to an objectivity which gives everything its rightful place on the plane both of our consciousness of it, and of our judgment on

[1] We do not intend to belittle the scientific value of our work as religious. If we can contribute something that is of value technically, it is all the better. We simply mean that our contribution in the technical or scientific order is not peculiar to us; it could be made by priests or laymen.

[2] I–II, q.57, a.5; II–II, q.47, a.7; *De Virt.*, q.1, a.65c. et concl.

[3] I–II, q.66, a.3 ad.3m.

it. It gives us a perspective of the ends and the habit of seeing the relation of means to their end, of estimating their fitness and exact proportions. It should teach us to reason rightly, to think in an orderly way, to distinguish between essentials and accessories, to measure the import of a statement.[1] It contributes thus towards enlightening and forming the judgment, to establishing true prudence[2] in us, and hence the whole harmony of virtues, each of which is increased in value by being thus flooded with light.

One ought to insist specially on the beneficent role played by intellectual training in the exercise of obedience.

Such training frees and deepens obedience, firstly, because it teaches us exactly what obedience is.[3] There have been ways of understanding obedience which diminish human personality and are thus contrary to true prudence. To obey is not to abdicate one's intellect. Its place is not in the speculative judgment except in the form of a cordial welcome and an especial receptivity when the superior's decision has been expressed. It forms docility in us: all that an obedient will can do to open the intelligence and make it flexible must be done to make the judgment of the subject agree with that of the superior in everything that is not contrary to the law of God and of the Church, and does not lie outside the superior's competence. This attitude would not be formally obedience, for it is concerned here with the speculative judgment, but it is the attitude of the truly obedient man in his speculative judgment.[4] Obedience is an act of the will by which it conforms itself to

[1] It is useful to everyone but especially to women. We feel the need of the absolute and we have a tendency to find it in things of no importance, and to assign a disproportionate value to means and to details. We could find constitutions for women which seem to put the manner of pinning a veil on the same level as the great precepts of the Gospel: fraternal charity or almsgiving.

[2] II–II, q.49, a.5c et ad 2m.

[3] Cf. Obedience and the Religious of To-day, Collection: 'Problems of the Religious of To-day'. (Ed., du Cerf, 1951.)

[4] 'The third and supreme degree . . . is to have not only the same will as the superior, but the same thought, submitting one's own judgment to his, as far as a will which has already submitted can carry the intelligence with it. Although the intelligence has not the same freedom as the will and assents by its natural impulse to what seems to it to be true, yet in many cases where the mind is not constrained by the evidence of the truth, the will is able to incline it to one side or the other; and it is in such cases that everyone who is really obedient will give way to the wish of his superior'. St Ignatius Loyola, *Spiritual Letters*.

the superior's will, and not of the intelligence which would be obliged to approve the objective value of the order given.[1]

Intellectual training is of service to obedience in many other ways. It teaches us to ponder the exact meaning of a text. We have to conform our conduct to an order we have received. Respect for another's thought is the first requisite here: we must not make others seem to say what they have not said; we must estimate the exact meaning of a word, we must learn to quote it in its context every time instead of cutting it out and using it by itself. How many sayings of superiors, of founders, have been thus erected into principles, hardened into a rigid sense which was never in the mind of the original speaker.[2]

We need therefore, besides, the sense of analogy, one of the invaluable benefits of study: to adapt one's judgment to the variety in things, to grant everything a measure of importance proportioned to its real value, to apply an order in a different way according as circumstances differ. Thus we endeavour to follow the superior's intentions as closely as possible, whereas a more material obedience may trap her with her own words. This flexibility in loyalty is the best and most difficult form of fidelity, just because it demands a personal effort every time

[1] This does not imply that the subject should analyse the character of an order she is given. As inferior a sister is not competent to judge the requirements of the common good which have inspired the superior's order. But on the other hand the inferior does not abdicate her human dignity and she is responsible for her actions. She cannot shift on to anyone else's shoulders, not even on to those of her superior, the responsibility inherent in the nature of a reasonable being. She must therefore see whether the order received is fit to be executed; her own judgment and decision occupy a place between the hearing and the execution of the order. It is either right or wrong for her to do as she has been told—right or wrong with regard to the moral law on which her reason is commissioned to decide for her. If it is right, she obeys the order given, but, as is clear, with perfect freedom. If wrong, she is bound to refuse to obey. Her liberty asserts itself in this refusal, just as it asserts itself at another time in her eagerness to obey. No vow of obedience can deprive her of the use of her reason and her liberty. This is the limit beyond which no control of one man over another may go. This is an almost literal translation of Note 166, on IIa–IIae, q.50, a 2c by R. P. Deman, in *La Prudence*, Summa Theologica, Coll. *la Revue des Femmes* (Ed., du Cerf.)

[2] We should distinguish between the personal and the collective planes: what we said is always true on the personal plane: every religious should make sure of the exact meaning of the words addressed to her by her superior, But on the plane of the laws of an institute and the words of a founder, it is not everybody's business to decide the problem of their adaptation and their value as a standard. That is done by those whose responsibility it is: superiors and general chapters. Nothing does more harm than to keep on raising doubts about the meaning of the law.

to enter more deeply into the superior's way of thinking, instead of acting mechanically and passively executing the order received without grasping the intention of the chief.

Understood in this way, obedience opens the door to all kinds of initiative, and gives a feeling of responsibility towards the work imposed. The sacrifice is all the more valuable that it represents every time the free offering of a human being made for no other reason than that the superior represents God.

On her side, the superior has to respect in her sisters both their utterly surrendered will, and their personal value, increased by study.

On the human level first of all, the superiors when dealing with trained subjects have to respect their competence. The fact of being invested with authority does not mean that one is necessarily qualified to do everything;[1] it might happen that some superiors dislike being outclassed by their inferiors, and to 'teach them humility' give them work at which their talents are wasted. As far as these sisters are concerned they only have to obey simply, without judging their superior; there is no problem here. But it would be a grave mistake for a superior to put aside her most valuable subjects and risk diminishing all the apostolic efficiency of her house or of the institute itself, and prejudice the common good. The higher the intellectual standard of the institute, the more need it has of deeply supernatural superiors, able to accept the greater competence of others and even to urge them to go further than they themselves could, for love of the common good and from a deep sense of serving the Church. A superior should safeguard the coherence of the whole while at the same time leaving to each individual the maximum of responsibility and free play for her activity within the sphere entrusted to her; the whole in an atmosphere of loyalty, mutual respect and trust.

Study does, as a matter of fact, present certain grave problems for superiors—we shall come back to them. This seems

[1] In well-ordered institutes the contrary happens: as far as possible, the sisters who possess qualifications extremely useful to the community or valuable with respect to its especial ends, are not named superiors: save in exceptional cases, a professor of philosophy, a social assistant, render more service by doing the special work for which they are competent, than if they were superiors.

to be one of the most critical, for it concerns the way in which authority and obedience are understood. Admittedly study makes the exercise of authority more difficult, not indeed because it might make the sisters less obedient, but because it makes them grown-up, emancipated, able to judge for themselves; they can no longer be treated as minors.

A certain training, for example, turns exclusively on 'the will of God'. The whole desire of our consecrated hearts is certainly to be in constant unison with that will. But we must be careful not to make it a convenient reason for dispensing ourselves from having recourse to prudence and letting ourselves deviate either towards illuminism[1] or authoritarianism.[2]

In the same order of ideas, one is obliged to admit that study develops the critical faculty. Now this is considered a most dangerous thing to have in a community. A distinction must be made however: there is a negative and destructive spirit of criticism which tends to undermine and pull down and which must not be mistaken for the healthy critical judgment. The latter is a normal function of the human intelligence and an indispensable condition of progress and re-adjustment. It needs education instead of systematic repression, should be loyally used in a true religious spirit with all confidence in the superior. Young sisters must learn to use it in a constructive sense, for the good of the whole, with courage and humility. It is quite healthy if used in an atmosphere of confidence. And if a superior welcomes the criticism and invites the critic to collaborate with her in seeking the causes of the evil and possible improvements, that will be excellent training for the critic herself and a gain for everybody: such criticism, so used, is a leaven of progress and a condition of health for the whole body. It profits religious life as a whole.

[1] A prioress in a contemplative monastery, giving a novice permission to practise penances which would ruin her health, told her: 'It is certainly not prudent, but I think it is God's will for you'. She may have meant human prudence, but one sees the tendency there is to contrast the judgment of reason with a light that cannot be verified.

[2] We might say with R. P. Chevignard that 'the will of God often serves as a cloak for obvious abuse of authority'. Without wishing to go so far, we might remind superiors that if an order given by them becomes the will of God for an inferior, it is all the more reason for them to bear their superiority with fear and trembling. Above all, they must not allow themselves to grow so used to this equivalence that they are inclined to take their own will for God's.

Many institutes complain of the scarcity of superiors, of the lack of subjects capable of filling positions of trust. But if every sister were trained to use her judgment[1] to make responsible decisions, to be 'prioress of her own soul' there would be far more subjects able to exercise over the whole community the control they have learnt to exercise over themselves.

The object of education is not to make a well-behaved child, but a man. The aim of a noviciate is not to make good novices, but religious. A good training, instead of trying to produce nothing but docile subjects, ought to make use of their docility itself to raise them to an ever higher degree of autonomous, adult prudence, and this is where study plays an extremely valuable role.

The benefit of this training is felt in many domains: take for example the domain of chastity which is so often a mine of scruples and difficulties, all the more insoluble that the subject dares not or is unable to explain herself clearly, and that often the superiors know no more about it than the sisters. The training of the judgment which puts everything in its right place prevents people from confusing temptation with sin, a physiological fact with a voluntary act, etc. Here again the subject is set free to practise a deeper and more personal virtue.[2]

Another benefit of the autonomy of the judgment deserves mention: it allows and protects certain zones of silence which would otherwise be constantly violated.

Silence about self is certainly part of what God demands of a consecrated soul. He wants to be free to work in us, and we must surround his action with immense respect. But many contemplatives, for want of theological training, are obliged to set forth their experience at length every time a fresh grace has touched and perhaps bewildered them. And this very necessity makes them consider themselves, try to explain their case and describe themselves, all of which is directly opposed to the demands of silence and risks sterilizing the graces they have thus exposed.

Anyone can see the benefit of a theological training deep

[1] Were it only in order to know that in such and such a case it is not for her to judge—which is a sign of judgment and of spiritual maturity.

[2] Cf. *Chastity*. Problems of Religious To-day. (Ed. du Cerf, 1953.) English translation (Blackfriars Publications)

enough to rectify one's personal reflexes and one's judgment on the most interior plane so that God may be able to pour his graces into us in silence, without exciting the curiosity of others or our own uneasiness; our immediate reactions will be healthy and sure enough not to need endless vague adjustments which are always an obstacle to spiritual progress. Here there must be no mistake: we do not intend to minimize the role of direction and spiritual advice. Every religious is free to have recourse to these according to her need. She will even make use of them with more profit to herself if she has had a training which enables her to be more exact and more objective. But this will be as it should: the free initiative of an adult and not a cry for help from a child who cannot find its own way.

One might consider in this way all the virtues, all the occurrences of religious life. Contemplatives are often very much left to themselves and unsupported; nurses, social assistants, missionaries, etc., find themselves in numbers of unforeseen situations, and have neither the time nor the means of getting advice.

It is not possible to insist too much on a healthy and well-grounded moral training—one, that is to say, which succeeds not only in furnishing the judgment with matter, but in correcting the judgment itself: teaching it the rightful place of everything by confronting it with its end.

Thus the training of the intelligence by study bestows freedom on it, a personal liberty extending throughout our moral life and imbued with honesty and clearness.

The role of study, however, is not only to enlighten and adjust the judgment, it brings with it many other intellectual good habits which affect our life of prayer beneficially.

To begin with, it proves a systematic education for the attention. All will agree that when we try to pray, the greatest obstacle is the plague of distractions that assail us. Simone Weil remarked acutely that even learning to write Latin prose or solve a geometrical problem affords a gymnastic exercise for the attention, making it more compliant in time of prayer. The hard mental discipline of concentration, of application to a given object whether pleasing or not, is an excellent prepara-

tion for achieving that permanent attention that we all long to have in prayer.

Study can and ought to help us to keep the rule of silence, for it gives us special exercises in the habit of this interior self-control: the necessity of passing from one branch to another, the duty of interrupting, not only the material occupation of reading or writing, but even all reflection upon it when we are called to office, etc. . . . The very fact that it brings to our inward conversations a definite subject imposed by obedience, prevents them from degenerating into mere chatter; and this objective content is sufficiently solid to give a better purchase to our most interior effort at silence. The control of the imagination given by study is all to the good of contemplation.

Again, as study consists essentially in the exercise of the intellect, it brings the whole being into an attitude of receptivity and transparency . . . the attitude of the intellect itself in the pure exercise of its action: the intelligence being a power which loses itself in the very moment of its action: when it knows, it becomes the object of its knowledge. Here we have at a very deep level, the whole personality being swept into the privileged attitude which should be ours face to face with God and with the souls of others.

Study provides a favourable atmosphere for the assessment of values. It should flood our lives with light: in its essence it is an unremitting quest for truth, and it tends to impregnate our lives with truth.

Perhaps lying is an especially feminine failing. Whether this is so or not, some convents or individual nuns contrive to give an impression of a want of frankness, a something hidden, doubtful, which often makes people feel uncomfortable.

Our veil enwraps and symbolizes the mystery of our consecration, but it ought not to serve at the same time to cover up our meannesses and unavowable pettinesses. Evidently we have to be very discreet in speaking of the community and its private life, but that is no excuse for an exclusiveness that refuses to admit its defects and shortcomings. People do not always find in us nuns the beautiful human qualities of confidence and the candour that looks one straight in the face. If there is a difficulty, a misunderstanding, one ought to be

able to get at the truth and clear the matter up simply and frankly.

Our love tends towards the God of truth with all its might. Yet we find it so difficult to pour truth into our lives, into our whole lives, on the individual level and on the collective level. A training which would make us apply ourselves to the search for divine truth, would surely help us to live individually and collectively entirely in truth.

Here, too, there is no necessary transition. One may be occupied all one's life with speculative truth, and yet tolerate falsehood within oneself, without even perceiving its gravity. At a certain depth the Holy Spirit alone can enlighten us sufficiently to be conscious of it. But it is, nevertheless, a fact that the objective search for truth creates a favourable atmosphere, both on the personal and the community level. Once again, the object of our study is not abstract truth but God with all that he implies.

At the root of truth is humility, and this is where study should help us much, because of its objectivity and receptivity, on condition that it is sufficiently well directed to be a true training and a personal education. Otherwise, if it only leads (as is too often the case in the race for certificates) to the acquisition of knowledge and information, instead of helping us to plunge deeper into humility, it might feed our vanity or give our instinctive coquetry new feathers with which to deck itself. . . . The way, therefore, in which this training is conceived and carried out, is of the first importance.

The very fact of studying creates an atmosphere which affects us even more deeply than the manner in which we do it. Devoting part of our precious time to this apparently unproductive activity, will restore to us the sense of the value of the intellect.

For the last few centuries, all the dynamism of thought has been directed towards will and action. 'In the beginning was the Act', suggested Goethe. This mentality has more or less consciously inspired all Christian behaviour, even religious training.

I am thinking, for example, of the narrow voluntarism shown in some training systems hinging entirely on the duty

of our state in life. There is no question here of minimizing that duty and denying its necessary place in our lives. But it is a matter of finality and of emphasis: we must accomplish the duty of our state, of course, but simply in order to please our Lord, and not in a rigid, arid spirit, so unlike the atmosphere of the Gospel.

This putting the emphasis on the duty of our state instead of on love, on what is due instead of on the beatific vision, on the will, to the detriment of the intelligence is all part of one error. Duty is separated from good, and the child is imprisoned in an ethical system instead of being allowed to expand and bloom in his native climate of contemplation and of the theological virtues. The damage is all the greater when this deviation is found in a course of training which takes hold of the young in the full impetus of their first gift of themselves, and penetrates them to the depths. They risk being 'moralized' by it, and rendered incapable for life of flying higher.

Instead of tending in all simplicity towards their full happiness, they fling themselves recklessly into action, in God's service, of course. But in it they risk forgetting our Lord's words: 'I do not speak of you any more as my servants. . . . I have called you my friends' (John 15, 15).

With this they end in a practical refusal of what Christian love demands: look in order to love, look because you love. The six days are for the seventh, all man's work is in view of leisure for contemplation. And, looked at in this way, reading and study are to be classed with contemplation in the category of what is gratuitous and generous. The very fact that the sisters in an institute are under the same obligation to reserve time for reading and study as for prayer, saves them from the risk of being entirely caught up in the wheels of work.

Study, again, is an occupation which brings in nothing tangible and has no immediate result. Should it be deep and go beyond the easy level of learning by heart, or acquiring information, it is difficult to measure the amount done day by day. Just as in the spiritual life the value of a real training may take years to appraise. Therefore, devoting hours of a religious life to the disinterested activity which study is, reserving a place in time-tables for intellectual work, is a concrete affirma-

tion of belief in the value of intelligence, and of a determination to grant it all its rightful place in our spiritual life.

Hitherto we have seen that study is useful to our moral life by the light it sheds, by the training it affords, by the favourable atmosphere it diffuses; we must add that in its very exercise, above all when organized, included in the build-up of a religious life, study presents opportunities of practising many virtues, some of them not otherwise obtainable.

It brings obedience into depths inaccessible without it. Not that it plays any role in the interior of intellectual activity (here we find a problem running parallel to that of 'obedience of judgment' of which we spoke above). But what corresponds analogically in intellectual life to obedience is receptivity. Receptivity with regard to the courses of study, the professors, the ideas, the methods. This takes the student far, specially if she has already been used to personal study before entering religion.

We must insist on the ascetic value of study:[1] discipline of the formal mind, of application to an object, of concentration, of the imagination which needs to be stripped; discipline by acceptance of the ideas of others, etc. . . . Our intelligence is our own most personal domain, and the freest. Therefore the discipline of the intellectual effort is one of the hardest, because it goes to the very roots of our being. It is more difficult to compel oneself to make an intellectual effort, than to force oneself to do manual work, because the former is further from our control: our will commands our muscles directly, but has less purchase on our faculties. Everyone knows from experience, that at times of great weariness or of indolence, one gladly takes refuge in any kind of needlework.

For a religious, study is the only way of integrating the gift of herself in to her intellectual life, and her intellectual activity in to her religious life. Organized study obliges us to put this most independent and most jealously reserved domain into the crucible and the mortar of a common training. Then the gift of oneself will at last be able to conquer all that is within, and nothing will escape its control.

As a moment's relaxation, I should like to propose an allegory, in which the intellect would be represented by

[1] Carnem macerat propter studii laborem (II–II, q.188, a.5c).

Jerusalem, towards the end of the second millenium before Christ: it had escaped being conquered by the Jews, and was considered impregnable.[1] Foreign potentates might and did try to impose arbitrary taxes ('obedience of the judgment') on it, but had never been able to enter and collect them. In spite of its central position, it remained an enclave, sometimes indifferent, sometimes hostile, always closed. You have already guessed that study is the ophel by which obedience slips into the proud city reputed impregnable. Behind it you would see the whole army of the religious virtues coming in good order to take possession of the city, so that the latter becomes the capital and governs the whole kingdom—as it was destined to do by nature and by its position, as well as in the divine plan.

This penetration is made at the same time from the point of view of the mental exercise itself and from the point of view of the object of study. Take, for example, a woman with a university degree in philosophy who is entering a convent where no study is pursued. She may not find it difficult to give up her intellectual activities perhaps, but the pagan luggage she has brought in will remain encysted as it were, latent, half forgotten, offered to God as a holocaust perhaps, but not permeated and saturated with the stream of her religious life. If she has to go through a serious doctrinal training, she will be obliged to revise her former ideas and to christianize her thought itself. It would seem the only way to make the whole of her, including her intelligence, into a religious. This faculty, the best part of ourselves, which ought to lead all the rest, cannot remain outside our training and our life without grave consequences. First of all, as we have insisted, from the point of view of our self-government: the kingdom is deprived of its capital. Above all, from a more essential point of view, the gift does not include us in our entirety, which means, I think, less glory for our Lord.

Once the conquest is achieved and peace made however, the mode of occupation may become different. After the period of training, the methods of acquiring knowledge and of perfecting ourselves change. We have already spoken of the difference

[1] Cf. 2 Kings; 1 Paralip. 11, 4–7.

between study properly so called, its technique, and doctrinal sustenance which does not mean work and effort. We have shown in speaking of the life of work and prayer, that study as such may not be necessary for every religious at every period of her life. It must be also said with regard to prudence and virtuous action: once a synthetic view of the content of our faith and of the principles governing all our activity has been acquired, once the judgment is formed, there is no necessity for study to continue. Prudence depends much more on experience than on study,[1] since its real domain is the infinite diversity proper to human actions which cannot be learnt except by the repetition of concrete cases. This is too evident to need more than a mention.

II

Where our personal life is concerned, it is thus not necessary to continue study indefinitely; it suffices to feed that life at the springs of Holy Writ, of doctrine, of spiritual writers.

It is quite another matter when this life has to be communicated to others by apostolate or by the teaching of doctrine: then it is absolutely necessary to study up to the level of the teaching required.

Two preliminary questions are to be considered before inquiring what the position of this study is with regard to the gift of truth.

First, a question of lawfulness: in what measure is apostolate or the teaching of doctrine permitted to women?

There are two texts of St Paul which refer to this: 'Women are to be silent in the churches' (1 Cor. 14, 34), and 'A woman shall have no leave from me to teach' (1 Tim. 2, 12). It would be worthwhile to make an exegetical examination of these texts, not only with regard to their literary context, but as seen in their historical and sociological environment and in the light of the abuses that St Paul was denouncing, but this is not the place.

It stands out clearly from them—besides being evident from the practice of the Church—that preaching, the official teach-

[1] II–II, q.47, a.15c; q.49, a.1c.

ing of doctrine and the role of doctor are not permitted to women.

At the opposite end of the scale, it is quite clear that their proper tasks are those of a mother, teaching religion to her children and elementary catechism to those of her household.

Between the two there is a very wide margin, and perhaps St Thomas provides us with a basis for agreement in an answer on the subject of St Mary Magdalen: *apostolorum apostola.*[1]

The party objecting is astonished at this, and we must admit that it is an extreme case: she was told to go and teach the first pope the central mystery of our faith, the resurrection of Christ. Surely that is not fitting for a woman, less still for a sinful woman! And of course, St Paul's two texts to hand. St Thomas answers: Everyone knows women are not allowed to teach officially in the Church; but they are permitted to give instruction to some people unofficially, in the form of domestic guidance.[2] And the clinching argument comes from St Ambrose: 'Woman is sent to those of her household' *ad eos femina mittitur que domestica sunt.*

Neither the text of St Thomas nor that of St Ambrose are so important here as the use St Thomas makes of St Ambrose's text: he applies the phrase *qui domestici sunt* to St Peter in relation to St Mary-Magdalen. For him the 'house' *domus*, has a wide embrace. As St Thomas himself invites us to this breadth of view, we need only follow him. Once the principle is laid down, the application may vary with times and places,[3] according to the level of civilization, which more or less admits feminine culture, and gives a greater or less place to woman.

[1] III q.55, a.1. ad 3m.

[2] *Mulieri non permittitur publice docere in Ecclesia; permittitur autem ei privatim aliquos domestica admonitione instruere.* Each word has here a rich and exact meaning.—*Publice* does not mean publicly but officially. *Publice docere* refers here to the teaching that is the Church's official function, reserved to the Bishop and to those to whom he entrusts it. *Privatim* is the opposite of *publice:* unofficially. *Instruere* includes not only instruction but training in the Christian way of life. Further on: *qui domestici sunt*, 'those who are of the household', with the broad meaning these words could have in ancient times: think of the family spreading until it is a tribe, in the Semitic world—and of the extension of the *gens* in the Latin world.

[3] To-day in the U.S.A., for example, there is a feminine group of the New York C.E.G. of which Cardinal Spellman is honorary president. Girls speak in the open air. They are given a serious theological and practical training, and pass an examination before being recognized as being 'capable of representing the Church in public'.

In proportion as this place increases, her circle of influence will grow larger[1] and at the same time the number of those who will be influenced by her, *qui domestici sunt*.

Once this is admitted, the lawfulness of doctrinal teaching for nuns is merely a matter of cultural environment and of personal competence.

The second preliminary question deals with the diversity of the ends proper to different institutes. To what a degree does the problem of directing study to an apostolic end concern all religious?

It is evident at once that it is of the highest interest to all institutes directly devoted to apostolic work,[2] contemplatives with circles of apostolic influence, parish teachers, missionaries, etc. For them the necessity of study is essential: as soon as doctrine has to be passed on or explained to others, whether in children's or adult catechisms, or religious teaching, etc., study is rigorously indispensable in strict justice.

What about the others? Those whose end in the mind of their founder or because of the atmosphere of their age, does not directly include the apostolate of Christian doctrine—all those, for instance, whose sole end is to nurse the suffering members of Christ, and to practise the corporal works of mercy?

The very conditions in which the religious life of nuns is now lived have deeply modified the field in which charity operates. Two factors have specially contributed to this: first the de-christianization of the modern world. In a Christian atmosphere, or at least where there is a widespread Christian conscience, everyone understood the meaning and value of charitable works. Faith never came into the question, or at any rate not directly; purely disinterested charity responded to pressing physical necessities.

There is also the fact that charity is being secularized, which means that at any rate in theory the health of everyone is taken charge of by the state itself, which assures, again theoretically, the care of the sick and of the aged, with all the mechanism of hospitals, health insurance, free dispensaries, etc. So that

[1] Cf., H. I. Marron: 'The position of woman in ancient civilization' in *La Chastete*, loc. cit.

[2] We are using 'apostolate' in its exact and correct sense of communication of divine truth.

often the nuns in order to continue their charitable activity are obliged to become state employees.

From the point of view of apostolate, these two phenomena, the secularization of charity and the de-christianization of the modern world have completely changed the position of institutes devoted to works of mercy. In actual fact, much that formerly depended entirely on private initiative is now the business of official departments and could if necessary, be carried on by state-paid lay-people. On the other hand, in a heathen world, the youngest of the sisters who keep the door or do the work of ward-maids may have to provide a real doctrinal message or justify her faith, and this often against militant atheists, trained in dialectics. This strengthens the argument in favour of a solid fundamental training,[1] but also may in some cases increase the need of study adapted to the apostolate of doctrine thus forced upon these institutes, even when it formed no part of their programme at the time when they were founded under different social conditions.

These conditions ought not to alter the end of the congregation, but impose some expansion upon it and perhaps give it its full measure. As long as Christianity lasts, the sick will never cease to be nursed for the love of Christ. What 'you did to one of the least of my brethren here, you did it to me.' That is enough. The nursing is not a bait to make a patient take a sermon, or a pretext for making contact. But we must nurse as people consecrated to God and as though the patients were our Lord himself. This cannot help provoking questions and opening up new horizons, and here is the point at which special preparation is necessary: 'private monition' as St Thomas called it, meaning personal contact, needs, besides a well-trained judgment a more assured and better digested knowledge of doctrine, than teaching in the strict sense: questions are asked point-blank, and adaptation of doctrine to everyone's special difficulties demands a greater mastery of the whole subject.

[1] Note that the argument is also strengthened by the difference in the environment from which the vocations come: a certain convent had four postulants; when the length of time since their baptisms had been added together, the total did not amount to ten years of Christian life; and even if she is not a convert, a girl will not necessarily have absorbed Christianity through every pore during childhood, as used almost always to be the case.

Even for contemplatives there is a somewhat similar problem, for there is hardly any contemplative nun who has not a certain degree of apostolate, in the parlour, for instance, or in her correspondence.[1]

It would seem then that apostolate is becoming almost universal among religious in the modern world—to a greatly varying extent. And in proportion to the extent will be the necessary study in preparation for apostolate.

If apostolate and teaching of doctrine are lawful for women and nuns, even more if conditions in our modern world render it obligatory for almost all religious, we must try to discover from the point of view of theology how study stands in relation to such apostolate.

It may be useful to find out, especially for feminine minds, exactly how the machinery works; we put ourselves entirely into everything we do, we commit ourselves totally, which men do not. An error of perspective might involve serious consequences.

We must distinguish clearly between study as a part of religious training, of which we have spoken in the first part of this lecture, and study undertaken especially for apostolate.

In an apostolic institute the doctrinal training will, of course, be directed towards the proper end of that institute. But it must not be canalized into the future apostolate which would be premature and sterile. It happens sometimes among young people, seminarists for example, that they go straight to works of popularization, because they imagine they will have to teach on that level. Instead of seeing the advantage to themselves of the immense intellectual effort they will be called upon to make over a period of years, they would willingly put up with something predigested; they do not yet know the value of a deep and laborious training, which will allow them, once it has

[1] A contemplative nun who had entered religion not long after her conversion used to receive visits in the parlour from members of her family, all non-Catholics. These questioned her keenly. She admitted that she had been greatly disillusioned (her own word) by not having found in the convent the doctrinal training that she had a right to expect and of which she felt the need. She felt it not only for herself, as it would have been a groundwork and support for her contemplative life, but also for this apostolate of the parlour which circumstances had made one of the duties of her state of life. Her superiors recognized it as a duty and allowed her to exercise it, but did not provide her with the necessary means for doing so.

been personally and vitally assimilated, to give their knowledge easily and simply, and adapt it to all and sundry without cheapening it. The training stage is different from the stage of giving out what one has learnt, and we must not try to combine them. In the time of training itself there may be direct preparation for apostolate: language, missionary or catechetic technique, etc.[1] But here we are speaking simply of doctrinal study which should be done for its own sake without being too much directed towards practice.

Let us now try to fix more exactly the relation of study to apostolate once the period of training is over.

The problem here is far more complex than in the case of profane learning. In the latter case, the teaching flows directly from the study: when one has made a sufficient study of geography, one need only refresh one's knowledge of what one is about to teach.

But when we come to sacred doctrine, all the sources of this science are in God: theology is a sharing in the knowledge God has of himself, which is possibly only if the mind of the theologian is constantly in vital contact with the divine source. The connection is made by a lively faith imbued with charity. Apostolate therefore, doctrinal teaching, is not only the fruit of study, of intellectual effort, of the acquisition of knowledge.

The right formula is that of St Thomas: *contemplata aliis tradere*, 'give to others the fruit of contemplation': apostolate therefore can be nothing but a communication of truths that have been lived at a deep level, which have been passed slowly through the crucible of mental prayer. One cannot give them to others unless one has been in permanent, habitual contact with them, upheld by the lively faith that adores the inscrutable mystery and at the same time lives by its light.

Apostolate therefore, if it is not to be the clash of cymbals, must spring from true, even if simple, contemplation.[2]

[1] Cf., the outline on pp. 2–3; the distinction between doctrinal study (B) and the profane studies needed for the communication of it.

[2] We have also to distinguish between apostolate and doctrinal teaching. For the former a deep and intimate contact with divine truth is absolutely necessary. For the teaching of theology, or catechism, the professor might perhaps give his course by putting the ideas together in the correct order, or even by following a manual step by step. But one asks onself what the effect on his hearers would be.

Where then does study come in? At two points, it seems.

Its first role is to search out and arrange the sciences: when it is necessary to present the truths of faith, the scrutiny becomes closer, the search for intelligibility more urgent, as is habitually the case when one is studying in order to teach. But here, the very fact that divine truth is the science, complicates the relation between its acquisition and its communication. First, from an outside point of view, there are all the moral interventions: a doctrine is often judged by its representatives; and because this doctrine is divine it not only touches the minds of its hearers, it throws its rays into the depths of their hearts. Our mission is to transmit it, but we risk imposing our own opacity between God's pure light and the souls we should enlighten. We can only turn to God and beg him to make us transparent to his light.

At the same time we feel more than ever our responsibility of presenting the truth without distorting it, and therefore the necessity of doing all the necessary work on the intellectual plane. But—and here we are at the heart of the problem—the more we try to fathom its intelligibility, the more we perceive that the secret belongs to God alone and the more we feel the need of plunging into the prayer of faith in order to reach the source.

We have seen that when we have only our personal life to consider, we need not find a connection: we are not obliged to pray about the subject of the teaching we receive or the books we read. But considered with regard to apostolic work, the gift, a connection is essential: we are bound to pray about the subject we are to teach, because we cannot pass it on unless it has been through our contemplation and been washed again at its eternal source.

But the deeper the contemplation, the more silent it is, and the less capable of expressing itself. In order to be able to deliver to others the truths experienced outside the reach of words, we realize more than ever the necessity of study, and we return to it with more light. This to and fro movement drives us from contemplation to study and back again, causing a progressive deepening of both.[1]

[1] From this depth—which corresponds, we think, to the level really required of an apostle—we can see how empty and artificial are the contrasts so often made between contemplation and study, contemplation and apostolate.

Finally, when it comes to communicating knowledge, study again plays a decisive part by securing a way and a check between contemplation and apostolate. What we pass on is what we have contemplated; only, to be able to give it, we must also be in communion with the faith of Holy Church and in the continuity of tradition.

Study assures, with the balance given by a solid doctrinal synthesis, a severe re-adjustment of our general ideas, and provides the correct words, polished as they are by twenty centuries of theological thought.

These words and concepts must also be understood by their hearers; a whole course of adaptation, explanation, of finding their level is indispensable and the whole must be animated by apostolic charity, which holds the two ends of the chain: at one end, the incorruptibility of divine truth, at the other, zeal for the souls of our brethren.

Let us take as an example the preparation of a very simple catechism lesson. Let us suppose the remote preparation already done—doctrinal and religious training, apostolic zeal, knowledge of the environment in which the listeners are at home, etc. But as immediate preparation, a scheme must be worked out on three levels: on the level of intellectual work: a course of catechism needs to be prepared just as a course of geography would; remotely, on the general level of the science to be acquired—this is rather the role of the training stage—and immediately, as regards the special point to be dealt with. This will need, according to the standard of the listeners, some honest and exact work and the more so if the subject is less familiar at the time being.

But also and equally indispensably, the truth to be taught must be brought to life, ripened as it were in the silence of deep mental prayer, otherwise the words may be fruitless and do more harm than good. This is part of the strict professional duty of anyone who has been given doctrinal teaching to do, it does not matter whether it is elementary catechism, or a course of theology, for it is always divine truth.

There is also the manner of imparting knowledge, the art of catechizing strictly so-called, in which so much progress has been made during recent years, with the introduction of new

methods, preparation of drawings, etc. This takes a great deal of time and work, and is not a technique that can be improvized on the spot. But this obvious and necessary aspect of technique must not make us neglect all the other planes of preparation when we have the formidable responsibility of imparting sacred doctrine.

In our apostolic life, we have to do more than transmit the truth, for there is also the moral aspect: we have to exhort and to encourage, we have to play the part of mothers and sisters; when people trust us they come and pour themselves out to us and ask advice.

In most cases, a will that really desires the best, a general view of the requirements of a Christian life, with a little experience will suffice to enable us to help and enlighten those who appeal to us.

However, the choice we have made of a state of life that separates us from the world limits our experience considerably. Here again we shall find the necessity of an objective training acquired intellectually (books, courses of lectures, etc.), to make up for all the personal experience we lack in certain domains.

Evidently, when we have received many confidences, established many close human contracts, we shall have acquired some experience of the problems of others' lives which will be worth far more to us in giving counsel, than anything we may have learnt from books. But it does not alter the fact that a little learning acquired beforehand will be extremely helpful in procuring for us in less time and more safely that irreplaceable experience. Moreover, and above all, it would be folly to count on chance meetings for our instruction: from the mere point of our information, it might leave considerable unsuspected gaps. And this negligence appears even more serious if it is considered from the point of view of the other people: it reveals a lack of apostolic spirit, a want of respect for the souls of our brethren. Some count on the repetition of such contacts to train the young religious progressively. But what about the first people she meets? Are they to serve simply as laboratory experiments for her inexperience and ignorance? It is not a very rare thing to meet with souls estranged from Christian faith and practice by the tactlessness of some nuns. Unfor-

tunately no amount of training and instructions can entirely prevent us from ever being tactless. But we could at least avoid the blunders due to ignorance, by acquiring the necessary principles in morals and the indispensable amount of psychology, to an extent in proportion with our apostolic aim.

We repeat here with respect to apostolate, what we have already said with respect to knowledge. The fact that a young girl enters an institute to live an apostolic vocation, entitles her to receive all the training necessary to enable her to live it to the full.

III

If study is so necessary and brings so many advantages with it, why is there so much objection to it?

For there are objections and of many kinds: some are objective . . . we shall return to them . . . but others are subjective and may spring from latent and more or less subconscious tendencies. In this case the objections made to study or the dangers discovered in it—whether by priests, superiors or the sisters themselves—may be merely a screen to defend an attitude, the causes of which lie deep in his or her hand.

We intend to try to search out the real motives. Some may think this irrelevant, as the study itself is not in question, but we mean to persist because our aim is a concrete one and the finest arguments are wasted on anyone whose objections are not based on reason.

If we want study to secure permanent acceptance, some examination may be desirable in order to establish it in a perfectly clear atmosphere. Let us try very simply to see the truth.[1]

In priests or religious there may be a feeling that their superiority is being affected. Here we have a reflex deeply rooted in male psychology, its expressions and modes varying considerably in different countries and civilizations. The ecclesiastical world has clung to views in this respect which the lay world has for the most part left far behind it. Perhaps

[1] Here, more than anywhere in the course of this difficult exposition which touches on so many sensitive points, I realize the difficulty of my task. But it seems to me that if a thing really needs saying, I have no right to evade it.

this may be due to a traditional training which seems to retain something resembling fear of or contempt for women.

There is also, to speak plainly, the natural tendency to take the line of least resistance and prefer, on the level of action, an easy government, or, on the intellectual level, a lazy disinclination to think out difficult ways of adaptation, and change accustomed situations, etc. It might happen, for instance, that a country parish priest had absolute authority over a small group of nuns isolated from their congregation, and made use of their zeal and readiness beyond the bounds of discretion. A better-trained superior would keep her religious within the limits indispensable to the balance of their life. If she had studied canon law, it would be her duty to have it obeyed and prevent abuse of power. Naturally the parish priest prefers things as they are.

There are chaplains too, who give short instructions to nuns regularly, and who do not perhaps really desire to see the standard of their listeners rise and make them harder to please.

It is perhaps useful to point out this latent disposition, although it is fortunately becoming rarer.

Objection to studies is to be met with not only among priests, but also among superiors. Why should this be so?

It happens sometimes that those whose shoulders bear the responsibility for an entire institute express in this way their fidelity to the letter of the rule, or to a 'tradition' or something thought to be such, thus giving importance to mere means without considering their just relation to the end nor their intrinsic value. The speciality of all founders is their anxiety to adapt their work to an epoch and to given needs. This is evident since they were not satisfied with what existed in their own time and thought it well to found something else. This proves that adaptation is the best form of fidelity . . . not an easy form either because it demands so much prudence and such a sure judgment from superiors. It would need a supple and solid training, and they have not had it. The very refusal of these superiors to allow their subjects to study doctrine is the best proof of their own lack of such training.

Again, there is the whole question of authority and obedience, inevitably brought up with regard to intellectual training. We have already spoken of this above.

Where the sisters themselves are concerned, objections to the idea of study arise from two errors: too great passivity or too great activity.

A contemplative who has experience of infused light is conscious that it is worth more than all the knowledge that can be acquired. She is right of course. But from that to despising the latter, there is but one step, easily taken, especially by a woman's mind and one which by hypothesis lacks basic training.

We must point out to her that the one does not exclude the others: study is no obstacle. St Thomas' ecstasy of 6 December, 1273, came after he had written the *Summa Theologica*, at the end of a life completely filled with intellectual work. Why could not the Holy Spirit enlighten a soul that has made all the effort possible on her side, as well and even better than a soul that has done nothing at all?[1]

In this attitude there is a risk of angelism, a refusal to accept the limitations of our human condition and of the normal ways of Providence.[2] St Gregory warns us that 'the contemplative'

[1] St John of the Cross recommends us not to enter upon 'the way of the Spirit' until the soul can no longer make use of meditation and reasoning. (*Ascent of Mount Carmel*, Bk. II, ch. xii and xiii.)

[2] This attitude is entirely opposed to the direction in which the Word of God points . . . think of all the praise of wisdom, of the recommendations about instructing ourselves, etc. And at a deeper level: think of the fact that Revelation is the Word, and is addressed to our intellect. Those who think otherwise try to adduce texts: There is first the verse of Ps. 120 (Vg) *quoniam non cognovi litteraturam, introibo in potentias Domini*, sometimes translated 'because I have no knowledge of books, I shall enter into the power of the Lord' (Hugueney). But this is most probably a gloss. The poor scribe was frankly giving warning that he had not been able to read a certain letter (non cognovi litteraturam) and his warning was incorporated into the text by the scribe who copied from him. This seems a fragile basis on which to build a spirituality. There are also all the texts of the Gospel on simplicity, and poverty, which are often wrongly interpreted, e.g. Matt. 11, 25: 'Father, I give thee praise that thou hast hidden all this from the wise and the prudent and revealed it to little children'. Read St John Chrysostom's homily in the Breviary: the children are the disciples, '*quasi non formatis adhuc, sed simplicibus*'. Dispositions of the heart are necessary for the reception of the Gospel—but the collaboration of the intelligence in the study of divine things cannot but strengthen these dispositions. Then 'knowledge only breeds self-conceit' (1 Cor. 8). Yes, says St Thomas, if without charity. But with charity it benefits spiritually (II–II, q.188, a.5 ad 2m). Moreover, St Paul is speaking here, not of knowledge as we understand it, but of the gnosis with which the Corinthians were puffed up. If texts in support of this anti-intellectual position are wanted, they must not be sought in Holy Scripture, but rather in the Imitation, where they express the healthy reaction of a spiritual soul against the encroachment of decadent scholasticism. But when theology is not decadent, there is no need for reaction.

who will not make himself a humble—this is the operative word, for there is often pride behind refusal to accept teaching —a humble disciple of truth, will soon become a teacher of error.

With other religious, the objection might come from the need of activity of which we have spoken. They see that study enriches and nourishes them personally and they think it more generous to give themselves utterly and always, until they have emptied themselves and hardened themselves, and they never realize that they are perhaps yielding to a natural need of action.

Our life must be one of pure gift of oneself, in work, in generosity, in self-forgetfulness; that is the proper quality of our religious life. But activism is a counterfeit of the gift of self. A pure gift has no taint of the environment, it will not debase itself by imitating the breathless, frantic rush of the modern world.[1]

Even religious belonging to active congregations, whose special end is the service of our neighbour, bear witness to this and their witness is the more telling that their life is visibly one of entire devotedness.

The reasons for objecting to study are not all subjective, some are objective, for it is quite true that study has its dangers and may develop very perceptible faults in some people. An obvious one in the case of women who study is the desire to play the blue-stocking, out of vanity, pseudo-intellectual conceit, and sometimes a form of naive showing-off.

This fault would certainly be much more shocking in a nun than in anyone else, but it seems to me less dangerous because a soul that is really 'given' will do all she can to correct it in herself. It is only natural that the discovery of immense intellectual realms should go to their heads at first, but a really serious training will give the subject the depth, the build-up, the personal solidity to eliminate the froth on top. Study would keep up this deviation only if it were directed towards acquiring erudition for its own sake or towards being well-informed, from which God preserve us!

[1] A sister who works in a factory is a worker with other workers and works at the same speed. But in the evening she prays for a long time. Also her life is divided by periods in which the pre-eminence of spiritual values asserts itself.

Moreover, in proportion as study becomes general among religious the exceptional appearance of culture in one or another will cease to be striking. The more simply those about us accept our superior education, the more they will help us to wear it simply. Religious life itself offers very suitable correctives for faults of this kind: admonitions from superiors, chapter, fraternal correction (very precious, this) forming a whole of which no sister would have had the benefit if she had remained in the world. Vanity is a real fault, and more shocking and repellent in a religious than in anyone else, but probably less serious, and in any case not the fault of the study itself.

A graver danger, graver because inherent in the nature of things, is that of seeking in study the personal development, which it brings with it as a matter of course, but which ought not to be the end directly sought by a student-nun.

Development! the young seem at times to talk of nothing else. They want to develop themselves and they are right, for if one has a true vocation nothing is more conducive to development, nothing satisfies us more completely than religious life. But this development is won by passing through death: here is the whole lesson of the Cross and the Resurrection. It would be a serious mistake to seek an easy and swift development. The desire to study might be in that case only a form of self-seeking, a camouflaged egoism, a craving to possess, all the stronger that this possession is an inalienable form of wealth and infinitely superior to everything from which the vow of poverty delivers us. Such a desire would be utterly contrary to the complete stripping, necessary as a foundation of any religious life.

The desire for study needs to be thoroughly purified, if it is not to be possessive. This is one of the reasons why study should be firmly organized, systematized, controlled, done under obedience, inserted into the exercise of the religious life, so that as a form of asceticism it may purify the soul and eliminate all personal advantage. In this way all that is gained by study will be entirely to the good of the subject and to the profit of the whole institute.

There is a normal will to know, which only needs to be cor-

rected. But there is also a danger: study risks developing in young, untrained subjects the claim to have a right to know everything, an idea very widespread in the modern world. Women do not often know when to be silent[1] and besides, indiscretion is so general nowadays that for example, some subjects can hardly endure the idea that there are books written especially for superiors, or that reviews publish separate supplements to prevent their falling into everyone's hands.

If one is able to give good and solid nourishment to the appetite for knowledge, this form of curiosity is easily put in its place. But to correct the desire to know everything, the training must be very deeply permeated with respect, with the sense of proportion between information and responsibility, and with love of silence.[2]

Another fault, perhaps more specially feminine, is dilettantism. When study is not directed towards a specifically apostolic end, which is the case with contemplatives, it risks becoming amateurish, superficial and lacking seriousness, the more so if there is not a solid training beneath it. The students waste their time, learn nothing useful, flutter from one thing to another and simply feed that interior chattering that is an obstacle to the work of the Holy Ghost. It would be a thousand times better to wash saucepans than to waste one's time at this game.[3] Evidently study, by its very nature, risks disturbing the silence in the soul by bringing a multiplicity of objects into the field of our cognition. Unless it is sufficiently serious to be

[1] This fault is certainly not peculiar to nuns. But among men the secret of confession develops the sense of this reserve.

[2] Superiors on their side should avoid all esoteric tendencies, and to try to keep for themselves all that is interesting or that adds to our intellectual riches. A member of the Council of the Union of Religious pointed out the scandal of the contrast between the value of certain prioresses' private libraries and the poverty of the common library.

In proportion as the sisters are intellectually trained and reach adult status, it becomes desirable to grant them more latitude in their reading. The superior's only motive should be the good of each subject and of the institute as a whole, and not the kind of jealous possessiveness where interesting sources are concerned.

And if the sisters feel that the superior is unselfish and detached on this point, they will probably accept more easily her reservations and the limits she can and should set to their desire to know.

[3] As this pastime is christened 'study', no one suspects the ascetic and educational value of true study and so the judgments passed on its place and utility in religious life are utterly wrong.

ascetic, it may injure our spiritual life which grows and deepens in silence and unity.

Here we touch on a delicate point. In a contemplative life, the essential attitude is silence before God and the severest austerity will perhaps lie in the keeping of this silence and this state of expectation in the face of God's silence: in the very heart of the desert, we are to refuse every distraction, every diverting of our attention; even if we are left in the desert for twenty years, we may be required to remain perpetually watchful and desiring in the darkness. Then the danger might be that study would offer an escape from God's silence, a chance of flight from the purification necessary in order to reach Mount Horeb.

Therefore, if a contemplative life has to include study, the vocation to it must be all the stronger, which is another reason for sifting vocations better. If insufficiently contemplative subjects present themselves, it would be better to try to direct them towards a teaching or active life, where their intellectual work would be purified by the immediate end for which it is undertaken.

Changing our angle of approach from study in itself and in its exercise, to the psychology of the subject herself, we notice the danger of making women too masculine. Women who give themselves up to intellectual work—this was observed long ago—do not always escape a certain hardening due to self-opinionatedness, especially when their profession involves a somewhat masculine way of life. Nuns are not absolutely safe from this risk, but it is one of the dangers which the religious life with its balanced organization and its rich arsenal of weapons is able by its very nature to neutralize. The exception would be a case where there already exists in the depths of the temperament a more or less unconscious tendency to masculinity. Then, contrary to what happens in other faults, which are usually corrected by regularity, the danger seems greater in the religious life than elsewhere, owing to the many other things that can hide under the cloak of a vocation. We must look it in the face; the choice of a life that includes a vow of chastity may be contaminated by motives such as a dislike for marriage and a preference for living entirely among women.

Take a religious with this kind of temperament; she may show more or less distinct defects of character, such as authoritarianism, tendency to particular friendships, etc.; on the spiritual level her deviation from type may perhaps express itself in a desire to make reparation, especially reparation for the sins of priests. On the whole her religious life will lack the liberty of the children of God, and probably their joy, but there will not be any serious hitch. Now put study into such a life. You have suddenly offered a fresh field of operation to the bad side of her character. Study presents an easy means of equalling or surpassing men. This, especially in a subject intellectually gifted, may bring on catastrophies, rejection of authority, preference of what is intellectual to what is spiritual, collapse of her religious life, etc.

Study did not cause the catastrophe, but its introduction offered a favourable field to a latent, pre-existing tendency. This is another reason for sifting vocations carefully, and discovering in time any psychological danger signals.

It was necessary to examine all these risks that accompany study, its real dangers and the faults it might develop in subjects. This should help to guard against them, by adapting it very exactly to the needs of the religious concerned, and by organizing it in view of the good expected from it.

IV

We have seen the necessity of study and its dangers and advantages to the individual, we must now consider it with regard to the community; this will lead us to examine in the concrete the problems arising from its introduction, questions of organization, adaptation, and the conditions required for it to be effective. First of all, we might point out the special range of its advantages and risks, as seen in a community of women.

Obviously study brings new elements into community life. It is the sphere in which the personal differences between the nuns stand out most clearly. Faults appear: rivalry, envy, jealousy, faults not unknown among men, but which take on a specially vivid appearance among women, especially when enclosed. And if, as is probable, different levels of study have

been planned, granting a rather greater amount to the more gifted or to those destined to teach in the community, natural differences are increased; among those who consider themselves less well treated an atmosphere of contention or bitterness might be formed. That is possible. We are capable of spoiling the best things.

There is another risk in community life inherent in these differences of cultural level: intellectuals have a habit of questioning everything; it is the normal play of an intelligence trying to measure everything by its principles. The result may be fruitful, and among people of similar culture with a trained judgment, there is no danger. But when different intellectual levels co-exist in the same community, we must be on our guard; discussion may be dangerous in the presence of people who think concretely, who are not trained in abstract thought, not in the habit of dealing with ideas and hypotheses. We might confuse them, bring them face to face with questions they cannot answer, shake the foundations of their thought without giving them the means of rebuilding them.

If, however, the reform of their judgment has kept up with the enrichment of their intellect, the sisters with more training will be able to communicate their ideas with tactful charity. Here is to be found in community life the immense advantage of study in letting in fresh air and creating an atmosphere of freedom and frankness. It contributes to the development of personality and gives sisters the joy of exchanging interesting information and of pooling their new ideas. It gives us worthwhile topics to discuss, instead of the futilities which tend to absorb us. It even makes a higher level of refectory reading possible.

Intellectual training properly understood will give us the sense of perspective which puts everything in its right place. It saves us from a harmful exclusivism: we can see how our little bit of work is ordered to the good of the community, the place of our community in the whole institute, and higher still the function of our institute in the Church.

No need to insist. We shall consider instead what concrete difficulties there are in introducing study. These are real and may appear very great indeed.

For the study itself, there are very often no books, as well as lack of authorized direction, of competent teachers,[1] besides some confusion for those inexperienced in creating an organization.

Above all there are material difficulties: never enough time, of course; in active congregations, overwork; among contemplatives, often an extreme poverty obliging them to consecrate all their available time and subjects to paid work. It would seem almost impossible for a congregation or a monastery to put back for a year or two the time when they can make use of their subjects.

But just consider the case of technical studies. Fifty years ago, most superiors would have cried out in horror at the thought of making their young sisters do three years' study before putting them at the service of the sick in a hospital. Civil law has made diplomas obligatory and nursing congregations have been obliged to provide their subjects with the technical training which is now customary, and forms a normal part of their time of preparation.

See what has happened in most communities when their lowered standard of health with weakening of the resisting power of their young sisters became evident: threatened with loss of vocations, the authorities have been obliged to consent to necessary measures (which would perhaps have scandalized the austere and robust nuns of an earlier generation): better food, walks, holidays, extra rest and sleep.[2] Even when poor or overworked, the authorities consent to what they see to be indispensable, and they manage to provide the where withal.

It would be the same for the time needed for study: the first point, the one we must begin with, the only indispensable one, which if gained will get us over all these insurmountable difficul-

[1] Good professors are always rare, but especially in this case, in which it is more difficult for them to adapt themselves and they will often be unable to judge of the effect they are producing. They will need time to find the intellectual level of their audience so as to avoid excess in either of two directions: a too technical approach, presupposing a preparation that the student nuns have not had—or over-simplification, from not rating at a sufficiently high value their students' desire for serious and thorough work.

[2] Remark here that study itself, in average doses, contributes enormously to psychological and nervous balance in many religious.

ties, is that the urgent necessity of study should be understood.[1]

To be quite exact the study of doctrine *is* urgently necessary. This is a fact, similar to the fact of the conquest of the right to culture and university degrees by women in this last half-century. It would be strange if the knowledge of divine things were the only science from which they were debarred. And inconceivable that women consecrated to God should be the only ones to remain outside the movement.[2] An institute which will permit no study or not enough condemns itself.[3]

The only question to decide is whether to drift with the stream of circumstances, or take the movement in hand so as to direct it along the right lines. In the latter case we must will all the conditions for making it effective and fruitful.[4] The problem of the twofold adaptation necessary must be thought out: (*a*)

[1] Some examples: one large congregation devoted to nursing and social work has suppressed two or three recreations a week so that the sisters may have time for intellectual work. Before the annual retreat every sister is allowed ten days rest and freedom which she may use for the same work. Elsewhere a weekly quiet day has been arranged, on which the sisters are free to read and continue their intellectual training. An interesting example of the training itself is provided by a young congregation whose sisters work in factories and live among the poorest people. At first it was thought that a 'missal and a copy of the Gospels would be enough for a little sister'. Now they do two years' study at the beginning of their religious life, in houses specially planned for the purpose, where they benefit by the teaching of outstanding professors. One might find many other examples of this anxiety to give study its due place; the essential point is that superiors general and chapters should realize the need and the urgency of the measures to be taken. It is for them to take the necessary steps, and if they wish they will be able to do a great deal in this sphere.

[2] In the approach of nuns to doctrinal study there will be two levels to distinguish at first. Those who enter religion without even the minimum of knowledge must be given that minimum in proportion to the aim of the institute, so that they may be able to lead their Christian life in its fullness. . . . For those who enter with a certain amount of knowledge, it would seem fitting that their religious knowledge should be brought up to the level of their profane culture. There need be no illusions about this level; experience has shown that in general, diplomas, as they are given nowadays, may co-exist with a deplorable absence of intellectual training and culture.

[3] Some years ago a certain diocesan congregation had no novices. A passing priest asked for a Bible at the Mother House. Impossible to find one. 'Reverend Mother,' he said, 'when you have Bibles you will have novices'.

[4] Reserving time for study is not everything. It must be properly used. Nothing is easier than to waste it, not only from curiosity or laziness, but simply from ignorance or inexperience. The students may not know how to set about such work. A certain monastery which possessed a very fine library, decided to allow its sisters half an hour a day for intellectual work. Each one of them might choose, subject to the Prioress' approval, whatever line of study she wished; one began St Augustine, another plunged into the treatise on Grace, yet another began to learn Greek. In practice very few were able to profit by the time allowed, often for want of basic culture or of a sufficiently sure knowledge of doctrine on the whole, and also of course for want of method and definite aim.

adaptation of the institute to the study; (*b*) adaptation of the study to the end pursued by the institute.

If study is introduced into a plan of religious training unsuited to it, it may do more harm than good. At the present time, in certain religious surroundings, one meets with great intellectual poverty and it is a good thing to remedy it. At a glance one sees that the doctrinal culture is insufficient. It is perhaps easier to apply the remedy on the intellectual level and that is where one should begin.

Let us have no illusions: this decision will be heavy with consequences. It will inevitably bring about a re-adjustment of the whole training. Doctrinal study cannot be added on as an artificial element; it must be organically bound up with the whole life—otherwise the new patch risks tearing the old garment; more developed intelligences will ask new permissions and demand new privileges, which it would be wrong to refuse—for the greater good of the subjects themselves, of the institute and of Holy Church, but it will be at the cost of real, perhaps deep modifications in the customs and above all in people's minds. These things must be seen and loyally desired. If it is to be effective, the insertion of study can only be the sign of a deep-seated will to make improvements and adaptations of which study is the beginning.

This will to advance which ought to be found at the level of the deciding authority must be shared by all. So we come to the second condition: a psychological preparation sufficient to bring the whole of a community or of an institute to a right estimate of the value of study, otherwise all the organization and all the recommendations of chapters general will remain a dead letter.[1] On the one hand a too great importance must not

[1] Here are two examples: a convent decided to make certain community exercises optional so that the sisters who wished to do so could give the time to intellectual work. In practice they do miss the recreation, but often it is to look after the rabbits instead. Probably they would not have been dispensed from recreation in order to work in the farmyard, but as they were dispensed, an appeal was made to their generosity asking them to sacrifice their reading to a humble and *useful* task.

In another place a complete intellectual training is provided for the young sisters, who have to devote an hour a day to study. But in order that this time might not be useless to the community, they had to be on call at the telephone or the front door. One may well doubt the effectiveness of an hour's study during which one is disturbed fifteen times or more, but what is still worse, such putting an hour of study to 'profitable use' tends to distort the sense of the value and importance of study in the minds of the sisters themselves.

be attributed to it, for that would twist the deepest values of Christianity in favour of an exaggerated intellectualism with all the dangers this would bring in its train. But that is not the most common mistake. Study must be considered by all as a religious exercise of great value, and all should be ready to give a sisterly helping hand to those who are applied to it by obedience; everyone in the community should have this sense of the gravity and the importance of study: student sisters are not useless mouths, the time devoted to study is not wasted, the very life of the institute depends on it.

In such an atmosphere, the sisters engaged in doctrinal study will not have a guilty conscience (commoner than people think) as though their study were a luxury, something it might be more generous to abandon. Borne along by the general atmosphere they can carry on their work with the deep seriousness, the selflessness, the supernatural spirit, which alone can justify the qualification: religious. Their effort will be a real gift of themselves, made under obedience, in the service of their religious family, to realize God's plan for them, and for his greater glory.

To attain this, there is another condition, *sine qua non*, this time from the point of view of the study itself: it must be training, and as such must be directed towards its true end. Training first of all: we have already alluded to this more than once, but it needs to be insisted on: study, at any level, must be conceived as training, and not as a means of acquiring information; it must be considered an education of the judgment, a quest for quality not quantity, in a personal synthesis, no matter how simple, and not a quest for erudition.

We must at any cost avoid making blue-stockings . . . we want to make adults, and give nuns everything that may help them to attain their full spiritual development and their full apostolic capacity.

Firstly, the programmes must be organized in view of this synthesis, giving the chief place to the essential courses of study, and within these to the essential points. The timetables must show this sense of the hierarchy of values: if the level is sufficiently high to permit of insertion of supplementary studies, care must be taken to prevent them from absorbing

time strictly due to the study of doctrine, and the relative importance of subjects studied should be considered in the allotment of time to each. All the educational exercises, the way in which the courses are given, the subjects set for homework should be viewed in this perspective, even and perhaps especially, when the level is very elementary.[1]

A study used as a training for religious should correspond to two needs: (*a*) it should be really work, and (*b*) it should form part of their life. It should mean work, demand an effort from them, otherwise it does not deserve its name: *studium*, and will be fruitless. One must not want to find a spiritual unction in it at the beginning, the students must go through the dryness of technique, of distinctions, of all the rational build-up, otherwise the courses will become spiritual conferences, the home exercises will become autobiographical, and the study will blend into *lectio divina*. Doctrine is not made easier to assimilate by seasoning it with pious or moral considerations, on the contrary, when it is given in the barest way possible, believing and consecrated souls recognize the taste of divine truth and learn to live on it. Even when reduced to its simplest terms, study must keep its scientific value and represents a real, technical effort, proportioned to the capacity of the sisters and to the end of their institute.

But it must also be ordered to the whole life of the student, without ever losing sight of the fact that the latter is a woman,

[1] How should we set about this training? In many cases the ideal would be to have courses given in the different studies, but this is not always possible.

An excellent example and one which could be followed without difficulty, is suggested by a congregation which asks each of the young sisters to read some standard works—the books being so chosen as to form a solid doctrinal whole. They have to summarize their readings and their notes are closely examined. As the same books are used again and again, the work of examination is not too much for the Mistress of Novices, or whoever replaces her at this. And it is an excellent way of obliging the young to make an effort, of forming their judgment and of learning to distinguish what is essential. This procedure needs neither professor nor lectures, is as simple as possible, and seems to be within the power of any convent of goodwill. After a few years of this training the sisters are able to make profitable use of any time that may be allowed for reading.

If the normal case is an intensive training (i.e., condensed within a given time, at the beginning of the religious life), it is possible to imagine it spread over a few years, and needing a fairly short time of daily reading. The 'how' matters little, provided the end be attained and that the whole constitutes a real doctrinal training.

and consecrated to God. All the training of intelligence and prudence should be directed towards the vocation proper to woman, giver of life, made to give herself in love. A normal woman so easily finds her way to harmony in her true life! All intellectual contribution should guide this gift in love, uphold this natural unity instead of leading it astray or hampering it.

The question here is how and not how much: we must not allow our anxiety to make the work interesting to lower the objective and scientific level. Yet all the faculties must be brought into play. The intelligence must be made to work more than the memory, and it must be an intelligence full of faith, so as to wake the whole person to the light of divine truth. Then it will be enough to open the windows looking towards life, and each one by her own reflection will assimilate the knowledge acquired so that her whole life will be perfectly poised and full of light.

This is what must be done if doctrinal study is to take its place in the religious life, avoiding dangers and producing all its fruits. And so it will realize its most essential function: its duty is to consecrate the intellect, not merely in pure adhesion, as in faith, but in its rational activity itself. Faith makes the intelligence of like nature with God, and its intrinsic logic calls for theology. The reason applies itself to the mystery with all its scientific apparatus, its procedures and its techniques, its acquisitions and its riches. And all this human wealth is consecrated, inserted as a vital part into our religious life, placed at the service of God for his greater glory.

Then the whole being, with all its faculties is directed towards God and we can truthfully chant with the Psalmist: 'May all that is within me bless thy holy name (Ps. 54, 2).

Chapter II

WOMAN'S ROLE IN THE CHURCH AT THE PRESENT TIME ACCORDING TO THE TEACHING OF H. H. PIUS XII

By J. Beyer, S.J.

THE QUESTION being treated here is important, not only apostolically but doctrinally. In this matter theological doctrine has to give a Christian the line of action to be followed in concrete cases. Therefore, it alone can enable us to form a true estimate of woman's function in the Church.

Nevertheless here, more than in any other domain, action has stimulated doctrine, for very often concrete situations and new initiatives have obliged the Church to expound revealed doctrine more definitely. Many of these circumstances were imposed on her from outside by modern civil and political life and are not the result of growth from within as though she were perfectly autonomous.

This interior realization by the Church was for a long time hindered by the fact that at first sight the attitude of the primitive Christian community towards woman seems utterly in opposition to the modern idea. Perhaps the influence of the contemporary surroundings of the first Christian apostolic workers accounts for this.

This is not the place to describe the legal position and the material circumstances of women before the coming of Christ, but no one will deny the important role played by the Church in helping her to rise above them.

On the other hand we shall offer two series of assertions and facts which marked the position and the function of woman in the Church from the very beginning. Nothing but a doctrinal and practical synthesis can show us their true harmony and final value.

First we find a series of assertions seeming to class woman

in a state of inferiority to man. Pictures and biblical stories of a special literary style continue to influence Christian imagination and strengthen certain prejudices.

The creation of woman is represented as subordinate to that of man; her weakness is strongly underlined by the initiative attributed to her in the fall of man. Alongside of examples of generosity and even of power to rule, woman remains branded by these fundamental facts, underlying the presentation of the primary dogmas of creation and original sin.

No apostolic responsibility is entrusted to woman in the foundation and organization of the Church: the little told us in the New Testament about her role, speaks only of submission, modesty and self-effacement, of help and service, never of initiative or direction.

Nevertheless, St Paul, who stressed these first aspects, amended this first sketch, we think, when he taught the full equality of the sexes in the deep life of the Church and in eternal life. 'No more male and female; you are all one person in Jesus Christ' (Gal. 3, 26–8). He too grants Christian husband and wife equality of rights and duties in marriage, in strong contrast with the practice of his time; also, an equal right of initiative to the baptized partner, whether husband or wife, where the maintenance of the faith is concerned or the use of the Pauline privilege.

The Church, on the other hand, seems to have recognized in her doctrine of Christian marriage the necessity of protection for the married woman; a protection required by her function as mother, and demanded by the very nature of the marriage bond. Wherever the Church stresses the influence of woman, she insists on the special character of her action which depends primarily on her nature, her physical constitution and characteristic qualities. She also emphasizes the affectionate and maternal side of her personality, her persuasive power, her ability to convey by example, her delicate tact, her skill in counselling.

If then we would study the function of woman in the Church at the present time according to the teaching of His Holiness Pope Pius XII, we must keep this theological background in mind and work into it the directives he gives us.

(*a*) If woman has a function in human society, we must examine how this should be exercised in contemporary society and what importance the Holy Father means to give it.

(*b*) As woman is destined to be a mother before any specialized professions, her role in family life and in matrimonial questions will be a predominant one. The Pope insists vigorously on this and never stops inculcating this point of doctrine.

(*c*) After that we must enquire what supplementary or equivalent tasks may be assumed, at the present juncture, by unmarried women, and see what good works are specially assigned to her by His Holiness with a view to the reformation of modern society.

(*d*) A word must be said of the place of nuns in contemporary society, of the great value of their contemplative life and of the mission of their institute, whether teaching or nursing.

(*e*) Having considered these different aspects of feminine action, we must approach a double theological problem of interest to the constitution of the Church itself; woman's position in the Church and her special mission there.

(*f*) Lastly, these data will enable us to draw conclusions as to how these papal directives and the doctrine they imply should influence the training programmes this session desires to draw up.

Hence the following sections of our statement:

1. The function and the vocation of woman;
2. Her responsibility in the family;
3. Her social responsibility;
4. Her part in consecrated life;
5. Her situation with regard to the Church.

To do this efficiently, we should need to go back over all the aspects of Christian life that His Holiness set forth in his different speeches.[1] What he says to all Christians about

[1] Before beginning to study the papal documents, we shall find it useful to define some of their terms. The Pope speaks of a woman's *position*, or her function, of her vocation and of her dignity. Speaking of a woman's *position*, the Pope uses the word in its metaphysical sense, where it means the essential relation of the individual with regard to his destiny and his essential mission. In *theology* the term can have a yet wider sense: it includes all the new shades of meaning added to it by revelation in accordance with the tradition and practice of the Church. The Pope will sometimes use it in this last sense. Speaking of woman's *function*, the Sovereign Pontiff is determining the end proper to her being as one of the human community, in so far as that end

their apostolic responsibility is meant for women as much as for men. We shall consider only those directives especially addressed to Christian women, whether mothers of families or consecrated virgins, lay-women or religious, and we shall endeavour to compress into a few words his detailed and rich teaching.

Among the papal documents there is one which dominates the whole question, the address given by Pius XII to five hundred women and girls, leaders of Italian Catholic Action, on 21 October, 1945, in which he discussed for the first time the important problem of women's status, of her moral worth, and of her dignity, as well as the special part she has to play in contemporary society.

1. *Woman's Function and Vocation*

'Woman's function', says Pius XII, 'seems to be clearly determined by the gestures, aptitudes and quality of her sex. She collaborates with man, but in a way proper to herself, according to her natural tendency. But a woman's function, her way, her innate inclination is to be a mother. Every woman's destiny is to be a mother, mother in the physical sense of the word or in a higher, more spiritual, but no less real sense'.[1]

This function is based on a deep *instinct*, making her naturally responsive to what is valuable in human beings, in personal gifts, and in love.

'A true woman cannot consider or fathom the depths of all the problems in human life save as seen in the family.[2] The family pre-supposes motherhood. God created the maternal instinct for the sake of the family. The Creator ordered the whole being of woman, her material structure and even more

[1] Address of His Holiness Pius XII to the Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, 21, October, 1945.

[2] Op. cit., p. 24, no. 14.

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is defined by feminine physiology and psychology. The function of a created being is its *vocation*, using this term in the sense of a destiny willed and determined by the will of God. In the pontifical texts the term sometimes has a more restricted sense. It may also signify a fixed personal destiny. The *dignity* of woman means her essential value in all its beauty and nobility ('value' to be taken in its philosophical sense).

her spirit and above all her exquisite delicacy of feeling in view of her motherhood and of the family she will found.[1]

Again, the fact that the sexes are complementary, normally determines all feminine behaviour: 'In all human works, as in the humano-divine work of the Redemption, God has made woman man's partner and helpmate. This feminine collaboration seems to us more opportune now than ever'.[2]

Woman should contribute with man to the good of public life, where she is his equal in dignity. Each of the sexes must take its share according to its nature, characteristics, physical, intellectual and moral aptitudes. Both have the right and the duty of co-operating in the good of society and of their country. But it is clear that if man is temperamentally inclined to deal with external business, woman, generally speaking, possesses greater discernment and a more subtle tact for understanding and solving the delicate problems of home and family life, which is the foundation of all social life. This does not deny the power of some women to show great competence in almost any domain of public activity.[3]

Hence it follows that woman is destined by nature to motherhood and to the family responsibilities that are its normal continuation. If she wishes to practise a profession or even take part in civil life outside her home, her action will necessarily be different from a man's owing to her nature and her maternal instinct. Thus, if she would be true to her deepest instinct, let her choose for preference an occupation which calls upon her latent powers for the greater good of the human community. Pope Pius XII admits that even in political life she has a role complementary to a man's: 'as man's colleague in the domain of civil institutions, she will apply herself chiefly to questions needing tact, delicacy and the motherly instinct rather than to those requiring administrative rigidity.'[4]

Neverthtless the profound instinct, so clearly characteristic of woman, does not mark her out for maternal and domestic

[1] Op. cit., p. 24, no. 14.
[2] Pius XII, Address to members of the international union of Catholic Women's Leagues, 14, April, 1939.
[3] Pius XII, Address to the Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, 21, October, 1945.
[4] Op. cit.

duties only. It is left unfixed, to the extent that an education is supposed which would, if begun in childhood, develop her living powers towards a spiritual maternity, the apanage of self-forgetful celibacy and of consecrated life.[1]

This freedom of determination makes it possible to find a solution to the grave problem of feminine personality in an unmarried woman who is not celibate by her own choice.

When marriage is impossible, says the Pope, she glimpses her vocation and then, with a broken heart but a submissive will, she too devotes herself entirely to the many and various works of charity.[2]

This text is worthy of all our attention: it opens out wide supernatural horizons to many who might otherwise give way to discouragement or to disgust with life. For the first time the Pope describes this situation as a special vocation and shows all its noble splendour.

Women's activity displays itself mostly in the occupations of domestic life, which, though many people do not think so, contribute more and better than any others to the true interests of society. But these interests require in addition, a whole legion of women who have more time at their disposal and so can devote themselves more directly and entirely to them.But who can these women be if not especially (we do not mean exclusively) those of whom we have just been speaking, those on whom ineluctable circumstances have imposed this mysterious 'vocation', vowed as they are to a solitude which they had neither reckoned on nor desired and which appears to condemn them to a selfish, useless and purposeless life? But on the contrary, to-day we see their mission unfolding itself manifold and militant, using up every kind of energy and such that very few other women, looking after their homes and the education of their children or subject to the yoke of their holy rule, would be able to accomplish it.[3]

The Pope then advises Christian women to look on the circumstances of their lives as so many signs given by God to show them their personal vocation, if they interpret them

[1] 'The maternal instinct is a human instinct . . . which nature does not determine in the details of its application', op. cit.

[2] Op. cit.

[3] Op. cit.

supernaturally. The vocation generously accepted will find its field of action in works of charity, especially in associations in aid of the family; these women will find their apostolate in the profession they practise or by their mere presence in the surroundings in which Providence has set their lives.

These vocations need not necessarily be fitted into any recognized canonical institute. They need only grow from a lively faith and a radiant interior life.

The Church, however, offers these generous souls a means of buttressing their lives and widening their range of action by allowing the establishment of secular institutes. The moment imposed celibacy is accepted as a *vocation*, and devotes itself to a work of charity . . . apostolic work for Christians . . . it will find its full development in the ideal of evangelical perfection realized in the world by the secular institutes.[1]

In the same line of woman's function, we find the spiritual maternity of the consecrated virgin, be she contemplative or active, a teacher or a nurse. In this lofty sublimation of a deep natural instinct, grace radiates through a forgetfulness of self that is pre-eminently feminine.

This sublime vocation should be the fruit of a Christian married life just as it is the pledge of its purity and its nobility. 'Where holy Christian marriages beautified by Christian morals are to be found, there a chaste virginity, sustained by the love of Christ, is to be seen appearing and progressing at an equal rate.[2]

II. Family Responsibility and the Modern Woman

A woman's function and mission are her motherhood, so that her first duty will be to encourage families. The importance of the latter marks at the same time the importance of woman in modern society. 'The family is something sacred: it is not only the cradle of children, but also of the nation and its strength and glory'.[3]

[1] Apostolic Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia*. 2 February, 1947, in Cath. Doc., 1947 co. 577–88.,

[2] Pius XII address to Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Ordinaries 2, November 11, 1950, in Cath. Doc., 1950, p. 1,502.

[3] Pius XII, Radio Message of 13 May, 1942.

There is an effort being made both in totalitarian and in capitalist countries to destroy the advantages of family life, of which the mother is always the steady foundation, and the woman who understands best its value and nobility will do all she can to defend and protect it.

The Pope specified the deleterious effects of these systems: 'A certain totalitarian government, he said, holds marvellous promises before women's eyes: equal rights with men; protection of pregnant women and of young mothers, communal kitchens, and other services'.[1] But the essential question remains: Is woman's position bettered by all this? The Pope's answer is in the negative.

'Equal rights with men, together with her desertion of the home where she was "queen", have made her subject to an equal weight and duration of work. No account has been taken of her true dignity and of the solid basis of all her rights, i.e., of the specific character of her feminine nature and of the proper relation between the sexes. The end the Creator had in view for the good of the human race and especially of the family has been forgotten. In the concessions which have been made to woman, we can easily discover in addition to the respect due to her dignity and her mission, the purpose of promoting the economic and military power of the totalitarian state to which everything must be rigorously subordinated'.[2]

Pius XII is not less severe in his appreciation of capitalist governments. In his messages of June and of Christmas 1941 and of Christmas 1942, he enumerated the disastrous effects of their policies. All through his Pontificate, he utters one long complaint of their abuses and excesses: unlimited agglomerations of population in cities; progressive growth of big businesses; precarious and stunted state of other industries, especially in the case of artisans and even more of farmers, alarming spread of unemployment,[3] a type of life which makes Christian morality difficult and practically impossible.[4] This

[1] Pius XII: Address to the Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, op. cit.
[2] Ibidem.
[3] Ibidem.
[4] Pius XII: Message of 1 January, 1941, in A.A.S., 1941, p. 207.

same government 'makes it almost impossible for a workman to get together any effective property for himself'.[1] 'In despair, he is ready to join any political party whatever, and be the slave of anyone who promises him his daily bread and guarantees peace at any price'.[2]

This critical situation obliges the mother to abandon her home to go to work, leaving the house to itself. . . . As it was already shabby-looking, it becomes worse still for want of care.[3] Not only does the upkeep of the home suffer, but the family union as well.

As the members of the family work separately in all the quarters of the town, and at different hours, they hardly ever meet one another, either for meals or to amuse themselves after the day's fatigue, still less to pray together. What is left of family life, and what charm can it offer children?[4]

As a result the children's upbringing is in danger.

How many mothers of families, in spite of all their goodwill and their selflessness, to-day more than ever find it impossible to do their *duty* fully on account of the harsh and inexorable conditions of their lives. Their domestic work and often work outside their own homes, leave them neither time nor leisure to do what should be the greatest of their joys, the chief aim of their lives on earth.[5]

The future of their families is endangered.

Young girls, accustomed to never seeing their mothers at home, and finding the house itself gloomy and deserted, will not be able to find any attraction there; they will not care for domestic work, nor understand that it really is noble and beautiful. They will not want to devote themselves to it one day as wives and mothers.[6]

This situation is not found only in working-class surroundings: all homes from which the mother is absent are threatened with the same misfortune.

[1] Pius XII: Message of 1 September, 1944, p. 253 in A.A.S.
[2] Pius XII: Address to Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, op. cit.
[3] Op. cit., p. 33, no. 20.
[4] Pius XII: Address to the members of the Italian Association of Catholic Employers, 4 November, 1945, in Doc. Cath., 1945, col. 150.
[5] Pius XII: Address to Leaders of Italian Cath. Action, op. cit.
[6] Op. cit.

The worldly woman's daughter, seeing the control of her home left in the hands of outsiders, while her mother spends her time in frivolous amusement, will follow her example. She will want to be emancipated as early as possible and, as the deplorable saying has it, 'live her own life'. How could it ever occur to her to want to be a true 'queen of her household', in other words mistress of a house with a happy, prosperous and well-behaved family?[1]

In setting forth so clearly the effects of a certain kind of civilization, the Pope is indicating the remedy for it. His Holiness has so often described an ideal Christian family that this in itself proposes a programme of action. Briefly: the mother must go back to being the *heart of the family*, she must rebuild it as a *sanctuary*, and devote herself entirely to the upbringing of her children; she enjoys political rights, but must use them to *safeguard her mission* and the rights of families.

The woman is the *heart of the family*. The care of the home where she is queen is the field of her main activity.[2] But preaching to her to persuade her to return to her home is quite useless as long as the conditions which forced her to leave it persist.[3]

The Pope is objective and realist and he sees that: it is not possible to alter this now.[4]

But we must not give in to it entirely on that account. On the contrary we must swim against the current to remain faithful to our duty as Christians.[5]

Then he gives clear, definite and heroic instructions: 'Dear daughters, if you must earn your living in factories and/or administrative work, then in the time left over for your home set yourselves all the more eagerly to giving your husbands and children the encouragement of your good example, your affectionate unfailing care. Let it be always your intention to give your family deliberately the happiness that our ancient Chris-

[1] Pius XII: Address to Italian Working-women, 15 August, 1945, in Doc. Cath., 1945, col. 64.
[2] Pius XII: Address to Italian Working-women, 15 August, 1945, Doc. Cath., 1945, col. 674.
[3] Ibidem.
[4] Ibidem.
[5] Op. cit., col. 675.

tian customs, now disappearing, used to afford them almost automatically.[1]

Formerly a family used to be a *sanctuary*, with its own liturgy and its own sacramental life. The Pope often reminds us of this aspect of family life: prayers said together at our Lady's altar, the sanctification of feasts in the family circle with rites and customs adapted to the liturgical seasons,[2] and the spirit of self-sacrifice in union with Christ which may be an epitome of all family spirituality.

The offering made by a Christian in a state of grace, by which he gives all his works to God for the greatest needs of the Church and of souls, can raise even the least and simplest of actions to a supernatural dignity. The farmer at his plough, the employee at his typewriter, the businessman at his desk, the cook in her kitchen, can become God's collaborators, for he expects from them and fulfils with them the humble work of the duty of their state in life.[3]

The upbringing of the children has been entrusted by Providence to the mother of the family. This is a psychological and moralizing influence which needs very delicate tact: to draw human beings to the appreciation of heavenly possessions, to stimulate them quietly to austerity, or at least to sobriety and moral conduct in life, to radiate the spirit of gentleness and of fraternal charity among all the children of God and consciousness, also of their duty to renounce unjust wealth. You will succeed in this by being yourselves the first to give up a luxurious manner of life; above all, as synthesis and crown of your spiritual action, educate your children according to the Christian vision of the world, revealed by our Lord. The first handing-on of the Gospel message is entrusted practically entirely to mothers. The wisdom and goodness of divine Providence has arranged that every generation at its birth should receive its mother's gentle schooling, as well as that of our common Mother, the Church, so that woman's innate, goodness and piety might always be given to it. Without this rhythmic return to its source, humanity, succumbing

[1] Op. cit., col. 675.
[2] Pius XII: Letter to Cardinal Maglione, 20 April, 1939.
[3] Pius XII: Address to newly married couples, 27 March, 1940.

to the harshness and bitterness of the struggle for life would in a short time relapse into the wretchedest savagery.[1]

This education of the human race is nowadays supplemented by external action.

For, if a woman's influence was limited in other days to her home and its neighbourhood, in our times it spreads (whether people like it or not) to the ever-widening domain of social and public life.[2] Pius XII tells the mothers of families they must use their civic rights.

It is hardly necessary to remind you, he says, that when the moral foundations of the family and the state, the rights of God and of his Church are in question, everyone, man or woman, of whatever class or social position, is strictly obliged to make use of his or her political rights, placing them at the service of the good cause.[3]

We must now see what is the scope of this political and social action and what utter loyalty it involves.

III. *The Social Responsibility of the Modern Woman*

WOMAN as such has a maternal and family responsibility. Her role in human society is fundamental. We have outlined it according to the Sovereign Pontiff's teaching.

We must go further into the subject because the social role of woman exceeds by a long way the limits and the narrow framework of the family and nowadays extends to the public life of many nations and of the whole world. The focus of her action will be on saving the dignity of woman herself, saving the family and to this end playing an active part in public life.

One might say that the target of the Catholic Women's movement has changed its place, and fairly obviously. Fifty years ago we were trying to introduce the Catholic woman into careers and into the public offices to which circumstances were calling her and to which she could no longer refuse her co-

[1] Pius XII: Address to Members of the 13th Congress of World Union of Catholic Women's Organizations, 24 April, 1932, in Doc. Cath., 1952, col. 653.

[2] Ibidem, in Doc. Cath., 1952, col. 653.

[3] Pius XII: Address to Italian Working-women, 15 August, 1945, in Doc. Cath., 1945, p. 676.

operation. To-day the first duty is perhaps to protect woman and to strengthen her position so that she may not lose in these new circumstances her personal dignity as woman and as Christian. It is true that the Catholic Women's movement always proposed to train woman and make of her a whole person and a true Christian. But it seems to us that to-day this last aim has become dominant, and so necessary at the present moment, that though it has not of course entirely ousted other aims, it has relegated them to the second place.[1]

The Pope explains his meaning quite openly. It would seem that everything in the world has entered into a league to make it difficult, even impossible, for a man and a Christian to safeguard his personal dignity. Mechanical skill, the methods of advertising and of making propaganda on radio and film now leave little rest to the senses and so prevent any access to inward recollection. A type of man is being created who cannot endure to be alone, even for an hour, with God and himself. The industrialization that hands over the individual to a business or a factory is beginning to impose the same methods on agriculture. Social life is characterized by the manifold interdependences of the individual and the family with respect to public power, to technical, economical and social controls, to centrals and organizations. In big cities life interferes with the form of human existence more and more intimately; the individual is being continually swallowed up by the crowd. The deep tragedy of this evolution lies in the fact that it is taking place at the very moment when definitely materialistic ideas are deliberately destroying human personality and tending to turn the individual into a mere component part of the mass, making use of the technical, economic and social position in order to attain their end without consideration by anyone or anything. We need not tell you what ruinous effects this evolution towards mass existence has, especially on the world of women and on their souls. You have had tragic experience of it during the last twenty years. Perhaps the past has been merely a general rehearsal of a still more terrible conflict, a conflict for the dignity of the Christian

[1] Pius XII: Letter to the German Federation of Catholic Women, 17 July, 1952, in Doc. Cath., 1952, col. 1,288.

woman, of the young girl, of the virgin, as much as for that of the wife and mother; a conflict for marriage and the Christian family, for conjugal fidelity, for the child and its education. All these domains reserved and sacred as they are, have already had to endure the attacks of the enemy to such an extent as the Church had never yet known. What the present moment needs is that we should use every means of developing every man and woman into a Christian person, who of himself will be faithful to God in natural as well as supernatural matters; all this is true for your league also. We firmly hope that you will keep our appeal before your eyes and that you will work and sacrifice yourselves in order to realize it in all discussions of interior policy concerning marriage, parents' rights, the school and social order.[1]

To save woman's dignity, she must be given back as soon and as entirely as possible her original function and mission. For this she must take part in social and political life.

It will be useless to preach the return of woman to her home as long as the conditions last which in many cases compel her to remain away. This gives you at once a first view of the mission now open to you in social and political life. Your entrance into that life came about very suddenly as a result of the social upheavals of which we are witnesses. No matter! You are called to take part in it. You would surely not wish to leave to others, to the very women who are promoting the ruin of the home, a monopoly of social organization of which the family is the chief element, in its economic, legal, spiritual and moral unity. The fate of the family, the fate of society is in your hands.

Consequently, every woman without exception (you understand me: *without exception*) is bound in conscience not to hold aloof, but to go into action according to the mode and in the framework suitable to her own position, in order to check the currents threatening the home, oppose the doctrines shaking its foundations, and prepare, shape and lead its restoration to a successful conclusion.[2]

[1] Ibidem, in Doc. Cath., cols. 1,288–9.
[2] Pius XII: Address to Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, 21 October, 1945.

How are we to realize this programme in practice and make it a success? We have to avoid an ambiguity here, for a whole social current exists which may diminish the field of action of the family itself, and undermine even more the dignity of the human person.

We fear, said His Holiness Pope Pius XII, not only that civil authority may busy itself with a thing in itself exceeding its attributions, but also that the instinct for Christian life and even the shape of its organization may be deformed or even destroyed (by such interference).[1]

Having mentioned the danger of state control, let us now consider the Holy Father's directives. The field of action facing the Catholic woman to-day is immense and each one, according to her ability and her temperament, must apply herself to intellectual work or direct social action.

The intellectual work will consist chiefly in studying and solving the problems that concern the position of woman and the family. There is still much to be done from the Catholic point of view; a theological doctrine is gradually being built up, minutely worked out in the great encyclicals on marriage, the family, the state, the social position of woman and the rights of childhood. This work is of supreme importance, for it will direct action.

The Pope gives a rapid sketch of what this action should be: to become a teacher and guide of the world of women, correct their ideas, dispel their prejudices, throw light where there is confusion, explain and spread the doctrine of the Church. Immense and very urgent work without which the greatest apostolic zeal will obtain no sure results.

It would be sheer presumption to imagine that mere courses of training would suffice. The Pope wishes even our Catholic schoolgirls to be put into contact with reality: in an address to girls of the upper class who were devoting themselves to the welfare of the poor, he told them: we know quite well that it is not always easy for serious students such as you, to combine a great work of charity with the ever-growing demands of your studies. It will often require self-forgetfulness and ab-

[1] Pius XII: Address to Cardinals, Archbishops, Bishops and Ordinaries, 3 November, 1950, in Doc. Cath., 1950, col. 1,502.

negation on your part; but God's blessing will be with you. Moreover, an apostolate of this kind will form a valuable complement to your scientific training itself. Your judgment will be ripened by this experience of life; it will open the way for you into the heart of the people far more surely and naturally than ever books and lectures in colleges and universities could do.[1]

Not only personal action and direct contact are necessary, but even more a deep and lasting influence. Life needs an apprenticeship.

The young girl, and often even the woman, need education as a necessary preparation and training for a worthy life. The ideal obviously would be for that education to begin in childhood in the shelter of a Christian home, under a mother's influence. Unfortunately, it is not always so, nor is it always possible. Nevertheless, this lack can be made up, partly at any rate, by finding for those girls who are obliged to work away from home, one of the occupations which are to a certain extent a kind of apprenticeship or training for the life for which they are destined. That is the aim of the schools of domestic economy which endeavour to make the big and little girls of to-day into the wives and mothers of to-morrow.[2]

The Pope has never ceased to encourage these initiatives and everything else that tends to favour the education and training of woman with a view to the running of her house, the organization of her own dwelling, the care and education of her children; everything belonging, not only to the physiological preparation for marriage, but also and above all to the spiritual and social preparation; the choice of a profession and the training it involves.[3] Finally, all the good works by which mothers of families can be helped, not only in their intellectual and spiritual training, but also in all the painful moments of their lives.[4]

There remains the sphere of political life: this has various

[1] Pius XII: Address to girls of their apostolate, 1 July, 1945, in Doc. Cath., 1945, col. 678.
[2] Pius XII: Address to Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, op. cit., pp. 48–9.
[3] Pius XII: Address to Women's League of Catholic Action, in Doc. Cath., 1949.
[4] Pius XII: Address to Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, 21 October, 1945.

aspects and His Holiness has already spoken of them at different times: he has often pointed out the gravity of the obligation of Catholics, both men and women, to vote at elections. Woman has a part to play in Parliament, on certain benches, in journalism, in professional life and in the world of labour. What is most important is to co-ordinate these different attempts, to form a compact, strong unit, able to advance if necessary, under strong direction and at the right moment, to direct action, also on a political[1] or trades union level.[2] This full union cannot be achieved save by the fraternal agreement of all social classes, so much encouraged by the Sovereign Pontiff.[3]

But the main objective of the direct action so highly recommended by the Holy Father is on the legislative level. He demands united action by all, both those who are occupied in study and those who by their direct social action are in contact with reality and with the concrete needs of the modern woman in her family or in her professional life.

Your social and political action depends largely on the legislation of the state and on municipal administration.[4]

This proves how important it is for our laws to be quietly reformed in the direction of a realization of the papal directives. The latter have been the signposts at all the difficult turnings on the way to a most important social apostolic action. They presuppose suitable teaching and education, as well as calling for the devotedness of many unmarried women who find scope here for their maternal love in the service of families, of their country and of the Church.

IV. *The Responsibility of Modern Woman in Religious Life*

Many women lead a consecrated life, vowing their virginity to God and witness in the Church to a love for God alone. This sacrifice is always apostolic just as divine love is.

[1] Pius XII: Address to Members of 13th Congress of World Union of Women's Catholic Organisations, in Doc. Cath., 1952, col. 653.
[2] Pius XII: Address to International Congress of Catholic Women and Girls, Doc. Cath., 147, col. 1,462.
[3] Pius XII: Address to Italian Working Women, in Doc. Cath., 1945, col. 676.
[4] Pius XII: Address to Leaders of Italian Catholic Action, op. cit., pp. 51–2. No. 38.

Re-tracing the programme of action recommended by Pius XII from the point of view of family, society, and politics, most of us understood that he was speaking not only to mothers of families, to impress on them their irreplaceable part in a sane and Christian society, but that he saw beyond them a compact group of innumerable selfless souls devoting themselves, body and soul, to the apostolate of the family. There they help mothers in distress and try to replace them, not only in situations where they are powerless for want of time or of means, but also whenever they abdicate their rights and abandon their children and their homes.

Among all dedicated souls, the Sovereign Pontiff has a special concern for nuns. There is a crisis in vocations at the moment, for various reasons: want of generosity in an age when comfort and luxury have diminished the spirit of sacrifice and bound souls fast to worldly pleasures and amusements: want of adaptation of religious life to direct apostolate, which makes girls prefer the work of Catholic action to the total gift of themselves in the religious life. There is also a lack of appreciation of this vocation among Christians, and especially among certain members of the clergy who do not seem to realize the grave responsibility incurred by those who dissuade many generous souls from entering the religious life. Nevertheless: at the present moment, the Pope says, the apostolic work of the Church is hardly conceivable without the co-operation of nuns in works of charity, in schools, in missions, etc.[1]

The Sovereign Pontiff has therefore again praised the vocation of contemplative nuns in his Apostolic Constitution *Sponsa Christi*, of 21 November, 1950,[2] and disclosed all the work of grace and sanctification represented in the history of the Church by their consecrated lives. For this he published the Constitution *Provida Mater Ecclesia* of 2 February, 1947.[3] If nuns and priests who direct them wish to grasp the immense

[1] Pius XII: Address to Members of Women's League of Catholic Action, in Doc. Cath., 1949, p. 1,093.
[2] Pius XII: Apostolic Constitution, *Sponsa Christi*, Doc. Cath., 1950, cols. 1,679–96.
[3] Pius XII: Apostolic Constitution, *Provida Mater Ecclesia*, Doc. Cath., 1947, col. 577.

value of the gift of themselves, first of all the necessity of their sacrifice and their love must be stressed.

The Church, who is a headful mother, looks on those who dedicate their whole life to Christ their Lord, and follow him by the austere way of the counsels, as her favourite children.[1]

The perfection of Christian life that they are striving to attain depends 'especially on charity, the charity by which we must love the Lord alone above all things and all other things in him'.[2]

Therefore 'at the same time as the perfect love of God, the Church insists on perfect love of our neighbour, and in virtue of this charity and of their state, religious, men and women, should feel themselves entirely dedicated to the Church and to the needs of all her poor'.[3]

Thus detached from all the accidental elements of their vocation, this total gift may sometimes be reviewed in its concrete applications and these may be re-adapted to the needs of other times and other souls, needs which are those of apostolate itself.

This concern for re-adaptation is the supreme demand of a true and total love.

Founders in most cases, says the Pope, conceived their new foundations in function of urgent needs of the Church. For which reason they adapted their schemes to the needs of their day. If you want to walk in their footsteps . . . do as they did.[4]

What cannot be changed is evidently not the object of this adaptation. First of all: 'the end of the state of perfection towards which you are tending with all your strength in order to become saints, and sanctify your neighbour either directly or indirectly by making him share more abundantly in divine grace.

Next, this principle which is the basis of the perfect life: 'that there is only one way to perfection: self-renunciation for love of Christ. Changing times cannot change that'.[5]

[1] Ibidem.
[2] Pius XII: Apostolic Constitution, *Sponsa Christi*, Doc. Cath., 1950, col. 1,687.
[3] Ibidem.
[4] Pius XII: Address to Members of Congress on the Three States of Perfection, Doc. Cath., 1950, col. 1,676.
[5] Ibidem, col. 1,676.

Neither must the work already accomplished by nuns in adapting themselves to their apostolate be underrated.

'Many of your activities have already been perfectly adapted. In proof we have the great improvement in your schools, in your work either as individuals or as members of institutes for the education of youth, for the alleviation of human suffering, for the cultivation and progress of science. We must therefore recognize that your contribution to the work of adaptation to modern times is already considerable.'[1]

The work remaining to be done would seem to be rather a psychological and intellectual adaptation than a technical progress.

'In this adjustment of your lives to the needs of a transformed age it is most important for you to find out by intelligent research what spiritual resources lie hidden in your contemporaries, what secret desires animate them, what their souls really look like'.[2]

The Pope, therefore, highly recommends breadth of view, unity of government and organization, efficacy of action by means of prompt execution; also the determination to make continual progress even in the sphere of technique.

Nuns, said the Pope, may sometimes be inferior in technical resources, but even on this point we urge them to-day not to let themselves be outdone, nay more: we would have them get ahead.[3]

To be in tune with the modern world, we must sacrifice what is merely adventitious, those details which transform our mentality far more than we think, put us behind the times and cut us off from our contemporaries. The trench between feminine religious life and the girls of to-day is in danger of becoming too wide for many of them to cross, unless a welcoming atmosphere and mentality can be made ready for them inside convents.[4]

His Holiness has discussed this problem very frankly, when addressing himself to superiors general. The main reforms he asks for are: the modernization of the habit, and of some cus-

[1] Ibidem, col. 1,677.
[2] Ibidem, col. 1,677.
[3] Ibidem, col. 1,675.
[4] Pius XII: Address to Superiors General, Doc. Cath., 1952, col. 1,283.

toms; professional qualifications; motherly rule; joy in work and in the fulfilment of the duties of the religious life.

The motive underlying such a complete and radical revision is the aim of apostolic life itself.

You would like to help the cause of Jesus Christ and of his Church according to the needs of the world as it is. Therefore, it would not be reasonable to persist in keeping up customs or ways of working which would interfere with this help, or perhaps even make it impossible.[1]

All this concerns merely outward elements which can be modified because they are only accessory. What superiors will have to achieve for the greater good of their institutes will require much more vigilant attention and far more effective action than what they are beginning to do to-day by revising their customaries and simplifying their habit. Young religious and future postulants must be able to develop fully in religion.

The sisters must be trained for their work and their special tasks. Here there must be no meanness . . . be broadminded. Whether it is a question of education, pedagogy, nursing the sick, artistic work, etc., a sister must feel: my superior is making it possible for me to have a training that will place me on an equal footing with my colleagues in the world.

Give them also the means and the possibility of keeping their professional knowledge up to date.[2]

The Pope had already spoken on this subject in 1951.

Your teaching nuns should know their subject and be perfect mistresses of it. Provide them with a good preparation and training, and one which will also correspond to the qualifications and diplomas required by the state. Be liberal in giving them all they need, especially in the matter of books, so that even later on they may be able to keep up with the progress of their science or other subject and thus offer their pupils a rich harvest of knowledge.[3]

The Pope's ideal is therefore the following. Nuns are to be up-to-date, as well trained as their lay or non-Catholic col-

[1] Pius XII: Address to Teaching Nuns, Doc. Cath., 1951, col. 1,289.
[2] Pius XII: Address to Superiors General, 15 September, 1952, in Doc. Cath., 1952, col. 1,284.
[3] Pius XII: Address to Teaching Nuns, 13 September, 1951, in Doc. Cath., 1951, col. 1,290.

leagues, well informed on modern problems and their solutions, so that they may always be able to understand and help those who are entrusted to their care.

This professional competence which obtains for religious 'the pupils' respect and consideration'[1] will exercise at the same time a ripening influence on their religious life and will increase their joy in their work. But the atmosphere of peace and joy, and the family life which are to make their task easier, is very largely the superiors' work. The Pope insists on this:

The order (or congregation) must, as far as possible, replace the family, and you, the superiors general are the first called to infuse the warmth of family affection into the community life of the sisters. Therefore you must yourselves be motherly in your exterior conduct, in your words and in your letters. . . . Above all, be motherly in your innermost thoughts, your judgments and as far as possible, your feelings.[2]

In these great papal addresses we have the clearest and most necessary directives for resuscitating the religious life of women. If we change the atmosphere of religious houses, revivify the spirit of congregations by a sincere and energetic adaptation to modern times, the crisis in vocations will very largely disappear, apostolic activity will be tripled and the life of perfection will be led with a joy that sad souls, wounded hearts or ill-trained minds, never know.

V. *The Position of Modern Woman in the Church*

Having considered the doctrine of His Holiness Pope Pius XII and set forth his directives, it is practically certain that many religious and many mothers of families engaged in apostolic work will wonder what exactly is their position with regard to the Church, and what is the basis of their mission in her.

We have often found by experience that the very fact of making clear in what the build-up of the Christian community consists, and what apostolic mandate Christ entrusted to lay apostles and to nuns through the medium of the hierarchy,

[1] Pius XII: Ibidem.
[2] Pius XII: Address to Superiors General, 15 September, 1952, in Doc. Cath., 1952, col. 1,284.

intensifies their devotion to the Church and their zeal for God's glory. To know the full import of his action and to what species of mission he is pledging himself cannot but encourage an apostle to do his work and pay the price. Many priests would also like to see the solution of the same problem, which is that of the union of the clergy with their local bishop and that of the dependence of Catholic action on the hierarchy. Clear theological principles can but aid mutual respect and help on collaboration and co-operation. The fact that so many priests and faithful see a problem here is sufficient to prove that current doctrine does not allow of such a vision of life.

Let us try to find the probable cause of this inadequacy.

For a long time, apostolate seems to have been considered an apanage of the clergy. It was thought that the priest by reason of his priesthood would have been by right an apostle in the Church; lay folk who gave themselves to apostolic work would be merely his occasional collaborators and would then share his priesthood in some vague way.

It is quite true that by the hierarchy of orders and functions in the Church, those who were more closely associated with priests in the liturgical offices received ordinations, considered for a long time by theologians and canonists as gradual participations in the sacrament of Holy Orders, and therefore as sacramental rites. This mystique of rites hid from sight the true build-up of the Church, exaggerated the value of priests' sacramental office and concealed their apostolic mission, their moral union—moral, not sacramental here—with the apostolic hierarchy, the Pope and the bishops. In order, therefore, to put the problem clearly, we should have to think out afresh the build-up of the sacrament of holy orders, see what is the value and the bearing of the sacramental act, and distinguish it sharply from apostolic missions. That, however, would take us too far away from our subject.[1]

We must limit ourselves here to considering what other powers have been communicated to the Church and how they are shared. If woman has been always excluded from the hierarchy of holy orders, the same cannot be said of the hier-

[1] We have dealt with these questions in our work: *Les Instituts Seculiers*, Brussels, 1954, Part II, ch. vi: Priesthood and State of Perfection.

archy of jurisdiction. In former times many abbesses wielded powers reserved by the Church nowadays to resident bishops alone. However, the apostolic activity of the laity might show us the way to discoveries which, in a different, perhaps less explicit and perhaps less far-reaching measure, resemble, nevertheless, the participation of the abbesses in apostolic powers.

Apostolic powers are all those powers entrusted to Peter and through him to the apostles, to the Sovereign Pontiff and to the Catholic episcopate.[1] These are the power of teaching and of the magisterium, the power of direction and government. Every ecclesiastical or liturgical act which is not specifically sacramental comes under the exercise of these apostolic powers: it is as Christ's deputy that the apostle prays, preaches, teaches, directs, sanctions and punishes. All his acts are placed under the patronage of Christ, whom he represents and under the protection and direction of the Holy Ghost who vivifies the Church of God.

Into the exercise of these powers Christ has absorbed the whole man, the entire personality of those whom he has chosen to deputize for him. Here words and gestures are no longer merely ritual, instrumental cause of grace as in sacramental rites, but secondary and efficient cause, moral cause: the man acts with his whole responsibility, puts his whole intelligence, will and sensibility at the service of the kingdom, in order to pass on the divine message and direct souls to God. The more he gives himself, the more continuous and subtle will be the divine help given him.

As in the sacramental order, everything here is also gift and grace: those who share in the apostolic mission must share in the divine mission entrusted to Peter and the first Apostles. Their powers are shared by the whole hierarchy and by all the faithful to whom a specific apostolate or teacher's task in the Church has been in any degree entrusted. Every one of the faithful who has responsibility for souls, be he cleric or layman, bishop, parish priest, superior of a religious congregation, catechist or leader of Catholic action, shares, often we admit

[1] The thesis that the Apostles received their powers through St Peter is very old and was defended by St Thomas. To-day the theological position which makes episcopal jurisdiction derive from papal jurisdiction is strongly stressed by Pope Pius XII. *Encycl. Mystici Corporis*, 1943.

to a very limited extent, but nevertheless in actual fact, in the mission of the Church and receives, were it only implicitly, a personal mission. If this mission involves actual authority, a share in apostolic powers is certain. It could not be otherwise in a society entirely founded on the will of God and his explicit initiative, and on a formal fundamental divine right.[1]

On all these points the teaching of Pius XII will prove to be decisive. The *Encyclical Mystici Corporis* clearly emphasized the internal dependence of all action and all apostolate in the Church.[2] On another point also, the Pontificate of Pius XII seems to show a decided doctrinal progress.

Recently the Pontifical commission for the interpretation of the code decided to apply to the powers of religious superiors (not exempt) the standards in force for the delegation of ecclesiastical jurisdiction. Certain authors (with whom we agree) consider that by doing so the Holy See recognized the public character proper to this type of shared authority such as, for example, the governing power of superiors of convents.

Again, such a ratification seemed to be required by the nature and the effects of their actions. More than any other ecclesiastical superior, these, the superiors of convents, used to change by their interventions the personal status of those under their authority. Admission to the novitiate, admission to make profession, utterance of public vows, cause deep reactions in the public life of the Church and in the direction of souls. The outstanding part these events play in the constitution and organization of the state of perfection placed them *de facto* if not *de jure*, in the stream of the Church's public life. But the action of these superiors is not only canonical. By the direction they give and the spirit they transmit, they maintain in their institutes an ideal of life honoured by the Church as the state most deeply pledged to the practice of evangelical charity. . . . Among them the Church recognizes doctors like St John of the Cross and St Theresa of Avila. And to-day who would deny the doctrinal role of the Saint of Lisieux?

[1] Delchard, S.J. The governing powers in Religious Institutes, R.C.R., 1952. Cf., Larraona, Arc. C.M.F. De Potestate dominativa publica in iure canonica, in Acta Congressus Juris Internationalis, Roma, Vol. IV, 1937.

[2] See above, p. 59. Pius XII says there 'Practically to whom is the first transmission of the Gospel message *entrusted* if not to mothers?'

Have mothers of families also a role in the Church? We believe they have, and Pius XII has definitely suggested it. God entrusts children to them, but the Church alone can admit them to supernatural life and guide them in their progress towards him. These rights are essential to the mission of the Church. A Christian mother cannot act without the Church; she represents the Church to her child when she passes on to him the teaching of the Mother of all the faithful and guards him watchfully with a pastoral care which must not be underestimated.

There is no need to be surprised because the mother's role has remained rather vague in our Christian society. It is after all a sign of health when life can be left to run its course normally and peacefully. Abuses and crises are often necessary to make us fully conscious of a revealed truth, a canonical mission, a papal rescript or a simple conscientious obligation. When these situations are better defined, they enrich our knowledge of revelation, and better grasped, they increase our consciousness of belonging to Christ and to the Church.

Thus we see that the same moral good scaffolds the whole Christian community, forms a base for all its responsibilities and decides all its action. It binds all the members to Peter and to his successors, therefore to the reigning Roman Pontiff. This union with the centre of the Church gives her her true unity as a Church, her Catholic unity. Christians will become more and more conscious of this unity, while building up, in spite of evil days, the Mystical Body of Christ. This same bond unites the bishops with the successor of St Peter, and passes beyond all local jurisdiction to concentrate in its starting-point and end. It is also the same bond which binds priest and faithful to their bishops, and religious to their superiors. We have not considered this apostolic power sufficiently and we must at any cost make use of it. It steadies our lives by linking them with Christ, it directs our obedience to the Church and is the foundation of our apostolate in the world.[1]

This doctrinal position permits us to soften some too cate-

[1] This apostolic view of laymen's role had already been stressed by Pius. XII in his speech of 3 May, 1951, to Italian Catholic Action in A.A.S., 1951, p. 376; cf., Doc. Cath., 1951, col. 579. The Encyclical *Evangelli Praecones* of 2 June, 1951, develops this doctrine. Cf., Doc. Cath., 1951, cols. 779–82.

goric statements as to the role of woman in the Church. She seems to be excluded from all share in juridical power, in priestly power. She is not called to the summits of the hierarchy. Tradition is very firm on this point, and maintains unanimously St Paul's doctrine. But the function of educator and teacher is hers in her home, or that she exercises in the Church's name, either in Catholic teaching or in the religious life and other states of perfection, in apostolic and charitable works, places her in active dependence on the supreme hierarchy, dependence which not only obliges her to obey, but gives her a share in the apostolic powers of jurisdiction, government and magisterium, a vital position in the mystical body of Christ.

We reflect too little on the authority and powers of abbesses and superiors of great religious congregations, for women who played a leading role in the history of the Church, thanks to the hierarchical powers entrusted to them.

It would not be surprising if at the moment when the Church is obliged to appeal more than ever to lay folk and especially to women, she should be led to live and to define more clearly the moral link which binds them to the hierarchy, and is the basis of their apostolic action; this amounts, jurisdically and theologically to assigning a place to woman in apostolic responsibilities and ecclesiastical jurisdiction.

The novelty of this thesis will perhaps surprise you. But it will only refresh the memory of theologians, and it recalls ancient positions and ecclesiastical customs, which are gradually regrouping themselves into a living system, open and welcoming. God's work is always pacifying and a revealed truth is always a salutary truth. It communicates a true greatness which it would be a pity to lose for the sake of avoiding some controversy such as has occasionally troubled a superficial serenity, but nevertheless, permits us to penetrate to a greater depth into the vital problems of the Church.

VI. *Conclusions*

We must now apply the papal directives to the subject of this session, i.e., the drawing-up of a programme of theological studies for nuns.

1. The Sovereign Pontiff has, we think, clearly shown the feminine characteristics which all initiatives of modern women must preserve. This seems to discourage any idea of adopting a programme of studies drawn up for clerics.

2. Moreover, Pius XII has stressed the great contribution of women in works of apostolate and self-renunciation. From this we conclude that adaptation of these works needs a solid instruction sufficient to make up for the loss of a Christian social mentality and even to out-do the past, thanks to a more advanced personal training.

3. Difficulties are presented by many problems concerning faith and morals, even the natural moral law. These cannot be kept from the knowledge of young people. Those who educate them ought, therefore, to be able to understand and solve them with the gravity and competence required by the degree of intellectual training already acquired by their pupils in other branches of knowledge.

4. Again, the training of religious needs in our times a doctrinal instruction adapted, not only to the needs of their apostolate, but also to the problems presented by their interior life and the difficulties with which they have to cope in their professional surroundings.

5. Lastly, the Pope seems especially anxious to make woman's dignity respected, and to safeguard her maternal and family role. He would like to see her prepared to be prudent in the exercise of her political rights and in the social tasks she may assume in public life. All theological instruction given to nuns must respect these lofty directives.

Chapter III

THE PROMOTION OF WOMAN IN THE MODERN WORLD

By S. de Lestaris, s.j.

As preface to this conference, I am borrowing this very remarkable passage from Lucien Romier and his book, *Promotion of Woman.*

'When one knows the decisive part taken by women in the religious and moral reformation of the sixteenth century, and in the preparation of the Romantic movement, one is amazed at the almost complete absence of the feminine spirit in the intellectual uplift of the last sixty years. One feels almost inclined to say that woman quitted of her own accord the domain of thought, properly so called and looked for an artificial diversion in her success in the art of the anecdotic novel.

'But it looks as though the moment is coming when woman is to re-assume her intellectual and social influence. Influence that always comes back to her when masculine genius wants a halt in order to review its own conquests. In the same way, the hunting savage throws down his game in front of the hut and leaves to the women the care of making it provide food for all'.

This very rich text might be studied and discussed phrase by phrase. For the moment it will suffice to have quoted it to show the infinite complexity of the question. For, in order to speak adequately of the promotion of woman in the modern world, one would need to be at one and the same time historian, sociologist and philosopher, if not more.

How can one attempt to discuss such a subject in less than an hour, without risking over-simplification, if one tries to extract general views from it, or on the contrary, leaving the audience uncertain and perhaps confused if one makes as complete as possible an inventory of the many currents criss-crossing in the modern world.

Therefore, at the beginning of this address, I ask your indulgence, realizing that it is almost impossible to satisfy your desire for a true and authentic analysis of such a complex reality and at the same time your need of synthesis and conclusions.

I propose to proceed as follows: we shall make three series of soundings.

1. A first series in the *ideas* expressed during the last century as to woman's mission in the world;

2. A second in the social facts which have transformed willy-nilly woman's position in the last hundred years;

3. A third in woman's behaviour, and any expression of her aspirations she may have given.

After which I shall try to finish in a fourth point with a sort of present-day balance sheet of feminism, for I should not venture to advocate purely and simply an authentic promotion in the modern world.

I. *The Ideas*

A relatively short while ago, people used to say with conviction: 'The world is led by ideas'. To-day we are more reserved. We should like to add as correction: 'But the climate and the social events condition it'.

Actually many ideas with regard to woman and her role in the world were circulated during the twentieth century.

The first prophets of feminism were the followers of Saint Simon. He himself—although he does not seem to have been a convinced feminist in spite of his admiration for Madame de Stael—bears, according to his disciples, the responsibility for two phrases, which were to them a new gospel:

'In the constitutive clauses of the international organization: women will be permitted to enter their names, they may be nominated'—and: 'Man and woman, that is one social individual'.

This double oracle was to be adopted by Père Enfantin, who made it into the *leit-motif* of the religion of woman, of which he claimed to be the John the Baptist.

Nothing but the influence of woman could succeed in trans-

forming a society that had always been military and warlike, into a universal society in which the successful exploitation of the entire globe would at last produce unlimited prosperity.

So, at the beginning of the nineteenth century and for almost one hundred years, were united the feminism and the utopian and sentimental socialism of the eighteen-thirties.

This idea of a feminine redemption was to be adopted by *Auguste Comte* in a less lyrical but apparently more solid and realist key. From 1845 onwards, especially, the founder of positivism will continue to repeat in season and out of season that 'one grows weary of thinking and acting—one never wearies of loving', for in essence the new doctrine consists in setting sociability above personality, and love above theory. Hence the fundamental importance of woman in the world, and her unique destiny: 'I' the positivist regimé, women constitute the domestic source of that restraining power of which the philosophers hold the co-ordinating organ and the proletariate the political guarantee.

Woman thus has a privileged position between the philosopher and the proletariate; the steering of all society towards altruism is entrusted to her.

Truly a religion of which woman is the messias!

The philosophers' platonic ideas were not long in becoming action. To this end it would be sufficient for some excitable revolutionaries to rise up and call for revolt. The most perfect types of these are *Flora Tristan* and *Jeanne Deroin*, towards 1848. The first feminist newspaper appeared in 1848: *The Voice of Woman*, demanding for all women 'the right to share in the social life of the country'.

Eccentrics come and attach themselves like parasites to this movement and provoke the mockery of their contemporaries. The very title of 'Vesuviennes' stuck like a label on these militants who, people said, poured 'torrents of lava' on society, is indicative of the unpreparedness of contemporary minds. They had never before seen woman come down into the market-place.

Nevertheless, women were loudly claiming their rights, because 'the abuse of the right of the stronger is a denial of our republican homes'.

Jeanne Deroin presents herself as candidate at the elections of 1848 and replies very justly to Proudhon who vilified her for making such a claim. 'The title of mother ought alone suffice to make you call women to the legislative elections'. Truly they were needed 'in this great badly run household called the state. . . . If men, to make themselves important, have transformed this household question into a political question, it is a woman's duty to put an end to politics and to war, which has done so much harm to humanity'.

But this language, although sincere and, to a certain extent, justifiable, was still premature, and in any case would not be allowed once the Second Empire was constituted.

The economic expansion of the years 1850 to 1880 would put an end to women's legitimate revolt in 1848. The romantic exaggerations of 1830 and Georges Sand's outrageous speeches would be a sufficient argument for the great industrials, whose interest lay rather in building up society on money and manufacture than on fine feelings.

Actually money and luxury ruined woman's cause at the end of the nineteenth century, exploiting some of them and making them into the proletariate of the new rationalized labour of industry, while others became accomplices of the wealthy and sated bourgeoisie.

From that time feminism sank to a discreditable depth: individualist libertinism. With Alexander Dumas, junior, with the brothers Margueritte, with Leon Blum, what women needed henceforth was complete autonomy in moral and sexual matters, as their predecessors had claimed it in civic, political and social affairs. Victor Margueritte invented the slogan which expresses the epoch of the nineteen-hundreds: 'Your body is your own'.

The amoral theories of these men of letters did not become part of social morality until the easy-going years between the wars, when it showed itself in the form of a more or less permanent repudiation of stability where the duties of marriage and having children were concerned. Divorce and deliberate limitation of births appeared in public morals after having been justified in theory. The years 1930–9 will remain shamefully stained in the sight of the historian and the sociologist,

even should he be quite independent of any moral prejudices.

Nothing but Catholic youth action, aided perhaps by war restrictions accepted in a spirit of sacrifice by a small Christian élite, were to be capable of launching a counter-action against these noxious and subversive ideas.

We shall have occasion to come back to them later. It is time to analyse the *social* events.

II. *The Social Events*

Alongside of the ideas, the social events: installation of machinery, division of labour, agglomeration of dwelling-places, appearance of a class of salaried workers, etc. . . . all this contributed greatly to the modification of woman's position.

Formerly, there was no demand for women's work, except, of course, for domestic work, wrote L. Romier. To-day women's work is called for from every side: the demand increases in proportion as economic activity, becoming more complex, creates employment into which women's work can be more easily fitted and costs less than a man's. The continuous rise in women's salaries during the last thirty years, relatively more rapid and more striking than that of men's salaries, indicates the increasing demand (L. Romier, p. 86).

In the beginning, the first crowded factories full of working women in big industry, especially in England, were 'hells'. Employers were not ashamed to think that the more miserable a workman was, the harder he would work.

In this way masses of women were driven from home by 'undeserved poverty', and forced to go to the machines in the workshops, to obtain from the new-born industrialism money to supplement what was necessary at home. The investigations of Villerme and Villeneuve Bargemont make sad reading on this subject.

Fortunately those days have gone by. Women's employment has been made more humane by laws on labour. Nevertheless, in spite of everything, not all the feminine working proletariate has been re-absorbed in the last fifty years—statistics on the state of feminine labour open perspectives unknown to most people.

From 2,768,000 women occupied in 1886 in urban professions (land-workers excluded), the actual number of women workers went up in 1906 to 4,356,000 to attain in 1931 a maximum of 4,394,000. In 1946 this total was slightly higher: 4,590,000.

These figures represent in 1906, 22 per cent of the whole femine population of France, and 21 per cent in 1946.

If we take the active population (always excluding agricultural workers), in every hundred workers we had in 1886, 33.8 women and in 1916, 34.8 per cent.

If we compare these rates with analogous rates in other countries, we find superior post-war rates in Switzerland and in Sweden: in the former 36.6 per cent, and in the latter, 35.3 per cent; in Britain, Belgium and the U.S.A. we find inferior rates varying from 31.2 per cent to 25.8 per cent.

We cannot therefore consider women's labour in French economy as occasional labour, for it is equal to at least half men's labour.

These figures would even be considerably higher if we took a very industrialized department such as the Seine. There in 100 workers, 53 per cent are women between fifteen and sixty-five years old!

Lastly, if we consider the development of employment among the married women of our country, we notice that the rate of activity of married women in non-agricultural professions has decreased from 20.2 per cent in 1906 to 19.7 per cent in 1946, for the whole of France. In the Seine where women work more than in the provinces, this rate of married women, not including widows or divorcees, is 39.8 per cent and 42.7 per cent of married women in the prime of life, between twenty and twenty-five years of age.

In the face of such statistics we should be no realists if we thought nothing had changed and that we are not in the presence of a completed revolution.

Nevertheless, we must admit frankly with Lucien Romier: 'The working woman has not yet succeeded in freeing herself (unless she is educated) from a proletarian condition, or if she is educated, from a condition in which she is rather endured by man than admitted'

This comes from woman's habit, in seeking her independence by work, of following man or aping him, in other words of offering her collaboration, not as a fresh and useful contribution, but as though she were canvassing, too modestly or too boldly, for a share in the usefulness he has already acquired.

Yet the study of the movement of feminine employment in the professional sphere is indicative of an attempt to direct this employment towards more specifically feminine crafts. Industry, public services, transport and domestic services between 1906 and 1946 set women free for the benefit of commerce (from 16.9 per cent to 25.8 per cent) of the liberal professions and administration (from 7.2 per cent to 17.6 per cent) which seems to indicate progress in feminine education. More girls and women are available for employment in the administrative services, as secretaries, shorthand typists, accountants, etc.

On the other hand there is an increase of salaried workers, relatively to independent activities. In 1946 there are fewer women running shops, etc., fewer small enterprises and women working on their own, and more employees and labouring women. This evolution came about especially between 1906 and 1926.

Thus, in spite of a certain advance in education, the proletarianization of working women has been increasing.

If we leave the domain of work and employment to pursue our inquiries in the sphere of elementary, secondary and higher education, very real transformations are to be noticed there.

In the elementary schools, where there is less change since education became obligatory, we find women's numbers passing between 1850 and 1950 from 46 per cent to 50.2 per cent of the total school numbers.

In secondary schools the increase is much more remarkable. In 1910 only 26 per cent of their pupils were girls. In 1950, the rate is 45 per cent.

Lastly, in the university the advance is considerable. In 1900 of one hundred students three were girls. In 1950 35 per cent of the university population is feminine.

One has to yield to the evidence: the young woman has won her place in the world of education and culture.

Nevertheless, it is too soon to talk of a real professional promotion of woman. Though she has more culture than of yore, her male partner does not allow her access to directive posts in business. Save in the textile industry and in the Health services where the directing staff are chiefly women, everywhere else (industry, commerce, banks, etc.) men govern. The idea of a feminine promotion from the bottom rung to the top has not yet made its way. Woman is still considered in her employment as a natural subaltern.

We find ourselves with these unescapable social facts in presence of a phenomenon of collective evolution.

The arrival of large numbers of women in professional work, co-education, freedom of movement, satisfaction of the desire for knowledge, all this goes far beyond the individual attempts at emancipation that we used to think so daring long ago, and makes them seem pointless and uninteresting. This checks the inclination some women might have to make themselves conspicuous, but at the same time feminine opinion which is growing broader, more active and more unanimous in society, is becoming also more effective.

III. *Behaviour*

These notes would be incomplete if after having remarked the influence of social facts on woman's position, we did not mention a thing that cannot be defined or weighed: subjective behaviour. This, when it becomes general, creates fashions, snobbery and, most important of all, valuable judgments.

In this domain of behaviour we have first to draw attention to a tendency to individualism. For the last one hundred years the great desire of woman has been to acquire individual liberty and to defend it against those who would like to identify too simply her personality and her function, even if that function is her family one. It would seem that woman is indifferent to being praised, flattered, respected in words in society, drawing-rooms, novels, if she has to be in reality a prisoner of the conventions made for her by men. Here woman means to be as free and independent as her male partner. She objects to being defined in terms of her relation to man.

Without falling into the excesses in language and behaviour displayed by the disciples of Simone de Beauvoir and Françoise d'Eaubonne, the contemporary generation is certainly burdened with a 'Diana' complex. Woman is taking stock of herself with a sort of resentment against a civilization which has hitherto kept her in a congenital inferiority complex. Nothing infuriates the modern girl more than the title: 'Queen of the home', of which past generations were so proud. She sees it as dark and grotesque irony, a mystification of which man makes use to justify and consolidate his *de facto* domination.

It may be on account of this reaction or for some other reason, but woman is more and more tempted to escape from her home and from domestic tasks. The explanation given that the family resources are insufficient cannot account for the desire of girls and married women, among the bourgeoisie at any rate, to work outside their homes. 'No young woman will to-day willingly accept the care of a solitary or very often lonely home. . . . Moreover, the runaway from home is not looking for liberty but for society'. The family is no longer enough, nor is the artificial life of drawing-rooms. Woman wants to feel she is at the crossroads where the economic, social and political life of modern civilization is passing by. She wants to be more than a 'figurante' in the state.

As a result of such behaviour, girls feel much nearer to young men and more on a footing of comradeship with them. The type of relations which exists between the sexes has evolved amazingly. It has been said that this comradeship has killed love. It would be truer to say that it has killed romance, and who would regret it? Young people get married earlier. This has doubtless some disadvantages, as many homes set up too early lack stability. But on the other hand early marriage is a gain for the woman, and definitely a gain for the love she is looking for beyond all else. Among the bourgeoisie, marriage is no longer a 'way out' as it too often was only a few generations ago.

Must we admit that girls are less on their guard against the surprises and the brutality of love? It would probably be more exact, if there really are many deplorable cases to record, to put

the blame more often on the girl herself than on the young man, for she is impatient of limitations and desirous to taste freely of 'earthly food'.

Another characteristic trait of feminine behaviour in these days: the extreme rapidity with which fashions and crazes change. Women have always shown a wonderful capacity for adapting themselves. But at present it cannot even be called adaptation, it is always on the move. New fashions go all round France in less than a month: shade of material, cut of clothes, styles of hairdressing, etc. There is a craving to be up-to-date, only equalled by the rapidity with which modern man moves about by car, coach, train, or even by the humble motor-bike.

These variations of feminine fashion are an expensive amusement of course, but can also be an excuse for not thinking of graver and more lasting aims.

Tending to the same end is an evident enthusiasm for *sport*, for open air life, for camping, for the road. It is always the same revengeful reaction against the iron collar, that a more and more regimented and directed society is trying to put on the necks of subjects.

Young women will not hesitate to ask nature, travelling, unexpected adventures to help them to rediscover spontaneity, surprise, risk.

From all this comes an increase of independence and autonomy, that might make us suppose woman has forgotten to think of founding her future on a hearth-stone, and prefers the unpredictable in the shape of a professional situation acquired on chance, anyhow. She sees no use in being ready, providing for the future in a 'broken' world, where preceding generations have so obviously proved the futility of their methods, by the wars they were unable to avert.

Thus there is a secret complicity based on cynicism or indifference with the supporters of theoretical existentialism more intellectual than real.

Perhaps to-day, as thirty years ago, the Anglo-Saxon type is magnetizing woman's unspoken desires. It is difficult to determine. There is more creative originality than one might think, underlying this complex conduct.

IV. *The Present Balance-sheet of the Feminine Question*

After this rapid survey of the more usual feminine behaviour, mostly explicable by social facts, and the substitute ideologies whether past or present, we should perhaps try to draw up a balance-sheet of the question of feminism and decide whether or no we may speak of the advancement of woman in the modern world.

To do this we shall be obliged to map out the sectors and consider in turn the modern woman as she stands to labour, to the state and to the family. After which we shall be able to end with some remarks on our Christian feminine elite.

1. *Woman and work*

If ever she did so at all, which is doubtful, the woman of 1953 desires less and less to see the world through the curtains of her kitchen windows only. All, more or less, have a secret yearning to contribute something to the modern organization of labour or to get some advantage from it.

The position of an artisan or independent worker is relatively disparaged. 'It does not pay', in any case. None but the liberal professions offer the bourgeoisie a form of professional activity which is still, at least in theory, compatible with a private life. Madame has her consulting-rooms as doctor, lawyer, dentist, but is obliged to pay a nurse or a family help to look after her children. Even in her home, she wants 'a breath of air'.

In the world of labour, the working-woman is now taken as a matter of course. It is even necessary at any cost for parents to train their daughters for a specific trade. When married they will perhaps abandon the office or the workshop for the time being, but they will leave a bit of their hearts behind. The working-woman knows, even if she stays at home, that she must not always slow down her husband's trade-union battles, nor underrate the value of strikes.

There might be in the soul of every daughter of labour a vocation for class-struggle, if it were cultivated. Communists are well aware of it, and count upon women's latent power of revolt. Lenin spoke of this in words that were polished and seductive if not always acceptable.

Unfortunately there is many a slip twixt cup and lip. Work away from home seems attractive; but it quickly becomes a burden and an obstacle to the development of a woman's personality and culture. Michele Aumont's *Women at the Works* is most enlightening on this subject. Women's work in factories is most often degrading and humiliating. It is, of course, possible that in the future, a civilization better aware of the dignity of woman, may succeed in providing a just outlet for her longing to work outside her home. Perhaps our grandchildren may some day see the era of a sane organization of women's labour with reduced hours of work. At present this is only a dream.

2. *Woman and the state*

Having started out on this road, woman no longer regards the sphere of the state as exclusively reserved for men. Pius XII himself accepts this when he says 'a movement which is carrying women along, willy-nilly, into the orbit of social and political life'. 'Are we to conclude,' he asks Roman women in 1945, 'that you ought to oppose this movement? Certainly not. . . . Your entering it happened suddenly, as a result of social upheavals of which we are still spectators. What matter? You are called to take part in it'.

Woman sees her sphere of influence spreading: so much the better, provided it does not make her neglect the essential part of her feminine vocation. As a matter of fact, woman has made her way through a breach into the world of social, civic and political responsibilities.

Woman has a vote and it seems impossible now that she should not have one. It seems so normal! She is often a municipal councillor, and as such she is irreplaceable; men admit this now. There are committees which, if there were no women on them, would be an exhibition of incompetence: committees of education, of school funds, of hygiene, of child welfare, of street policing, etc.

No one laughs any more at the idea of a woman deputy, a woman clerk to a ministry, a woman minister. On the contrary they respect her. It would ill become us to complain of that.

3. *Woman and the family*

Nevertheless, there are shadows on all this. Without claiming that woman habitually deserts her home and maternal tasks, we cannot say that most women put as much heart and taste into them as of yore. The idea of family usually brings before the eyes of this generation the spectre of expenses to be met. Children are not as a matter of course considered blessings from heaven. It would not be true to affirm that motherhood is no longer desired. But it is true to add that it is in general desired within fairly narrow limits. However, there has been progress on this point during the last fifteen years. We may attribute this to the lightening of the financial burden represented by family allowances to a home with at least three children. But one cannot assert that this increase in families always corresponds to a real desire for children.

In Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian countries limitation of families has acquired the value of a new gospel and doctrine of salvation. This, thank heaven, is not the case in France, though the limitation does occur and has even been made into a system.

In contrast to the preceding generation, many married women now look on themselves as first wives and then mothers. At any rate they are less 'broody' mothers, and allow their children to be less at home and more often entrusted to collective nurseries; there is even, we think, some exaggeration in this direction, when we look at the result in the characters of these children when they have been deprived of their mother's affection too early or for too long.

There is much talk of unadapted children; we might perhaps talk more of unadapted mothers.

Some ten days ago your colleagues of the union of religious hospital nurses were shown examples of crimes of this kind. Too many mothers, if not exactly unworthy, are not attentive or loving enough, so that the children seem outcasts as far as affection is concerned.

Perhaps I should remind you that divorce has increased since the war, and the annual average is now 45,000 as against 35,000 in 1938. And women sue for divorce as much as men do. In these conditions can we talk simply and solely of the

promotion of woman? It would seem necessary to distinguish many different shades in the picture.

If we mean by this formula that the social, civic and political standing of woman has greatly improved, there is much truth in it. It would even be entirely true if we distinguished between the social, civic, etc., standing of woman, as it actually is and as public opinion imagines it ought to be; for as it *really* is still in many social categories hardly touched by constitutional reforms: proletariate of big cities, agricultural or seaport proletariates, small landowners, or farmers of poor districts, it is quite another matter. There is not much sign of promotion there.

Moreover, if when speaking of the 'promotion of woman' we systematically put on one side her inward superiority and her instinct for education, which until now have been the apanage of feminine nature, one is not really talking about the question of woman's promotion at all. For, as Dr Berge says, in an article contributed to a psycho-analytic review: Women need not try to be a copy of man. 'The great evil is that woman, wanting to make herself more important, has lost the consciousness of *her* importance; she does not properly understand that she is the corner-stone of the building, whereas formerly, when she was less intellectual, it was doubtless easier for her to know it instinctively. It is true that woman's role is often a thankless one, for vanity often has to be sacrificed to efficiency. But a deeper and more lucid view of things would enable her to be proud of this instead of being almost ashamed'.

Fortunately for humanity and for France, there are some Christian feminine elites who have acquired their promotion from the double point of view we desire: both on the social, civil and political level, and on the level of the inward personal life of moral and religious consciousness.

I am glad to be able to end this statement by mentioning the magnificent spectacle of the young Christian homes which are being set up at this moment in the ranks of our youth. I was told recently of the surprise and admiration of one of our most highly qualified sexologists in Paris on meeting some of these young women who had come to consult him. Their faith and

their delicacy in matters of conjugal chastity showed a real interior liberty, and not a kind of scrupulous tension, to such a degree that the doctor himself was astonished. The harmony of nature and grace was here a wonderful reality and, he said, perfectly designed to procure respect for the Christian doctrine of marriage.

In Christian homes such as these, the gain is certain. The woman is more wife than ever, collaborating better than ever with her husband in all the spheres of life, including the professional one. She is none the less motherly for all that with her children, whom she brings up in a more enlightened way, as she is well provided (better provided than her mother was) with pedagogy and psychology.

She means to realize with her husband a very united home, but it is not to be shut in upon itself. Her ideal is that of the *family open* to a number of households, or a Catholic action community. She occupies herself with social problems. She wishes to initiate her children into them progressively, inculcating in them the sense of their responsibility and solidarity with regard to other classes of society.

This time one can talk of promotion indeed, for such a woman is spiritually equal to her situation, and any external tasks she assumes will not interfere with her duties as mother and wife in her home.

There is just one shadow on the picture: health. In this way of life where she is torn between social obligations and home duties, woman no longer gets sufficient help. Actually, a modern woman who tries to face all the responsibilities to which her increased abilities have promoted her, risks overworking. However, in a certain sense this is the fate reserved for sanctity: to go to the very limit of its powers, and never to be able to say 'No!' when called to the perfection of love for others and of love for God.

Chapter IV

THE DOCTRINAL TRAINING OF CONTEMPLATIVES

By Lucien-Marie de St Joseph, o.c.d.

THE EVIDENCE I have used in drawing up this statement was furnished not only by Carmelites, but also by other contemplative orders. My personal investigation was supplemented by another, made at almost the same time. All the different shades of contemplatives were consulted, from the most intellectual Dominicans to the Poor Clares, passing through the Cistercians, Benedictines, Carmelites, which makes the result fairly representative.

Resuming an investigation is risking many repetitions and much uncertainty in the line of thought, and although the investigations furnished the material for this report, they are not its only object. Besides, it seems fanciful to construct a ready-made plan in the abstract to be sent to contemplatives in general. Without setting aside numbers and statistics, the main part of this report is furnished by some reflections on one investigation and also by the experiences of priests and religious who were called upon to exercise their ministry to contemplatives. Above all, although it is difficult to escape it always, I should like to avoid dogmatism. Some impressions, subject to revision, are preferable, and their chief advantage will be to help each of us to think out the problem set. Many other facts may be added to those already cited. The important thing is, of course, to arrive at something which might really be useful in the doctrinal training of contemplatives.

To begin with, an important observation must be made: the word 'contemplatives' includes both in history and in different places at the same moment in history, such different realiza-

tions that it would be very rash to generalize *in abstracto* and to dogmatize or to legislate for 'the' contemplatives, as if this word always signified a reality everywhere identical. This does not mean that it corresponds to no reality, but that its realizations are so varied. They differ according to the religious family they belong to, or even within the same religious family according to the vocations that come, or according to the dominant influence in one house or another, or even in the interior of the same house according to individual vocations. Thus, what is most to be dreaded would be a hasty generalization, leading to a kind of dogmatism. This manifold variety of shades does exist, it is a matter of experience. It is good that it should be so and I would even say that it cannot be otherwise. Variety of this kind is greater among contemplative vocations than among any others because they have not, in general, the sort of objective standard which teaching nuns have on account of the subject matter of their teaching. The same is true of other nuns who have a mixed life, according to the orientation of their apostolate. The human incarnation of the ideal is less developed and less definite among contemplatives, which is the source of their diversity. St John of the Cross, speaking (as he thought in his humility) to Carmelites only, expressed this variety in words whose poetic expression does not in any way deprive the thought of its austerity:

> Searching for traces of thee
> Maidens run along the way,

that is to say, St John of the Cross comments, they run in different directions and in many ways . . . each according to the spirit and the call God has given her; they run, I say, with many different kinds of works and spiritual exercises along the road of eternal life.[1]

If within a religious family, distinguished historically and canonically, there can be such differences that St John of the Cross feared the application of an abstract schema to essentially movable and diverse realities (in which he was right), *a fortiori*, when one thinks of the variety of contemplative vocations in the Church, one must take into account the difference

[1] *Spiritual Canticle*, Str. XVII, verses 2 and 3.

of atmosphere, both doctrinal and spiritual, which exists between the Poor Clares of one monastery whom poverty compels to earn by hard work the minimum necessary for subsistence, and another convent of contemplative Dominican nuns, destined to receive, though fairly exceptionally, retreatants belonging to an intellectual environment. (I am not commenting here, merely stating facts.) It is therefore necessary to be prudent in generalizing.

Among the wishes of contemplatives in the matter of doctrinal formation, there are points on which all are *positively* unanimous. To take a very simple example, all are agreed in desiring the study of dogma. There are also points on which they are *negatively* unanimous: all have an equal horror of dilettantism or of intellectual curiosity. A strange fact, strongly supported by Père Liege's reflections (cf., *infra*) is that on certain points there is what one might call a 'privative' unanimity, for the majority, if not all, omit some things. They must not be reproached for this. Actually the theologians must bear the responsibility for it. Moral theology is too often taught in a negative and legalistic way which results in its boring those who require to live on what they are learning. One cannot live on prohibitions. In reality the teaching of moral theology, rightly understood, is the basis of spiritual theology. This omission on the part of the contemplatives is distressing to the theologians, but the latter should draw conclusions from it. Lastly, there is the whole immense gamut of points on which opinions spread all up and down the scale, from yes to no. In the quality of the training, this scale varies from the conferences given by a mistress of novices, more or less competent (I do not mean to be ironic) to quasi-university courses, spread over seven years and given by qualified professors. All this will help us to avoid striking on the rock of too great a confidence in a universal pattern prepared in advance, which we could offer ready-made to the contemplatives.

Moreover, it warns us of what might be called in religious psychology the danger of seeing something magical in the idea of doctrinal training. These dangers are perfectly real, and one senses them in the letters of some nuns, who are not among the least gifted. And this last thought brings us into the heart of

the subject. Obviously it is more important for us to stop there for a moment than to aim at a complete statement of the question. By hypothesis, contemplatives are nuns whose usual form of life does not involve apostolic contacts. It is hardly worthwhile to mention the exceptional case of a few monasteries where retreatants are received in very small numbers. This statement is pregnant with consequences. The problem of their doctrinal training therefore, aims above all at their own personal, spiritual development, the progress of their interior life, and the more theocentric views which will soon appear will in no way alter this. An idea of the doctrinal training of contemplatives which one might call magical in the sense of the psychology of the subconscious would be to imagine that by its own infallible (obviously the operative words) virtue, an increase in knowledge of doctrine would automatically produce progress in the interior life. Some people are not far from this notion. Facts, as well as the classic teaching of the doctors of the Church show that the connection between the two terms is not of the order of infallible or magical causality. There is nothing in that to lessen the value of doctrinal training, but it helps us to put it in its right place. Experience as well as the teaching of the great doctors on this point is very definite: we need only cite St Thomas' teaching on devotion. He knows well that the true gift of oneself to God (for that is how we translate *devotion*) is not in actual fact in any proportion to the degree of knowledge possessed by any particular subject. Nevertheless, he reminds us that in itself, greater knowledge, perfectly docile to God, favours a better gift of self.[1] There is much that might be said about the opinions of spiritual writers on this problem of interior life. The position taken by St John of the Cross in this is especially important. There are of course, fairly frequent ambiguities in vocabulary to be got rid of. They show themselves in the contemplatives' answers to the enquiry. Actually the expression 'doctrinal training' may cover a number of very different realities. This provides a base for opposition where it is really misunderstanding. We must therefore describe the exact level of thought to which the words we are using belong. When St John talks of pure faith,

[1] IIa–IIae, q.82, 1.3 ad.3.

we must not be so naive as to think he means speculative faith in its specific purity, as presented to us in an abstract treatise. For him on the contrary, pure faith is a lively faith, a faith informed by charity, and often illumined by the gifts of the Holy Ghost, in opposition to all rational human, especially sensible, accretion. Pure faith is thus in no way opposed to charity. On this point St John's vocabulary comes very close to that of St Paul, and for him pure faith includes charity. A great deal of confusion comes from the fact that people do not define clearly enough the meaning of the expressions they use, and the level of thought to which these belong. Would it enrich one's interior life to have an exact knowledge of St Paul's special vocabulary which he uses in speaking of faith? The unanimous answer would be: very little, or not at all, and it would certainly be remarked that knowledge of this kind risks drying-up interior life. Evidently there is no necessary connection between the two. Nevertheless, would not the study of the same St Paul, from another angle (for example , a real, living knowledge of Chapter 8 of the Epistle to the Romans) be capable of enriching one's interior life immensely? Everyone would say it would. Thus, with regard to the same question: the doctrinal knowledge of scripture, there may be two different attitudes according to the levels of thought or the vocabulary used. This is above all true for contemplatives who have, on account of their vocation, a less precise vocabulary than teaching nuns; much confusion may arise, and many ambiguities, ending with antagonism, which must be got rid of immediately.

If therefore we approach St John's position, it is certain that for him there is no possibility of interior life and *a fortiori* of mystical life (for there is no incompatibility between these two) without a minimum of faith and therefore of knowledge. Love, in which perfection consists, can only be born when an object is known. But he is careful to distinguish a qualitative increase of faith (one might call it a plunging of roots downwards) from a surface development, definite unfolding of faith, a purely speculative knowledge bearing on distinct objects and not having any necessary connection with the qualitative increase of faith illumined by love. He contrasts obscure faith (the adherence of our soul to truth proposed by God) with this

working out and distinguishing. Evidently the essential thing is the increase of this obscure faith and not of this distinct knowledge. Distinct knowledge bears, and may bear very usefully, on numbers of special points of doctrinal study, but it is not itself directly connected with increase of interior life.[1] Faith, however, conceived as an obscure adherence, growing ever deeper and deeper, to the mystery of God, has a relation to the interior life. To speak clearly, here is one quotation among thousands: 'the purer and the more advanced in faith a soul is, the more infused charity she possesses'[2] and therefore the more perfect she is. That is clear. In the very degree in which dark faith includes a loving adherence to God, all increase of faith will bring with it an increase of charity. And this brings us to the core of what the contemplatives want and we ourselves would like for them. For if there is no necessary connection between a more explicit knowledge of revealed truth, and an increase of faith, there is no opposition either. And the explicit knowledge might become, under certain conditions, the instrument of an increase in the excellence of faith. The essential aim of doctrinal training among contemplatives is to dispose them to increase and develop to its maximum that loving and lively faith, by means of a deeper understanding of revealed truths and dogmas. There are other aims as well, especially this: to keep away the errors which tend by a kind of osmosis to seep into the most believing souls. But the main purpose of doctrinal training of contemplatives is the increase in excellence of dark obscure faith. This was the chief solicitude of St John of the Cross; it made him take up his pen. He wished to give contemplative souls the concrete doctrinal training, always orientated towards realization, of which they stood in need. Being what he was, poetry sufficed him when he wished to express his experience for his own personal use. His mystical poems were born spontaneously and even necessarily of his experience, and they not only sufficed him but they contained for him infinitely more than all the didactic commen-

[1] It is not necessary to insist on the higher states of the mystical life, in which increase in love is obviously no longer in proportion to increase in conceptual faith and thus in doctrinal knowledge. The two forms of progress are unconnected or at least independent of one another.

[2] *Ascent of Mount Carmel* II, XXIX.

taries. But this poetic expression remained a sealed book to the souls he taught, and they asked for a commentary. This commentary corresponds exactly, as he says in so many words in the prologue to the Ascent of Mount Carmel, to the need of contemplative souls for doctrinal training. One may consider, without of course wishing to end the debate on it, that the plan of teaching given by a saint who is a doctor of the Church (no one is a doctor of the Church without being a saint), when writing for contemplative souls, represents perhaps the type, or at least one of the purest types, of doctrinal teaching for contemplatives. We find that numbers of founders of orders as well as many directors of contemplative souls were preoccupied with the same need. Saint Teresa drew up lists of books for the doctrinal teaching of her daughters. Bossuet, St Francis de Sales, and many others, were interested in this training, and upon occasion themselves wrote about it.

The notion of dark faith (according to St John of the Cross) and its difference from an explicit development in distinct formulae of knowledge of the matter revealed, explains another scale of opinions among contemplative nuns. We refer to their own psychological attitude to the question in hand. Here, too, it is impossible to generalize, for their attitudes differ and vary from a barely concealed suspicious reserve to the ingenuous candour of those to whom sin is merely ignorance. These positions, slightly exaggerated, represent the extremes. Between the two we can fit in almost anything. It is easy to understand the reserve of some: it is reasonable, for all are unanimous that there is no strict proportion between the clearness of explicit knowledge and the depth of a lively faith. But everyone also admits that the least one can say is that explicit knowledge in itself can do no harm to the depth of faith and the enrichment of the interior life. The contrary is true.

This also explains the extreme variety, not only in the choice of means for ensuring doctrinal training, but also in the matter of the teaching which they desire or do, in fact, receive. Here again we find different orientations, not only according to the different religious families, but in the same family, distinct tones, and even in the same convent manifold special callings. St Teresa wrote at one time in support of doctrinal training

for her daughters, and insisted strongly on her esteem for true theologians, carefully distinguishing them from uninstructed ones. Even then she remarked that some ignorant souls (not that she thought they ought to be ignorant, she was merely making note of a fact) were going to God in an authentically mystical life with a small baggage of vocal prayers beyond which they could not go—the Pater and the Ave. She gives examples which have become famous. Other cases quoted by Bremond and by other historians prove that this is no mere fancy. We must not think it necessary to preach ignorance on that account, but it is important to stress the infinite variety of individual needs in the matter of doctrinal training. It is likewise true that every epoch has its own prevailing currents, and what is easily explicable in Spain in the sixteenth century or in France in the seventeenth, is harder to understand nowadays. The important point is to repeat that, even now, it would be rash to fix a universal programme for contemplatives or even to make general rules for realizing a teaching judged necessary by almost all. But there are some positive currents that characterize our times. After a comprehensive glance at them, we can consider some special problems.

In the responses resulting either from personal enquiry among the majority of the great contemplative orders, or from exchanges of opinion between religious and priests ministering to contemplative nuns, the first point on which all are unanimous is this: they recognize the absolute necessity of doctrinal training for contemplative religious. Most of them give two reasons: the necessity of assuring a solid basis for spiritual life and prayer, and also—and this seems to correspond with facts—the imperative need of finding in it a preservative against modern errors and deviations. The second point is this: though they have no hesitation in asking, with almost naive unanimity, for doctrinal training, they stress at the same time that this training must never become pure speculation, of which they have a horror, or even study in its proper meaning, thus making an end in itself of what is only a means in the order of interior life. It seems to me that we might put in a slight note of optimism as far as this fear is concerned, yet we have not often found it among the answers. But the well-

founded dread of dilettantism is such that it does not always allow them to see all the aspects of objective truth.

1. To take some definite points: when one asks contemplative nuns: 'Do you think it necessary to ensure a doctrinal training for the nuns in your congregation?' the unanimous answer is: 'Yes!' They support their answer with two complementary and almost contradictory reasons: on the one hand, the humanistic culture of young girls is far more advanced than of yore: on the other hand, their lack of religious training is almost as general. Hence the necessity, definitely greater now than formerly, of a training in doctrine for contemplatives. We must also emphasize one aspect of the life of faith which seldom fails to show itself during a normal spiritual development. It is a well-known phenomenon of religious psychology. Most contemplative nuns enter without much preparation, even if they are converts. Not until a few years have passed do the problems of the autonomy of their vocation and even of the autonomy of their faith make their appearance. In other words, there almost always comes a moment when they realize the immensity of their faith, and that moment, although not confined to contemplatives, is often experienced by them with all the more acuteness that they have no outlet. They wonder to what extent their action in entering the convent was their own, and even to what extent they are acting as a free person when they say the Creed. If when that moment comes, they have no opportunity of re-examining their faith from the doctrinal point of view, many may feel very deeply the tragedy (for it is one) of the childishness of their faith. That is to say: they are going ahead with the knowledge they acquired when they were eight, ten or twelve years of age, which was all that was requisite for that age, but which urgently needs to be thought out again and re-assimilated in their adult souls in an adult way. At such a moment no mere words of encouragement can help them. In the light of God's grace, and often by means of the purification effected by the Holy Ghost they must undertake the work of personally absorbing their faith by means of deep personal study of their Creed. It seemed important to stress this aspect of the doctrinal training of contemplatives.

2. To the question: 'What advantages do you expect from this training?' they answer: 'Ensure a solid basis for their interior life'. Here again, very many shades of opinion may be summed up in these two notes; positively, they emphasize quite rightly that a serious doctrinal training allows the life of faith to be deepened. Negatively, and here they are insistent, they see in it, again quite rightly, a way of avoiding the perils that lie in the way of women, especially: a spiritual life too dependent on feeling, or else errors and deviation in the spiritual life caused by currents of modern thought, with which all, men and women, risk being more or less permeated, even if they are not explicitly aware of it. It is a matter of experience, of which many proofs could be adduced, that the two great currents of present-day thought, existentialism and marxism, percolate deeply, by a kind of osmosis, into the minds of numbers of people who have never read a word of Karl Marx or of Jean-Paul Sartre.[1] One finds confirmation of this even in contemplative convents, probably not in the violent form of these currents, both of them atheist in any case, but at least in a veiled, one is tempted to say, baptized form.

Lastly, most of them stressed a point which is certainly not negligible and which allows us to react against an idea one has occasionally met: if there is a poverty which enriches, there is another that is wretched and God preserve us from canonizing it.

There is another important aspect of the benefit of a doctrinal training, which has been hardly touched upon in the enquiry we are using. Historical examples in the Church bring it to the fore. Quite apart from the incontestable personal benefit one may obtain from a doctrinal training as real and as much in harmony with the present life of the Church as one could wish, is there not something essentially contemplative in doing homage to God for the intelligence that is his gift to us, by applying it to study and to a deeper knowledge of the truths of faith? A spontaneous homage of the intelligence such as this, is essentially contemplative and many feel it vaguely

[1] This in no way excludes the opinion that the above-mentioned authors were not so much creators of a current opinion, as its typical though not unique expressions.

without being able to put it into words. Such a homage is obviously not reserved for contemplatives only, but as they have no apostolic end in their study of revealed truth, they are more directly called to give it to God. On the spiritual level, the fact is touching. To cite but one example, Père de Foucauld, when gardener at Nazareth, and not yet thinking of becoming a priest or of any apostolate, used to read St Thomas Aquinas' *Summa Theologica*, in order above all (he said so explicitly) to offer to God this homage of the intelligence God himself had bestowed upon him. This is very beautiful and perfectly legitimate, even apart from any immediate subjective advantage. It is a homage to God's transcendence, and it legitimates among contemplatives a deepening of the content of their faith, as far as possible in harmony with the present life of the Church. These considerations never fail to find an echo in the hearts of contemplative nuns when they hear them. On this subject, there are some very fine pages in Père Meersch's *Theology of the Mystical Body* where he points out the pathos and the beauty of the effort made by the intelligence trying to fathom the mystery, even though the effort be clumsy and unsuccessful. The search, the tenacity of our poor minds enlightened by faith and trying to penetrate God's mysteries constitute a splendid act of homage. It would be very regrettable if even in contemplative convents no one understood this homage of the intelligence to the thrice holy God by the study of doctrine.

We cannot insist here on the psychological aspect of doctrinal training, which was mentioned more than once by the contemplatives, and which would need to be treated at length. There is in study and in application to study controlled by prudence something that makes for true balance, especially for subjects who because of their temperament or antecedents are only too prone to instability.

3. What disadvantages do you see in this doctrinal training? This time we find well-known objections in the answers: everyone dreads intellectualism, in the sense of mental curiosity, and also dilettantism. Perhaps this is the place to recall that there does exist a virtue called studiousness, and that it should stimulate us to study, while at the same time it helps us

to avoid the dangers that may accidentally result from study. This fear of deviation in study is founded on experience: there is a way of using words as bluff, in pseudo-theological verbiage, that really does occur and is not merely a bogey. However, it is only fair to add a rider to this: deviations of this kind happen in individual cases only. Perhaps, if one tried hard enough, one *might* find a convent of contemplatives where this danger existed collectively, but in practically all monasteries there are none but individual eccentricities to be feared. This must also be added: from a collective point of view, this danger seems less grave now than formerly, on account of the different circumstances in which convents live. During the last ten years, the manner of life in most convents of contemplatives has evolved in what one may call a felicitous way[1] and in harmony with the life of the Church itself: their life has set, in a manner of speaking, into a kind of realism, on account of daily bread to be earned (sometimes there is a tragic acuity about this), just as in homes where poverty is not the result of a vow, but a dreaded and implacable economic fatality. In which case, doctrinal training, far from being a danger is on the contrary a help to balance and therefore beneficial. The hardness of present-day life means that, collectively speaking, and apart from special cases, there is much less danger than there used to be in giving a substantial doctrinal training to contemplatives. So much so that, under this heading, we should almost be obliged to reverse the proportion furnished by the questionnaire, in which the fear of dilettantism prevails over confidence in the advantages of study.

4. In what spheres should this doctrinal training be most developed in order to satisfy the desires of contemplatives? Here again there is unanimity: first of all, Holy Scripture; secondly, dogmatic theology; thirdly, liturgy. We have already said that there is an almost unanimous silence as to moral theology. It is worth while discovering this, but painful for us, theologians; for it justifies the dislike of interior souls for a certain negative and legalist conception of moral theology. Yet

[1] To be perfectly optimistic, we think that perhaps some observances might still be re-examined in view of this obligation to earn money by paid work.

contemplatives can appreciate the importance of certain points of moral theology, but they have no notion that there might exist a moral theology, the great sweep of which includes spiritual theology, and they are definitely mistrustful of the manner in which moral theology is taught. It is for us to draw the moral. Moral theology itself is not to blame. The present attempt (let us bow to those who have made it) will make it possible to rehabilitate moral theology: spiritual theology is simply the full development of a moral theology sanely understood, and spiritual theology has and can have no other foundation than moral theology as a complete whole.[1]

5. When and in what form should this teaching be given? The answer is again unanimous: the noviciate seems the right time for it. Many make a distinction between the noviciate in the strict sense, which lasts two years, the noviciate for professed religious two or three years, and then the conventual life begins. With regard to the manner of giving this instruction, there is an immense scale of values to be considered. It stretches from the humble form of advice on reading from the mistress of novices or from a visiting priest (which is something at any rate), up to the almost university programme of some communities. There is thus great diversity in this domain. There is even variety in the rhythm of the conferences, and it cannot be otherwise. The arrangement adopted by the noviciate of a great contemplative abbey, where as a rule there are fixed dates for receiving postulants, and where a fair number enter at the same time, cannot possibly be the same as that of a convent of Poor Clares or Carmelites where perhaps one novice enters every two or three years. (That is the average for a community of twenty-one religious, taking into account the average length of human life.) In this last case it is very difficult to find a fixed formula. We have also to take account

[1] We should like to plead for a kind of knowledge which, though not essential, is desirable, especially in individual cases more frequent perhaps than people think. To be precise: an exact knowledge of human psychology and even of physiology, especially as far as this concerns chastity, would often be a great benefit. Unfortunately some superiors have a horror of the very idea. Obviously this point needs discretion, discernment and prudence, but experience shows how easily, for want of knowledge, people become victims of errors of judgment, injurious to the inward life. We must not identify ignorance and virtue, especially when ignorance causes us to make mountains out of molehills.

of the lack of teachers, in the case of entirely cloistered monasteries, which are not in the neighbourhood of a convent or abbey of priests of the same order. Lastly, we have to remember the difficulty arising from the different levels from which come the novices, entering one by one. Here we are in the domain of facts, and facts must be respected. Therefore, in most contemplative convents with a small number of vocations, one understands that it is not possible to arrange courses according to a fixed programme. This is the almost unanimous opinion of the contemplatives themselves. Must we tell them to put up with a makeshift? That would be a hard saying. Efforts now being made show that, in spite of everything, something methodical is being thought out, and it is possible to arrive at a doctrinal training, sufficiently substantial for the inward life and nevertheless not requiring material or financial expenditure beyond the means of most contemplative monasteries. This effort is all the more meritorious that one of the great difficulties of to-day, the need of earning our daily bread, has to be taken into account. A good thing in itself, the obligation or even sometimes the tyranny of manual work makes it really difficult to find and keep time free for an adequate training. In these conditions, here are some of the ways in which to ensure a training adapted to the needs of different monasteries.

There are the usual conferences given in the noviciate. These could certainly be better arranged than they are in most cases. The male branch of a great contemplative order has drawn-up a programme, adopted by the general chapter, but perhaps not yet in use. It foresees for the noviciates a fairly complete scheme in which doctrine is taught according to the rhythm of the Liturgy. An excellent formula certainly, but it presumes a great mastery of the doctrine itself. One wonders whether it might not be possible to generalize this formula and at the same time make it more flexible. The important thing would be to evolve an outline of the whole; this might easily be very different from a synopsis of standard theology, for there is no reason against adopting for contemplative nuns a plan resembling one which has been drawn up for catechetic theology. According to this outline, more or less perfect lists of

representative or standard books might be drawn up, enabling a nearly complete training to be given. Later, according to this same programme one might draw up lists of more technical books, so that a further and deeper training might be given. The outline would have the advantage of ensuring the unity of the training and yet remaining flexible enough to allow of different degrees of depth.

In some monasteries, especially among Carmelites, we see that study circles for the novices have been begun. This assumes that there will be four or five of them. These circles, prepared in advance by all concerned, according to pre-arranged directions, are directed by the mistress of novices, or —and this is an excellent economy of forces—by some nun in the community who happens to be competent in liturgy or history or whatever the subject to be studied may be. This training, which allows free play to personal reaction has the immense advantage of helping the acquisition of a grown-up faith, and gives the younger subjects an opportunity of exposing their difficulties and taking in the doctrinal truths in a way suited to them personally. This scheme is tending to become widespread and does not seem to have any drawbacks. It would be most unfortunate if there were a mistress of novices incapable of preventing useless chatter and whatever dissipation might occur.

Correspondence courses are another resource and are no longer unrealizable. *Forma Gregis* already provides the elements: they can be developed. They are a great economy of force and are excellent as long as a well-arranged general plan gives them their proper place and the importance that belongs to them by right.

Lastly, there are some monasteries of contemplatives (the whole thing depends, of course, on whether the superior has the supernatural flair for it, so to speak) which take the trouble to have, periodically, sometimes for a whole session, priests or religious who are specially qualified in the different branches of theology and whose teaching will enable the students to go deeply into doctrine. One monastery arranges for the same theologian to come regularly and his influence is strengthened by this regularity and by his being therefore better known.

After each of his conferences, there is a perfectly free exchange of views between the lecturer and the nuns, whatever their age and level of training, and whether they are choir-nuns or lay-sisters.[1] There is no doubt that schemes of this kind are most useful in the doctrinal training of contemplatives.

Some conclusions, which will be very modest, because this report is not intended to be either exhaustive or definitive: nature abhors a vacuum and so does the supernatural. We may not dream of magic transformations, thanks to an automatic distribution of teaching among contemplatives. One point is fixed: doctrine, and by that we mean the living doctrine of the Church, is sincerely loved by all contemplatives and their desire is that a deeper knowledge of that doctrine should be made accessible to them. Consequently, we hope that a decided effort will be made to abolish all the sub-doctrinal literature which is still too widespread. We are thinking in particular, of a certain type of literature devoted to private revelations, which is a favourite choice of reading in more than one monastery. We have no intention of pronouncing any judgment on the authenticity of such revelations, but we want to urge discretion in the use of such unsuitable reading. Secondly, let us always be careful to respect all the different religious families, and to respect also the spirits which may develop within those families. Lastly, the essential aim to keep before us is the increase of faith and the homage given to God by an intelligence which is developing, thanks to the light of faith, in a greater knowledge of God's mysteries.

The result will certainly be an increase in the interior vitality of the Church. For the Church is a unity. The contemplatives do not live for themselves, they live for the Church. Besides, ought not all of us, even the most active, desire to have contemplative souls? All those who work in the master's field must

[1] Hardly any monasteries want to make a distinction between the doctrinal training of the choir-nuns and that of the lay-sisters, and this is understandable. Nowadays many of the lay-sisters have been through the Y.C.S. or the Y.C.W. and thus have already had a good doctrinal training. On the other hand, except in a few cases, the choir-nuns are rarely specifically intellectuals. (Note that I say 'specifically'.) The average of a monastery, choir-nuns or lay-sisters is sufficiently homogeneous to make it unnecessary to distinguish the two classes, or make any difference between the doctrinal training of either.

have this desire. Therefore, these reflections may prove useful even to those who are not by their vocation contemplatives in the narrow sense. May God grant to all both active and contemplative an ever-growing knowledge of and love for the doctrine of the Church.

PART TWO

Towards New Realizations

Chapter I

ADAPTATION OF SECONDARY AND UNIVERSITY COURSES FOR MEN TO TH TEACHING OF WOMEN

By A Religious of the Sacred Heart

HAVING listened for two days to such broad and deep commentaries, I feel somewhat abashed at having to speak myself to-day. The question with which I am to deal has, of course, a more limited bearing, and I shall consider it under its concrete and practical aspects. I think it is the only point of view from which a nun can address such an audience as this.

When the organizers of these days of study were choosing the subject of to-day's fourth report, their idea was the following: that, when about to evolve a plan of doctrinal training for nuns, they might profit by experience gained in the education of women on the level of profane studies.

What light can these experiences throw on the plan for doctrinal teaching for religious?

The subject of the present report has thus been defined as follows:

Adaptation—to the teaching of women—of secondary and university courses for men.

First of all, has this adaptation been realized?

(*a*) *Officially?* No. We know that in France girls' studies are entirely in line with those of boys.

What is the effect of this on feminine personality?

(*b*) In the sphere of private teaching, that is of schools not subsidized by the State, there has been an attempt at adaptation.

The Catholic institute of Paris has organized a double series of studies:

Women's university for higher education.

Women's classical school for secondary education.

What ideas inspired this organization?

From these two premises:

—on the one hand: lack of adaptation of men's courses to teaching of women;

—on the other hand: need of adaptation.

We shall try to deduce some conclusions, in order to throw light on certain aspects of the doctrinal training of nuns.

The lack of adaptation to women's education in the secondary and university courses for men (in official education). For more than thirty years we have been watching the girls in the race for diplomas; during the last fifteen or twenty years a good number of those who have got a diploma have been going in for a licentiate: their studies have been therefore in everything the same as young men's. What are we to think of this? What profit do they get from these largely masculine studies? What is the parents' opinion on this point?

Considering the problem set for these days of study, we thought it would be interesting to question the religious who receive some of these girls on their entry into the postulate. What have they to tell us?

In order to make this report very concrete, we have enquired at the mother houses of several congregations engaged in teaching, nursing, or parish work. About twenty of them have been kind enough to answer the questionnaire we sent them. From their answers we can put together an intellectual composite of girls of to-day, of those at least who have done secondary or university studies.

I. Effects of secondary or university studies on feminine character.

The question asked was this:

Among postulants arriving in the religious life, do we find the general education sufficient to serve as a foundation for their religious training?

How have they been affected, from the general and from the religious point of view, by the influence of the more or less

advanced and specialized studies they have done (secondary or university)?

A. The first part of the question was almost unanimously *answered in the negative.* With very few exceptions, *the general education of postulants entering religion is insufficient.*

It is incomplete, defective, lacking vigour and co-ordination. The postulants, they say, are immature, often mere children. More exactly: they are children with regard to some things, whereas with regard to others they are more mature than the girls of twenty years ago. Accustomed from their earliest age to bestir themselves, to take the initiative, to assume responsibility, they always know what to do, and as a rule do not come up against the practical problems which used to confront their elder sisters. On the other hand, in many cases this precocity has been developed to the detriment of a deeper maturity: they seem to have no idea of any hierarchy of values, and are swayed by their passing impressions. One superior remarks: they may *seem* mature, but much of it is merely 'put on', and they still lack real character.

B. To the second part of the question the answer is in the affirmative: *In general, the secondary or university studies have left their mark upon the girls.*

Real riches and beside these many deficiencies!

Open minds, intellectual curiosity, interest in general ideas, broadening of horizons. But, on the other hand, absence of deep culture. They know many things, but as a rule only superficially. Their intelligence is often weak and untrained, their judgments usually borrowed from others. They have 'digest' minds, with a tendency to dilettantism, and are astonishingly ignorant of certain things. Some have begun to specialize too soon and their general culture is insufficient. Solid foundations are lacking: they do not know how to work methodically. Under an appearance of self-confidence they are unsure of themselves. They do not know how to defend any convictions they may have; they either have wrong principles or none at all.

Their critical sense is strongly developed and sometimes, unfortunately, degenerates into a spirit of criticism; I shall not insist here on the possible consequences of this.

Among some of them, mind and spirit bear the stamp of the philosophical and pedagogical currents that are 'in the air':

—scepticism and pessimism from the influence of existentialist literature;

—pessimistic discouragement due also to premature and too advanced study of

—practical materialism, fruit of certain philosophical studies.

—naturalism, which teaches them that all restraint is injurious to their development, destroys the sense of sacrifice, of abnegation, of obedience, of humility, making them despise these so-called passive virtues. This was particularly striking in some girls who had done their pedagogical studies in a school where the philosophical bases were not well laid.

On the whole we find a lack of balance and harmony in the education of the young; the 'profane' side had been developed, but not the religious; hence a dangerous gap between.

The intellect has often been too exclusively developed, to the detriment of the practical or the artistic side of a girl's nature, and sometimes even at the expense of social and domestic culture. Among many we find an intellectualism which inclines them to be satisfied with their own ideas and to neglect the realm of action. (But here again, it is dangerous to generalize: many are far more practical than girls used to be: even as postulants they are capable of taking charge of an important department of material work: linen-room, kitchen, catering, upkeep of the house, etc.).

The girls' open minds together with their lack of groundwork explain their intellectual demands. Knowing, though very superficially, something about everything, they see problems everywhere, they want to get to the bottom of everything, have proofs of everything, understand the reason of everything for themselves. Naturally, there are sometimes difficulties about this: in history, in philosophy, and above all, in the case of religious problems, some of them ask questions which would need very profound answers and the answers themselves would be beyond their grasp. On the other hand, however, these demands have an advantage: they help towards a broadening of the mind, a deepening of thought and solid intellectual improvement.

On the whole modern studies, more advanced than in the past, seem to have developed in our girls frankness, breadth of mind, need of true values, but if they are to become complete human beings, solidity, depth, balance and optimism, have yet to be added to their intellectual training.

These results may perhaps look disappointing, and one cannot help wondering to what to attribute them.

It might be that the pupils themselves are of a poor type; but it seems almost impossible that such a decline should be so universally observed.

It might be due to the influence of the environment—this is certainly strong, and young people are always sensitive to it—which has its advantages in training them, if one knows how to use it.

Again, it might be due to the type of studies imposed for official examinations, for these embrace too much to allow of any depth.

Everyone deplores the race for diplomas, the overweighted programmes that compel young people to depend more on their memory than on their reason. The disadvantages are bad enough for boys, but *a fortiori* they are worse for girls; studies for women entirely modelled on those for young men, do not really suit a woman's nature.

This discovery is nothing new; as far back as 1941, the A.P.E.L. launched an enquiry into the education of girls.

II. The parents' view of studies for girls exactly like those for boys.

The following questions were asked:

(*a*) Are you satisfied with girls' education?

(*b*) If not, would you like far-reaching reforms, and if so which?

Here are the essential points in the answers, as M. David, delegate general of the A.P.E.L. communicated them to the National Days for Teaching Nuns in 1946:

The parents desire:

—*true* culture, instead of cramming;

—an *all-round* culture (for the actual programmes, overweighted with detail, do not contain the essential things);

—a *feminine* culture, adapted and specialized therefore, and one which will allow the future woman to follow her natural vocation, while at the same time providing her with the means of supporting herself if, later on, she should be unable to get married.

The parents blame:

—the rejection of fundamental culture which is disinterested, uplifting and joyous;

—the bookish and encylopaedic character of the training;

—the 'ready-made' character of the teaching, which ought to be adapted to different cases;

—premature utilitarianism, precocious specialization;

—and all are unanimously opposed to the irrational worship of diplomas.

Here we quote some statements by fathers and mothers of families:

We are the first to admit that women should be educated, and well educated; but as they are different from men, they should not be educated like men.

It pains me to see my daughter overworked on account of the encyclopaedic programmes, and the unbelievable amount of work to be done to get through these programmes. (This statement was repeated many times.)

I am the mother of ten children. I cannot say I am satisfied. I have seen at close quarters quite a number of young licentiates, who go straight from college into marriage, and make very poor wives and mothers.

The obligation of acquiring an enormous quantity of useless knowledge usually disgusts a girl with real intellectual culture. After a few months, nothing remains of all that undigested rubbish, and one is horrified at the ignorance of the holders of diplomas and even of degrees. Again, a girl accustomed to think of nothing but examinations when she comes home, thinks she is nobody unless she takes up some other study. She loses the time she ought to spend in preparing for her future, in further useless overwork, or else, if not allowed to take another examination, her life seems futile to her, and so it really is, for she has never learnt to work.

We cannot entirely free ourselves from official programmes, nor can we put up a direct opposition to the rush for diplomas. But a few schools have opened 'classical sections for girls', with a very liberal and educative curriculum, and backed by very important examinations in the schools themselves. This plan has met with great success.

Formerly, the class for pupils who were not preparing to take a

diploma was looked down upon. It was considered the refuge of good but brainless girls. Fortunately this idea is dying out. Obviously there must be other keys besides the diploma to open doors, even the doors leading to the lucrative professions. A larger and larger place must be given to well-planned domestic and household teaching, with classes for practice, and all families will applaud this. Perhaps after all the girls who obtain this benefit will succeed in addition in winning the famous diploma, especially if the character of its requirements were to be modified.

Recently, in 1953, the A.P.E.L. sent out a questionnaire to families in a certain part of France:

'Do you think that the school programmes necessitated by examinations should be the same for boys as for girls? If not, where do you think the essential differences should be made? What should be the specialities in studies for women?

So we see that the question of adapting secondary and university studies to suit girls' education is well to the fore.

Is it possible to imagine studies which would be solid and serious and at the same time suitable for women? And how would you plan them?

This is the question to which the classical courses for women are trying to provide an answer.

III. *An attempt to adapt studies to feminine nature*

An attempt—I insist on this word—attempt, for we are only beginning. The classical courses for women owe their existence to His Excellency Monsignor Blanchet who encouraged the movement from its inception in 1947, and has lent it the powerful support of the Catholic institute: the first examinations were held in 1948 and since then every year has seen the number of candidates increase.

As is the case in every undertaking which leaves the time-honoured beaten tracks, and is not backed by 'official' prestige, there has been no lack of difficulties. We have no intention of presenting the classical courses for women as a total success. We merely mention at the express wish of the Reverend Father Plé. Moreover, what is interesting from the point of view of the doctrinal teaching of nuns is not so much the historic fact of the evolution of the classical courses, as the flash of

intuition which conceived it; not so much a detailed statement of its programmes and methods as of the principles which inspired it and which have controlled the organization of the examinations.

1. *The initial idea of the classical courses for women.*

Modern pedagogy reproaches the traditional methods with being more concerned with the 'object' to be known than with the 'subject' who knows it. The initial intuition in the case of the classical courses seems to have been their special concern with the 'subject', in this case, feminine nature, in order to adapt to it the 'object' taught.

What then are the special characteristics of feminine nature?

(*a*) *Woman has not the same power of physical resistance as man.* Intellectual overwork produces in her nervous fatigue, strain and finally loss of mental balance.

(*b*) In woman far more than in man, *the different faculties continually compenetrate one another in the course of their exercise.* Woman is rarely a pure intellectual; her will is rarely exercised independently of her feelings. Almost always the predominant emotion, rooted in the depths of the subconscious, will exercise its influence, whether in the sphere of knowledge, of dreams, or of action.

(*c*) The feminine intelligence which interests us most in this problem of doctrinal study, has also certain specific characteristics:

(i) Deficiencies: it is usually less powerful and deep than a man's intelligence; it is less objective, because more easily swayed by the emotions, less realist, less exact, less synthetic.

Hence, in woman, a tendency to judge subjectively, to be influenced by environment, controlled by impressions or sentimentality, easily intoxicated with words; on the whole, a tendency to romanticize her thought and her life.

(ii) Her special good qualities: delicacy, feeling for shades of meaning, intuition, taste for analysis, and detail. Feminine intelligence, closely bound up with imagination, often needs a concrete support; closely bound with feeling also, it is better at explaining and amplifying than at proving. Woman is more interested in human nature than in things and her mind be-

comes extremely penetrating when she is dealing with the problems of life: that is her privileged sphere.

Consideration of feminine nature has brought us back to investigate (in view of this concrete datum: woman) programmes and methods of work, and also the examination which would complete women's secondary studies, for in our days an examination is regarded as an indispensable ratification of any serious intellectual training.

2. *A conception of programmes and methods of work which takes woman's nature into account.*

Just now we drew attention to the continual interpenetration of a woman's faculties in her exercise of them; consequently orientation of work in an exclusively intellectual direction runs the risk of stifling her specific talents or even of disgusting her with study; besides, we have been assured by Father Rimaud that 'a feminine education in which there is no place for practical tasks, is a caricature'.

(*i*) *In drawing up the programmes of the classical courses for women we have tried to avoid this over-cultivation of the intellect.*

(*a*) First *by inserting as obligatory subjects* in the curriculum *practical* courses: cutting-out, needlework, domestic economy for instance; and *art courses:* history of art for all pupils, and, for those who wish, courses in drawing, painting, music, etc.

A girl's energy is thus not entirely expended on intellectual subjects. Manual work and artistic work introduce a kind of distraction into her time-table, a source of relaxation which makes for poise.

(*b*) *As for the intellectual courses on the programmes*, there are two kinds:

—some more specifically feminine;

—others identical with those on the official programmes.

Among the former, we mention:

—puericulture, closely connected with the study of biology;

—home pedagogy. This will gain in meaning and in depth if it is based on the one hand on concrete experience obtained by living with young children, and on the other hand, on simple but really philosophical notions of psychology and ethics and even of metaphysics;

—law: elementary of course, and considered especially in its relation to family and social training.

The other studies are on the whole the same as those on the official programmes of the school-leaving certificate or matriculation; but with a few differences in their order of importance and in their presentation. More emphasis is laid on literary than on scientific culture, as being more suitable for the majority of women. And even within the programmes: philosophy, literature, history, geography, even science, we put less stress on technical questions than on life problems. Thus:

—in literature (French, classical, foreign) great importance is attached to knowledge of the authors themselves; texts are scrutinized to discover what was alive at the time when it came from the author's soul and might come alive again in the soul of the reader; more interest taken in the specifically feminine problems discussed in some literary works;

—in history: more importance attached to the history of civilizations than to wars and the historical characters occurring in them;

—in geography: very special interest taken in human problems and in their social repercussions: housing, employment, etc.

—in philosophy, a study which seems even more necessary for girls than for boys, for the former are more apt to be carried away by their feelings; the programme should be directed towards the acquisition of a well-developed character.

The programme first invites reflection on everyday experience; fundamental tendencies are to be discovered, and then we find that reflection always leads the mind to the same great problems: of love, of liberty, of knowledge, of spirituality. The need of a metaphysical solution is then felt: the human person is sharer in an absolute and philosophy must find him. The discovery of God, of his transcendence, of his plan for man, the groundwork of moral science, grips the entire person in its depths as well as in its concrete exterior manifestations.

The study of philosophy is not therefore conceived uniquely as a review of all the different systems; this would infallibly produce a tendency to scepticism in the pupils. It is to be a

statement of truth in its positive aspect. Then the false systems with which the pupil will inevitably come in contact can be confronted with the truth. This philosophy, illumined by the light of St Thomas and enriched by modern contributions, gives the pupils a broad and firm standing-place, so that they can carry on their other studies in an atmosphere of interior freedom and intellectual conviction. Philosophy also gives students valuable aid in their personal conduct. It is a great advantage for growing girls and young women to be able to perceive what is happening within themselves, and especially to be able to distinguish an idea from an impression, and an act of the will from a sensation; the psychological studies they may be led to make in the course of their work in literature or history, will gain in depth and formative value from the knowledge acquired in studying philosophy.

In general the students are recommended, whatever their subject, not to keep to the sphere of pure thought, but to look out for the point of contact of abstract ideas with the level of life, that being what satisfies the desires of most women.

(*ii*) *The methods of work* aim at preventing superficiality and parrotry, faults often found in young girls; they are arranged to necessitate reflection, and give an opportunity of training the mind.

Special importance is attached to reading. The candidates have to read a certain number of works of value on religion, literature, history, philosophy, pedagogy, science, etc. . . . and make a personal review of them which is submitted to a jury for examination.

One of the essential tests is the scrutiny of texts, not only in literature, but also in history and philosophy, work which gives scope to a woman's natural intuition and subtlety, and in which memory is subordinate to reflection.

Elocution also has a place in this curriculum. One of the examination tests is a conversation on a subject of general culture; and in all the oral examinations the pupils are expected to show more evidence of general culture than of having memorized the contents of a handbook.

The statement of these programmes and methods may perhaps make an impression of multiplicity. And one objection

arises of itself: does adapting education to feminine nature consist in adding on more to what was already too heavy a burden in men's education? The answer to this is contained in the very conception of the examination of the classical courses for women. Actually, we have tried to provide an examination suited to a woman's capacity.

3. *An idea of examination which takes a woman's capacity into account.*

Beside obvious advantages, preparation for examinations often offers certain dangers in the case of girls and women: excessive fatigue, over-work and nervous strain, worry about success, preventing calm, self-possession and the all-round development of personality, as well as domestic and social self-forgetfulness.

This might be because examinations encourage accumulation of information and hasty encyclopaedic work; or because the results often depend on contingencies such as a lapse of memory, or mere bad luck, and so the work of years is sometimes rewarded with failure.

To reduce the possibility of such an unfortunate occurrence (which often has a quite disproportionate effect on a woman's psychology) two important arrangements have been made with respect to the examinations held by the classical sections for women:

—the introduction of the scrutiny of a dossier of records as an essential element of the tests;

—a wide scale of options among the questions set for the written and oral examinations.

The *dossier*, film as it were of the candidate's school life, contain not only her school reports, but also compositions written by her during the year and her personal notes of lectures; it is first-hand evidence of her work, her knowledge, and above all of her mental growth. The sending in of this dossier constitutes the first stage of the examination: if the marks she gains for it are above the average, they may make up for some inadequacy in the written examinations. This provision, which might appear meaningless to some, greatly diminishes the risks of an examination. It has an immense effect on a woman's

psychology, helps her to be calm, balanced, optimistic, all of which increases her working power.

There is wide choice given in *the written and oral tests*. Some subjects appear on the programme, but not among the final tests. Their study pursued throughout the year, can be checked by inspection of the dossier. This prevents overwork and leaves the students free to develop in the direction suited to their tastes and abilities.

These are the main ideas which inspire the women's classical sections. What advantages do they offer? It is too soon to speak of results on a large scale, but what seems so far established by the facts is that in institutions where these sections have been properly understood and well organized, the girls have developed more, been better balanced and happier.

Can this twofold series of data:

—on one side the unsuitability of official teaching;

—on the other, an attempt at adaptation in private schools;

help us to discover some desirable methods of doctrinal training for religious?

IV. *Suggestions for specially adapted doctrinal training.*

Recently, while the programme of these study-days was being drawn up, Father Plé said that while considering how to give a better and deeper doctrinal teaching to nuns, we must be careful to avoid unsuitability.

To be satisfied, for instance, with merely transposing to a lower stage for the use of nuns, the studies made in the seminary would be doubly mistaken:

—treating women as though they were the same as men mentally is misunderstanding feminine psychology;

—treating nuns as though they were going to be priests is misunderstanding the specific character of a nun's apostolic mission, whether she is going to be a teacher, a nurse, or a social worker.

If the doctrinal training is to be suitable for a young nun, it is important not to forget that she is and remains a woman. It will be necessary to take into account the specific features of feminine character and the physical powers of woman.

In this connection, we should like to suggest some hopes and wishes expressed by various congregations with regard to methods of the doctrinal training to be given to religious. The other deeper and more essential aspects have been or will be treated during this session by more competent speakers than I.

1. *The programmes*

To be completely suited to feminine nature the programmes should be directed:

—rather towards general culture than specialization;

—towards solid culture;

—towards a doctrinal culture closely bound to life.

(*i*) Orientation rather to a general culture than to specialization. Specialization risks utilizing one part of the intelligence to the detriment of a harmonious development of the whole. For women, general culture is usually preferable in religious knowledge to a very deep treatment of a special points. We said 'general culture' which presumes a certain depth, and is not to be taken as synonymous with a general review rather like that of a 'catechism of perseverance'. We mean that the theological and biblical initiation should bear on theology and scripture as a whole, rather than on a special aspect of such and such a treatise and this or that book of the Bible. We also mean that the study of Hebrew, useful perhaps in certain cases, exceptional ones, is certainly not necessary for the majority of nuns.

(*ii*) *Orientation towards solid culture.* This is to remedy women's lack of objectivity as well as our modern scepticism.

In this respect Thomism is of indisputable educational value. Obviously it is no use putting the works of Gilson, Maritain, Garrigou-Lagrange, Sertillanges, or the text of the *Summa* itself into the hands of people whose education has been very slight. But even for these people some Thomist training is necessary. St Thomas' great philosophical thesis ought to underlie the teaching of important points of psychology, provide the elements of a metaphysical training within their reach, throw light on the knowledge of God.

Religious on a higher intellectual level would find direction and safety in the *Summa* itself, at least in the essential theses.

This study instead of closing their minds to contemporary thought, enables them to open widely to it, while at the same time endowing them with a sure standard for reference.

(*iii*) *Orientation towards a culture which remains in close contact with life.*

In Scripture courses, preference might be given to the study of texts enabling the student to discover and enjoy spiritual riches, rather than those which afford material for exegetic argument. A book to be used with advantage is: *The Old Testament, course of Spiritual Life*, by Père Paul-Marie de la Croix.

In directing courses of doctrine, it would be a good plan to arrange that the explanation of more speculative ideas should always be accompanied by a mention of the points where these contact the spiritual and the apostolic life.

However, in certain provinces there must be a limit to this realistic desire for contact with the needs of the world; the reactions of feminine sensitiveness, very different from those of men, have to be taken into account. There are ideas which upset a woman's soul on the surface, and sometimes to its depths. Several superiors have mentioned how the daring speech (and often the daring thought) of some professors has disturbed young nuns.

It is obvious that all religious should have a serious fundamental instruction on sexual and matrimonial problems, and that ignorance which was formerly permitted to pass, would be unpardonable nowadays. But discretion is necessary in public courses addressed to religious in general. Nursing sisters and visitors to the poor need to know more than others. It would be desirable for them perhaps to have special courses in medical and surgical technique, where they could learn these things, instead of in classes meant for others as well.

For the development of nuns' affective qualities for their mental balance, it is needful that their theological and moral studies should throw light on the notion of love, showing how supernatural charity is grafted on nature without destroying her, but rather using and elevating her.

In teaching, stress ought also to be laid on the concrete aspect of social and missionary training.

It would seem possible for a practical training in pedagogy to run parallel to the theoretic courses; practice lessons in catechism under the direction and control of experienced teachers are valuable for showing young nuns how to transfer their speculative knowledge to a concrete level. The more such exercises are specialized, the more useful they will be.

A last note. When religious are devoting themselves to study, even doctrinal study, it is essential to their mental health and balance that they should not be cut off from all manual work or dispensed from all occasions of self-sacrifice in community life. St Teresa used to say: 'A woman who cleans and polishes never goes off her head', and indeed, there is much truth in her jest. Deep and intense intellectual work, not balanced by other activities, risks destroying the instinctive sense of the hierarchy of values, and perhaps leading the religious to undervalue in practice those humble and hidden works that should always be particularly dear to consecrated souls.

2. *Methods and modalities of work.*

(*a*) *Methods in harmony with the intellectual needs of young people.*

A very important problem is the organization of sufficiently profound work to counterbalance feminine superficiality, without exceeding the intellectual and physical capacity of women, and also of adapting it to the special vocation of each congregation.

Stiff work is indispensable for those who are equal to it, but here great care should be taken. Intellectual levels in noviciates (and therefore later on in communities) are very different; they may range from matriculation (sometimes from school-leaving standard) to M.A. or doctorate. Obviously explanation of the most complex and subtle problems in the bible or in theology is enlightening and developing for cultivated minds, and on the contrary very harmful to nuns less gifted intellectually. In the latter case they usually remember the existence of a problem or a difficulty, but the answer—necessarily complex—escapes them, for to understand this answer required a power of abstraction they have not yet attained.

How are we to satisfy the intellectual needs of those capable of going further?

Their difficulties are often the result of want of method in their earlier religious studies: application of successive layers, laid on broadly but somewhat superficially. The remedy would be to dig deeply into some fundamental truths. The study of these essential points during the first years of religious life, would throw light on all the other points, and would *ipso facto* solve many problems.

The young require proofs, facts, documents. We must give them these, invite them to do personal research, and give them first-class works to read on the important questions.

Evidently there must be courses and conferences organized for them also, but what helps them most would be a few very full and very compact courses, with indications of what books to read, what points of view are of vital importance, and offering them also models of deeper studies, which might spur them to work along the same lines afterwards. But how is all that to be realized when there are a thousand other circumstances to be considered?

(*b*) *Methods taking into account all contingencies in the practical order.*

What are they?

—situation of noviciates and training schools often right in the country, which makes it difficult for anyone to attend courses in town regularly;

—time, which cannot be stretched indefinitely;

—health, temperaments, physical capacity of women.

All this is particularly important in the case of young professed nuns who, while studying, are obliged to carry on simultaneously their religious life which, especially at first, makes great demands on their energy and self-control. When nuns are studying hard, they cannot, like girls in the world, take a day off when they feel the need, or make an expedition to some other place in order to relax.

In the choice of means to be adopted, a distinction should be made between the doctrinal training of the staff and that of the generality of the nuns.

The training of the former ought to be carried out under the

direction of specialists either at the university or at a training school for teachers, such as exist in many countries. A vigorous teaching by theologians, with all the advantages it offers, would be thus secured for those religious really capable of profiting thoroughly by it, and these could in their turn pass it on to others.

The training of the generality of the community might perhaps be organized *within* each congregation. Those of them who had been trained in catholic institutes or training schools for teachers might be charged with the instruction of their sisters, and through them all the trainees would benefit by the general interest and directives in their work.

Moreover, it might be possible to arrange something analogous to the '*dossiers*' of the classical sections: personal work, under the superior's control and responsibility, which might be submitted to a theologian for examination.

This organization would present various advantages:

—by suppressing loss of time and the fatigue of comings and goings, it would allow of quieter and deeper work.

—it would give an opportunity to a greater number of nuns to acquire a deep doctrinal training.

—on the one hand it would allow of a certain individualization of the work, according to the different levels already reached by the students: on the other hand there would be collective study in the community which would interest all the religious in a house in certain forms of research or in the study of certain points of view.

—lastly, it would allow of greater latitude in varying the training according to the spirituality and apostolic orientation proper to each congregation, an element which is its treasure and should always be safeguarded.

This seems to be the only practicable solution. One can hardly see a whole noviciate or a whole community transporting itself regularly to a Catholic university, for instance, to follow courses there. Nor does it seem possible to ask overworked priests to come regularly to give courses in doctrine in each convent.

As to training the young nuns in methods of work, this is easy in congregations which possess a juvenate or a scholasti-

cate. Other means might be suggested for congregations which do not possess one of these organized institutions: for instance, courses in some religious house, grouping together students from different congregations; sessions during the holidays; monthly days of lectures giving an impetus to work which could be continued by correspondence, etc. One mother house has notified us of a bulletin sent to all the daughter houses giving information and directives from the doctrinal as well as from the apostolic point of view.

The higher school of religious studies now open at Rome offers all congregations very precious opportunities of training an élite. The subjects who benefit by it will then be able to give an impetus to the doctrinal studies of their own congregation.

The plans for studies to be thought out to-morrow will surely render us immense service. They will make it possible for the already existing staffs in the different congregations to make the needful readjustments so as to improve their teaching, and so be able to correspond better with the directives of Holy Church on the doctrinal training of nuns, directives which we desire to follow as exactly as possible on account of our love and respect for her.

Chapter II

HISTORY OF THE CHIEF CODIFICATIONS OF THE DATA OF FAITH AND OF THE GREAT THEOLOGICAL SYNTHESES. ORGANIZATIONS OF SACRED STUDIES IN THE COURSE OF HISTORY

By Louis Charlier, o.p.

The Organization of Sacred Studies throughout the Course of History

THEOLOGY did not come from the brain of a great genius, like Minerva darting in a lightning flash from the forehead of Jove, fully armed and uttering a shout of victory.

Theology as we know it to-day, with its many ramifications, is the product of a slow and patient development.

It would be vain and presumptuous to attempt to enclose within the narrow limits of a few pages a study which needs lengthy treatment, and one would need to write several books in order to retrace the history of the chief codifications of the data of faith and of the great theological syntheses as well as the organization of sacred studies in the course of history.

The notes I am venturing to submit to your kind attention are only meant to be a very summary sketch of the development of theology and sacred studies in the past. Even then, we shall only point out what has seemed most significant to us. We have also endeavoured to choose from the stages of this development what seemed to us to correspond best with the purpose of these days of study.

As far as possible we shall keep to chronological order. Nevertheless, we must not forget that the Christian conscience has had to take account of more than one problem at a time.

The development of sacred doctrine is engraved in the very life of the Church, and a living body cannot be cut into slices. In other words the divisions of a historical statement are always largely artificial.

I. *History of the Chief Codifications of the Data of Faith*

Christian doctrine is not a philosophy. It is distinguished from all other human knowledge, says St Thomas, by having its origin in divine revelation received by faith in God's word, while all other spiritual disciplines are constructed by the light of natural reason which is their sole guarantee.

At the birth of sacred science there is a revealed datum, a premise that is both notional and real. For divine revelation is not only the communication of certain truths, but also a divine reality entering into human history to make it a sacred history, an 'economy' of salvation. It finds its summit in Christ, son of God, the Saviour by whom and in whom we have access to the Father.

The redemption is something that happened 'once and for all' in the mystery of Christ. The mission of the Spirit, sent by the Father in the name of the Son, and the foundation of the Church put us entirely in possession of the divine realities acquired by the death and resurrection of our Lord.

The fullness of the gift and the end of apostolic witness set a limit to revelation here and now. Henceforth the Church will have to live on this sacred deposit until the Lord is revealed in glory at his second coming.

The first communities founded by the apostles lived fervently on this faith and this hope.

Nevertheless, the Church risked drifting into a kind of doctrinal torpor after the death of the apostles, had not heresy come providentially and obliged her to define her positions.

1. *Standards of Christian teaching and first attempts at synthesis*

The first problem to be solved by the Church was provided by the relations between Judaism and Christianity.

Should Judaism be utterly rejected or accepted completely? Battle was joined on two fronts at once: on one side were the

Judaists who maintained that the centuries-old observances of the Old Testament were necessary to salvation. For these Jewish revelation was absolutely of the first importance. On the other side were the Marcionites who rejected the entire Old Testament as radically opposed to the New, as the God of the Jews is opposed to the God of the Gospels.

Christian reaction against these two contrasted errors will disengage the exact meaning of the Jewish economy. All the Old Law is a preparation for Christianity, and finds thus its fulfilment and perfect meaning in Christ and the Church. The two Testaments are the work of one God, as Revelation is one. Even if Jewish observances are declared to have lapsed (Council of Jerusalem, *c.* 49), the Old Testament writings must be kept. They will be the Christian's first sacred books. This preservation of the canon of the Jewish Scriptures was of great importance. It will serve as a model on which to work out a canon of the New Testament writings in the second century.

Christianity had thus succeeded in securing its independent origin against the threat of re-absorption into the surrounding Judaism, as being one of the latter's sects, more or less faithful to the law of Moses, and it had also succeeded in asserting at the same time its close relationship with Old Testament revelation. Immediately another religious movement proceeding more insidiously, endeavoured to take possession of the Gospels and integrate them into the mixture of religious traditions, philosophical commonplaces and magical science which it was offering to the pagan world as the last word in the revelation of the mystery of salvation. This movement is now called gnosticism; it had many schools. Some of its teaching appealed to the masses, but it preferred to recruit its adherents among the cosmopolitan 'intelligentzia' of great centres: Alexandria, Antioch, Rome, just where Christianity founded its first large churches.

In Gnostic terms, the Gospel presented an incorporeal Christ, who issued from the world of the good and transcendent God and came on earth clothed in an appearance of evil matter in order to teach captive minds their true dignity and their immaterial nature which had come into the power of the demiurge in consequence of a 'fall'. All men are not able to

reach this salutary gnosis; only those who possess in advance a spark . . . a seed . . . issuing from the Pleroma.

The Church replied with a decisive argument: tradition, received from Christ and the Apostles. God has spoken to you through Christ and he has entrusted his doctrine to the Apostles and to them alone. Where are we to find the intangible deposit of the faith? In the churches founded by them, the apostolicity of which can be verified by the uninterrupted series of their bishops. The unanimous agreement of the churches, the spirit of God that vivifies them, guarantee the infallibility of their witness. Such is the doctrine inspiring Tertullian and St Irenaeus in their respective writings: *On the Denunciation of Heretics* and *Against Heresies*.

Every gnosis, however, is not gnosticizing if one is using this term in the exclusive meaning of salvation by knowledge only, a meaning which makes the gnosis incompatible with faith. For the fathers following St Paul, there is an authentically Christian gnosis, that is, a doctrine founded on Revelation. In accepting the principle of gnosis and the gnostics' allegorical interpretion of types, the Christian masters of Alexandria, Clement and Origen, certainly contributed in spite of some mistakes, to preparing the way for the great theological synthesis of the future. Origen, though deeply attached to the traditional faith, was at the same time very susceptible to the charm of pagan philosophy.

He undertook a whole work of theological elaboration from the base up, collating the chief versions of the Old Testament with the Hebrew text and that of the Septuagint. The result was a monument of scientific exegesis, after the method of the Alexandrine grammarians engaged in studying Homer, which we call the Hexapla. This work was completed with great commentaries on the essential parts of the New Testament in which the heretical exegesis was at one and the same time refuted and outclassed. The results of this persevering and very deep study of the best texts were popularized by an unusually continuous homiletic teaching.

This giant of thought did not stop here. Perfectly acquainted with the philosophic disciplines of his day, he wished to offer inquiring and cultured minds a logical statement of Christian

beliefs. He produced the first sketch of a *Summa Theologica* which had to wait ten centuries to see the plan more resolutely carried out: this was his 'Peri Arkhôm' or 'Treatise on Principles'. On account of his absorption in apologetics, this treatise insists mainly on free will, a faculty essential to every being endowed with reason, which makes it able to orientate itself towards good.

Here we must evoke the memory of another great Christian thinker, older than Origen by nearly a lifetime, and of a very different stamp of mind: Irenaeus of Lyons. Determined enemy of heretics, he based his whole refutation of their doctrine on the simple affirmation of one authentic tradition only. Often bitingly ironic, but always perfectly fair, he contented himself with disentangling the skein of his opponents' fantastic lucubrations and opposing to them the simple assertions of the Gospels: one God, one Christ; a true Redemption in the blood of a Saviour who is truly God and truly man. St Irenaeus reveals himself as a first-class theologian when he proclaims and completes the outlines of the Pauline doctrine of Christ, the new Adam, in whom the 'recapitulation' of all things is made. His synthesis, however, remains disconnected and imperfect in comparison with Origen's which is more careful and more systematic.

From every point of view, the effort towards refutation which the great Church was obliged to undertake when faced with gnosticism, was of advantage to her, for after this first crisis she understood better the indissoluble bond that units her message to the history of the chosen people, the true nature of faith, excluding all esoteric doctrine, the meaning of tradition, the realism of the Incarnation and the Redemption, which had been endangered by the unbridled speculations of gnosticizing Docetism.

At the end of the third century the Church is in possession of a coherent doctrine in the pattern of Christian teaching: the deposit of faith is contained in the Scriptures of both Testaments and in the tradition handed down by the Apostles and transmitted in its original purity by the apostolic succession in the Chief of the Bishops, successors of the Apostles. The living teaching of the Church even takes precedence of the Scrip-

tures, for the latter are only one expression of tradition and it is by reference to tradition that the true meaning of the Scriptures is obtained.

II. *The Content of Faith*

Revelation is written in a sacred history, which is itself the realization of one of God's great plans. He wishes to make of the human family a family of children of God. At the very beginning of creation there is this immense fatherly love. The living God takes part in the human adventure and shares it with us to the end, right through the passing centuries. When the primitive economy is thwarted by sin, God's patience takes it in hand again and enhances it. The plan of restoration is prepared under the old dispensation which was only a preliminary sketch and a type of the definitive dispensation in which God takes part personally in our history, for in the Person of his Son he has welded his divine nature substantially to human nature. 'When the appointed time came, God sent out his Son on a mission to us . . . to make us sons by adoption. To prove that you are sons, God has sent out the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying out, 'Abba, Father' (Gal. 4, 4–6). The Holy Ghost then is also sent, sent by the Father and the Son, sent on a permanent mission present in the Church until the end of time, responsible for Christ's work and entrusted with the bringing of it to a good conclusion.

Why was the simple statement of the revealed content, as we have just formulated it, insufficient? Because questions were asked, controversies arose which compelled the Church to engrave the truth in rigorously dogmatic formulae. It is hardly possible to determine the exact meaning of a revealed doctrine without using a technical terminology. In each case the Church will be obliged to create the vocabulary laboriously. St Augustine remarks with reference to the Blessed Trinity: 'They are three, of course, but three what?' Our human words are inadequate to express the ineffable. We can only speak of divine mystery in an analogical language. But how far does the analogy go, in each case? The Church has to tell us.

At once we grasp how slow and painful must have been the

bringing-forth of the dogmatic formulae that lie at the base of the whole theological structure. Before the great theological syntheses of the Middle Ages could be born, the principal revealed truths had to be inventoried and their dogmatic expression fixed. This was the work of the great oecumenical councils and of the Fathers of the Church, especially in the fourth and fifth centuries.

The primordial dogma of Christianity is the dogma of the Blessed Trinity. The God of Christians *is* the Blessed Trinity. Baptism is conferred in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, and in the actual mystery of his initiation, the Christian feels himself surrounded by the Blessed Trinity. He is born of the love which urged the Father to beget him in the Son and sanctify him in the Holy Ghost. His profession of faith is a profession of faith in the Blessed Trinity. But this faith at once meets with a difficulty: how reconcile it with the pure monotheism inherited from the Old Testament? Two tendencies make themselves felt in the very heart of the Church herself: a unitarian tendency and a trinitarian tendency. The former wishes to preserve the idea of the unity of the Godhead, to the detriment of the real distinction of the Persons; the latter wishes to preserve the distinction of the Persons to the detriment of divine unity. The error of Adoptionism and Modalism on the one hand, on the other the error of Subordinationism. The latter error pushed to extreme lengths gave birth to the heresy of Arius, for whom the Son is merely a creature of the Father. Arius was condemned at the Council of Nicaea (325) which defined that 'the Son was of the same substance as the Father, God of God, true God of true God, begotten not made; con-substantial with the Father'. The word con-substantial (in Greek homousios) defines the quantitative identity of the concrete substance in the Father and the Son.

The epic battles following on Nicaea allowed the champions of orthodoxy, such as St Athanasius and the Cappadocian Fathers, to develop the Trinitarian doctrine, basing it on Scripture, and also to define its terminology. Since Tertullian the Latins had been using the word 'substantia' to name the divine essence, whereas the word 'persona' marked the distinc-

tion of the three relations existing in God. They said: one only substance in three Persons. The Cappadocian Fathers (Basil of Caesarea, Gregory Nazianzos, Gregory of Nyssa, Amphilochus of Iconium) will make the Greeks take another step towards fixing terminology by getting another formula generally accepted: one ousia in three hypostases. It was the Cappadocians also who, with Athanasius, played the decisive part in the definite statement of the dogma of the divinity of the Holy Ghost. The Council of Constantinople (381) will complete the work of Nicaea by adding to the Creed the developments in the doctrine concerning the Holy Ghost: 'Et in Spiritum Sanctum, Dominum, et vivificantem, ex Patre procedentem, cum Patre et Filio adorandum et conglorificandum, qui locutus est per sanctos Prophetas'.

The battles over the Blessed Trinity were followed by the great Christological controversies. Primitive faith asserts the oneness of a single person in Christ and the truth of his divinity and of his humanity. But how reconcile the unity of Christ and the duality of natures within this unity? Two theologies develop, each insisting upon one aspect of the problem. Their tendency and animating spirits are utterly different. The Alexandrians insist on the union of the two natures, on the unity of the God-man, on the mysterious and incomprehensible side of the Incarnation. The Antiochians on their side stress the permanent difference between the human and the divine. They endeavour to prove that each of the two in Jesus Christ keeps what is proper to it and avoids all confusion.

One can imagine the possible deviations of the two tendencies. As long as the theological vocabulary is not clearly defined by the Church, as long as the elements of the syntheses have not been balanced, we risk going to extremes in indicating the consequences of either of them, and end by denying either the truth of the two natures, or the personal oneness of Christ.

Insisting on the unity of Christ, one side will say: 'Christ is indivisible, he is one, a single living being, a single personality; but an individual being is at the same time a person and a nature. Therefore, there is in Christ only one person and one nature'.

The other side, starting from a quite different point of view, will say: 'Christ is truly God and truly man; if then there are two perfect natures, there are also two persons, for where there is only one individual being, there could not be at the same time more than one person and one nature'.

The conflict between Diophysites and Monophysites came before the Councils of Ephesus (431) and Chalcedon (451). The latter condemned Nestorius, the former Eutyches. The latter council was dominated by St Cyril of Alexandria, the former by Pope St Leo. Thanks to them the two great truths which sum up the mystery of the Incarnation were definitively defined. In Christ there is only one person but two natures. Two natures—the divine and the human—each keeping its own integrity and both united in the single person of the Son of God.

The Christological controversies that began in the fourth century lasted until the seventh. The last offshoot of monophysism, which is monothelism and admits only one activity and only one freewill in Christ—the divine will and activity—was condemned in 680 at the Council of Constantinople.

At the beginning of the fifth century while these Christological controversies were being carried on in the East, the West was tackling tough problems of original sin, freewill, grace and predestination.Two systems were opposed: the Pelagians stood for one, St Augustine for the other. The one exalted nature and declared it undamaged by original sin, and asserted that the will, also undamaged, was capable of observing all the commandments without the grace of God; also that predestination finally depends on man's freewill. The other side exalted the power of redemptive grace which lifts us up from the deep misery of sin and predestines us gratuitously.

The struggle between these opposing systems went on for more than a century after the death of St Augustine. The second council of Orange (529) held under the presidency of St Caesar of Arles, put an end to the controversy. In twenty-five canons, taken more or less word for word from St Augustine and St Prosper of Aquitaine and sent to the council by Pope Felix III, both pelagianism and semi-pelgianism were condemned and the Church's doctrine clearly defined. Boni-

face II confirmed this council which subsequently had a great influence. The Church recognized in St Augustine the Doctor of Grace, and formally allowed him the merit of having made clear her doctrine of original sin and the need of grace in the work of our sanctification, but at the same time she discarded certain augustinian theses on the intrinsic malice of concupiscence, on the '*massa damnata*', on absolute predestination, etc. . . .[1]

The effect of these many long controversies was not only to define the exact meaning of the principal dogmas of the faith, but also to provoke carefully worked out theological treatises on the most important points of Christian belief. We are thinking, for example, of St Athanasius' Discourse against the Arians, which contains the first synthesis of Catholic teaching on the Blessed Trinity since the birth of Arianism, of the twelve books on the Trinity by St Hilary of Poitiers, of St Basil's Treatise against Eunomius and of his *Holy Ghost*, of the theological Discourses of St Gregory of Nazianzos, of the numerous polemic, dogmatic and exegetical writings of St Cyril of Alexandria, and especially of the gigantic task undertaken by St Augustine, especially of his *De Trinitate*, *De Civitate Dei*, of his *Enchiridion*, of his exegetical works and of his Retractions. St Augustine did not, strictly speaking, leave us a *Summa Theologica*, but he did bequeath us an incomparable legacy. A complete synthesis of Christian dogma may be drawn from his writings. He attacked all the essential questions: God in the unity of his nature and the Trinity of Persons—the work of God—the Incarnation and the Redemption—man: his nature, his first state, original sin, sanctifying grace, actual grace, predestination—the Church and the Sacraments—the last things.

All western theology is, for widely differing reasons, in debt to St Augustine. Among the Latins, he is *the* Master in Theology.

Among the Greek fathers, the strongest impression on the Middle Ages was undoubtedly made by the mysterious theologian who is hidden under the name of Dionysius the Areopagite. He is read and commented very nearly as much as the

[1] Cf., for a wider view of all these questions, R. Draguet, *Histoire du dogme catholique*, Albin Michel, Paris, 1941.

inspired books. He is one of the most often quoted 'authorities'. In St Thomas alone, more than 1,700 quotations from him have been counted.

Through him as through St Augustine neo-Platonic philosophy influenced Latin thought almost exclusively, until Aristotle appeared in the west in the thirteenth century.

We cannot go any further without mentioning at the end of this rapid review of the development of sacred doctrine in Christian antiquity, the last of the Greek fathers: St John of Damascus (*d.* 749). He was not a genius like St Basil, St Gregory of Nazianzos, St Cyril of Alexandria, or the Pseudo-Dionysius. The interest of his work is that it gives us a summary of the great works of the past, according to a logical order which anticipates the theological syntheses of the twelfth century. Through him especially the west received a part of the patrimony of Greek theology rather late however, as Burzondio of Pisa's translation dates from 1150. He may have been known to Peter Lombard before the latter published his *Sentences*, for their plan, broadly speaking, recalls the divisions of 'Orthodox Faith'.

St John of Damascus' influence on western theology is real —St Thomas often quotes him: fifty-six times in Part I of the *Summa*—but it does not seem to have been deep. His chief work is *Exposition of the Orthodox Faith*, divided by the author himself into one hundred chapters. The Latins divided them into four books, doubtless to make them accord with the divisions of Peter Lombard's *Sentences*.

Book I (chap. 1 to 15): resembles our treatises on God's Unity and Trinity.

Book II (chap. 16–44): treats of God's work *ad extra*. Creation in general, angels, devils, visible nature, paradise, man and his faculties. Providence.

Book III (chap. 45–73): is concerned with the mystery of the Incarnation and its consequences.

Book IV (chap. 74–100): after a few chapters which continue the subject of the Incarnation, treats of various matters: faith, baptism, eucharist, mariology, the canon of the Scriptures, scriptural terminology on Christ, God-Man, refutation of manichaeism, the law of God and the law of sin, virginity, circumcision, anti-Christ, resurrection.

We may say with Father Jugie[1] that the general plan follows the order of the Creed of Nicaea-Constantinople.

III. *Constructive Theology in the Middle Ages*

Between the patristic period and the theological renaissance of the twelfth century, there is a transition time of which we must give a brief summary.[2] Boethius and Cassiodorus passed on the legacy of older days to future generations. Boethius was *the* medieval philosopher until the triumph of Aristotle. By his translation of Porphyrus' Isagogue and of Aristotle's logical works, he was the inspiration of medieval philosophical studies. His theological writings were much commented; we need only name the commentaries *De Trinitate* of John Scotus Erigena, and of Remy of Auxerre in the ninth, of Gilbert de la Porrée and of Clarembaux of Arras in the twelfth and of St Thomas in the thirteenth century.

These treatises helped in the making of the method of theology in the Middle Ages, especially in the use of formal reasoning; Boethius supplied a model. His processes of formal reasoning became the favourite processes of scholastic theology: use of definition, of distinction, of debate, and especially of the 'question' which was to become one of the literary styles of medieval theology. In these very commentaries De Trinitate, the writers of the Middle Ages such as Gilbert de lé Porrée and Clarembaux of Arras, explain what they mean by the 'quaestio'. Boethius created much of western terminology; everyone knows some of the celebrated definitions which he bequeathed to the scholastics, those of nature, personality, beatitude, eternity, providence.

After St Augustine, St Gregory the Great is the father of the Latin church who had most to do with moulding medieval religious mentality. His books are among those which were most read and most enriched with marginal glosses.

Isidore of Seville, Tayon of Saragossa, St Bede the Venerable, are counted among the chief transmitters of the patristic legacy.

[1] M. Jugie, *Jean Damascène* (saint), in Dict. théol., cols. 639–71.
[2] Cf., J. de Ghellinck, *Littérature latine au Moyen Age*, Bloud et Gay, 1939.

Throughout the Middle Ages, right through the Carolingian renaissance, series of texts, often chosen somewhat at random, would be passed from hand to hand; in this way there came into being collections of texts taken at first from the writings of the same author (St Augustine and St Gregory were the most sought after) or from several; then later on arranged according to the order of ideas. The Carolingian period used these extracts but took the proceeding over into the sphere of exegesis. This is the origin of the 'glossae', in particular of the great gloss of the period bearing the name of Walfrid Strabo ('Glossa Ordinaria'); interlinear glosses (written between the lines of the text), were also known, as also marginal glosses.

Two features are to be noticed in these first sketches of theological literature: (*a*) the dialogue form, resembling catechisms in question and answer, popularized by Alcuin's schoolbooks, and (*b*) the use, still in rudimentary form, of dialectic.

Medieval man is slave of the text. *The* text is that of the Bible; and medieval theology will develop round the biblical text; to be professor of theology is to be 'magister in sacra pagina'. The essential part of teaching is the reading of the Bible, 'lectio divina'. In the lectio, the exegesis (expositio textus) included three kinds of explanation: the 'littera', explanation of the phrases and of their connection according to their general grammatical purport. The 'sensus' means the exact and obvious meaning of the text under study. The 'sententia' is the deep understanding of the thought of the writer, the doctrinal content.[1]

Certain texts give rise to questions. An obscure passage needs to be expressed more accurately, or a thought needs to be made clearer; doctrinal problems arise and become subjects of discussion. And so 'quaestiones de divina pagina' appear about the biblical text. These are answered by recourse to the 'auctoritates'.

But when the glosses differ and the texts of the fathers invoked to explain them disagree, how is the question to be answered? In the twelfth century Abelard with his 'sic et non'

[1] For the history of theological method in the twelfth century, see a book which is now a classic, by G. Paré, A. Brunet, P. Tremblay: *La renaissance du XIIe siècle, Les Ecoles et l'Enseignement*, Paris, Ottawa, 1933.

tries to introduce the exact method of interpretation, by resorting to dialectic, and soon this method makes its triumphant entry into theology. It will encroach more and more, especially when the questions take on an impressive range, detach themselves from the biblical text and become 'disputed questions'. A plentiful theological literature is born of these methods of teaching. First of all the glosses, or choice of extracts grouped according to the order of the Scriptures. The 'glossa ordinaria' is continually increased by the addition of fresh elements from the fathers or from more modern writers. In the twelfth century, the glosses of Anselm of Laon, of Gilbert de la Porrée and of Peter Lombard on the Psalter, see the light. (Peter Lombard's is called the 'glossa maior'.)

After the glosses come the *Sentences*, selections of texts grouped according to different points of doctrine. St Isidore's *Sentences* introduced this fashion. His collection is divided into three books: 1st Book: devoted to dogmatic questions: God, the angels, Christ, scripture, baptism, eucharist and the other sacraments, the Resurrection, judgment, heaven, hell. 2nd Book: contains moral theology, theological virtues, grace, contrition, confession, sin, vices and virtues. 3rd Book: merit and the states in life: monk, cleric, leader, subject, prince, judge.

In the twelfth century, this type of collection of Sentences is often found; we mention as example the *Elucidarium sive Dialogus de Summa totius Theologiae* by Honorius of Autun and the *Sentences* of Anselm of Laon.

Soon *Summas* of Sentences will appear in which doctrinal intruction will be of more importance than exegesis, and in which the use of dialectic adds arguments from reason to the 'auctoritates'.

And so the real scholastic theology is born. St Anselm and Abelard are its creators: St Anselm, who in his mighty monographs endeavours to penetrate the content of faith and obtain a certain understanding of it by the use of reason, 'fides quaerens intellectum'; Abelard, who will pick up Anselm's method, adjust it, and boldly and confidently instal dialectic at the very heart of 'sacra doctrina'.

As soon as the dialectic method had been given right of entry into theology and had been applied to the explanation of

dogma, the way was open to systematizations of the data of faith. Then there appeared the theological syntheses of the masters of the twelfth century: the *Introductio ad Theologiam*, of Abelard, of which we possess only the first part, concerning faith and the Trinity; the *De Sacramentis* of Hugh of St Victor, the *Quatuor Libri Sententiarum* of Peter Lombard, the *Sententiae* of Robert of Melun, etc.

(*a*) *Hugh of St Victor* (*d.* 1141).

Hugh of St Victor provides us with one of the most successful attempts at a theological synthesis in the twelfth century.

His *De Sacramentis christianae Fidei* (Mysteries of the Christian Faith) is, as he says himself, a short *Summa* of revealed truth.

The mysteries (*Sacramenta*) are given to us by Scripture itself in the text of the *historia*. It is the foundation to build on. Next the bases have to be laid: these are the revealed truths that must be inventoried and classified. This summary of revealed truths provides the base for the superstructure: the 'secunda editio' of the Bible 'quae in allegoria est', that is to say, the doctrinal interpretation of the Scriptures by means of the 'auctoritates' and the 'ratio'.

The *De Sacramentis* follows the historical order in the distribution of its parts: 'Primer liber, a principio mundi usque ad Incarnationem Verbi narrationis seriem deducit. Secundus liber ab Incarnatione Verbi usque ad finem et consummationem omnium, ordine procedit'.

St Thomas alludes to Hugh of St Victor in the Prima Pars, q.1, art. 7, when he quotes the second opinion which makes 'opera reparationis' the subject of theology. Thus it is an economy of salvation concentrated in the Incarnation.

Here is the plan of the *De Sacramentis*, which is divided into two books:

Book I
- The work of the six days.
- The Trinity.
- The creation of the angels, their nature, their confirmation in good or their fall.
- Creation of man and his state before the fall.
- The fall of man.
- Man's reparation.
- Institution of the Sacraments.

Faith.
The natural law.
Mosaic law.

Book II The Incarnation of the Word.
The unity of the Church.
The sacraments of the New Law.
The end of man.
The end of the world.
Life of the world to come.

(*b*) *Peter Lombard* (*d.* 1160).

Lombard's attempt at synthesis is inspired by St Augustine's formula in the *De Doctrina Christiana*: things that must be enjoyed, 'res quibus fruendum est'; things that must be used, 'res quibus utendum est'; things which both enjoy and use, that is to say ourselves, men. After these res, come the signa; among these the use of some is 'insignificando', of the others 'in significando et justificando', that is to say, the sacraments of the Old Law and of the New.

This division appears from time to time in the course of the work, but seems to have been nothing but an exterior arrangement and not a fruitful inspiration in the composition of Lombard's work. The division of the 'Opus' into four books was made by the author himself, but all the divisions introduced into the present editions of the *Four Books of Sentences* are not his.

According to Father de Ghellinck[1] the following are the contents of the four books of the Sentences:

Book I (in 48 distinctions)
De Deo Trino et Uno:
The Trinity (distinctions 1 to 34).
Attributes of the Deity and action *ad extra.*
Foreknowledge, power and will (distinctions 35 to end).

Book II (in 44 distinctions)
De Deo creante, de gratia, de peccato originali, de peccato actuali:
End of creation, angelology (distinctions 1 to 11).
The work of the six days (distinctions 12 to 16).
Anthropology (distinctions 17 to 23).
Grace (distinctions 24 to 29).
Original sin and actual sin (distinctions 30 to end).

[1] J. de Ghellinck, op. cit., pp. 126–9, and *Dict. Théol.*, art, Pierre Lombard.

Book III (in 40 distinctions)
De Verbo Incarnato, de Christo Redemptore, de Virtutibus, de Decem Mandatis:
Redemption (distinctions 18 to 22).
Theological virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost (distinctions 23 to 36).
Commandments (distinctions 37 to end).

Book IV (in 50 distinctions).
De Sacramentis in genere, De septem Sacramentis in specie, De Novissimis:
Sacraments in general (distinction 1).
Baptism (distinctions 2–6).
Confirmation (distinction 7).
Eucharist (distinctions 8 to 13).
Penance (distinctions 14 to 22).
Extreme unction (distinction 23).
Holy orders (distinctions 24 and 25).
Matrimony (distinctions 26 to 42).
Four last things (distinctions 43 to end).

The detailed plan of the Sentences, with St Thomas' clear divisions of the treatises is in the communication of Father Philippe, O.P., in the *Bulletin Thomist*, July–December, 1932, pp. 132–54.

The extraordinary success of Peter Lombard's work—which remained for centuries *the* Liber Textus—in the theological schools (until the *Sentences* were dethroned by St Thomas' *Summa*) was due, not to any qualities of genius on Lombard's part, but to a number of average qualities; Father de Ghellinck wrote of it: the material is well chosen, the questions well arranged, and the answers are judiciously weighed, which is a real merit. But apart from that, the work is essentially impersonal, and presents itself from a literary point of view as a lifeless, colourless summary, although well proportioned and reasonably complete, of everything that was being discussed in the schools at the time, and that must therefore form the basis of the teaching. . . . Colourless and fleshless, the *Quatuor Libri Sententiarum* lent themselves perfectly, in connection with each individual question, to an exposition of original views, by an appropriate commentary, and one can see that the original commentaries did not fail to make use of this liberty.

(*c*) *The Sentences of Robert of Melun.*

Robert of Melun is one of the most remarkable theologians of

the twelfth century. He does not belong to any of the great schools of his time, but he stands out above them all by his explanatory and his critical work. His *Sententiae* certainly constitute one of the best syntheses of his century. Here is its plan according to Father Martin, to whom we owe the edition of the works of Robert de Melun (Vol. III, *Sent.*, vol. I, p. 9). The *Sentences* are preceded by a preface, in its own way a unique example of medieval theological literature. In it Robert criticizes certain methods of the theological teaching of his day and indicates what should be the aim of a compendium of sentences, namely: to work out a theological system in which the mind, basing itself upon faith, explores and tries to take possession of the truth of Holy Writ and of the patristic teaching; he also gives the matter treated in his *Sentences*, that is to say: the Sacraments of the Old and New Testament.

Book I. The Sacraments of the Old Testament.
The work of the six days.
The Blessed Trinity. In general: knowledge of the Trinity, distinction of the persons. In particular: of the Word and of the Holy Ghost.
The attributes of God: power, wisdom, goodness, wisdom considered as knowledge, providence and predestination;
will of God;
immutability, ubiquity, eternity.
Treatise of the angels.
Treatise of man: the human soul, the origin of the soul; free will, man's state if he had not sinned, temptation of our first parents, original sin.

Book II. The Sacraments of the New Testament.
First Part: differences between the Old and New Testament;
as to the precepts;
as to the sacraments;
as to the promises (merit).
Second Part: Treatise of the Incarnation.
The incarnation as a sacrament;
of the necessity of the incarnation, mode of the redemption;
the human nature of the God-man;
the properties of the God-man;
Christ's two ways of knowing;

conception of Christ, his birth of the Virgin Mary; condition of Christ during the three days after his death, descent of Christ into hell, fate of souls before and after the death of Christ.

Book III. The Sacraments.

Book IV. Of the virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Book V. Eschatology.

IV. *St Thomas' Theological Synthesis*

To understand the full import and the originality of St Thomas' theological structure, we must put it back into the historical setting from which it issued. Limited as I am for space, I shall merely try to bring before you the formidable crisis that endangered the very existence of Christianity in the thirteenth century, the principles at stake and St Thomas' glorious victory.[1]

The crisis through which the Christian West was passing at this point in its history, was a conflict between two equally totalitarian mentalities and orders. On the one side Christian thought and the Christian order of the universe. On the other pagan thought and the philosophical order of the universe, represented by Aristotelianism, invading the Christian world with all its exuberance. It is a conflict between two different claims to wisdom.

Platonism with its types and thanks to a re-adjustment transferring the true world of ideas back into God, presented itself to Christian thought as a marvellous symbolical interpretation of the supernatural world. The history of divine revelations concerning the salvation of the world was able to develop smoothly in the tissue of Platonism, where the idea of divine freedom predominated. Rationalism could introduce no discord there.

Then Aristotle arrived and with him the whole Greek 'bloc'. No longer a world of ideas but a world of natures, no longer as in the twelfth century logic, but metaphysics with its reasons for the existence of everything, its powerful but earthy realism, its changeless laws, its necessity, its interior structure, and its

[1] We refer the reader to the masterly and indispensable work of P. M. D. Chenu, *Introduction a l'étude de saint Thomas d'Aquin*, Montréal-Paris, 1950.

order of the universe, which all hold together of themselves and suffice for themselves.

On the one hand thus, the whole of pagan rationalism.

And on the other, the whole mystery of Christianity.

The angelic doctor, being a genius, grasped what depended on the problem and solved it lucidly. He saw that however carefully a metaphysical system like that of Aristotle might seem to have been purged of the flagrant but partial errors it contained at its introduction into the west, it would continue to be a permanent danger to Christian thought as long as it did not renounce its claim to being 'wisdom'.

To procure the abdication of Greek 'wisdom' in favour of Christian 'wisdom', the former would have to cease presenting itself as a world complete in itself, so that all its reality could open into the divine world of faith and be entirely submissive to its sway.

With his wonderful lucidity, St Thomas saw in God, the formal subject of theological wisdom, the point of co-ordination of the two worlds: the Christian universe and the Greek universe and the point where rational and natural Aristotelianism meets the Platonism of Dionysius and of St Augustine; he realized the synthesis of all reality in the One, that One who is not the 'one' of Plotinus, nor the 'prime mover' of Aristotle, but the living God of Abraham, the triune God of revelation.

The subject of theology is thus God 'sub ratione Dei'. Theology is a wisdom which contemplates the universality of things—whether they belong to the world of nature or to that of super-nature—no longer 'sub ratione entis', but 'sub ratione Dei'.

Theology, because its subject is God, 'sub ratione Deitatis', attains to reality in its universal range, including the world of super-nature. Nothing escapes it. It knows everything as it is in God, in its purest truth, in its deepest reality: 'prout est aliquid Dei'; all creation calls itself that in reference to God himself. It is only completely comprehensible in the 'absolute' of God.

If theology has God himself as subject—the same object as that of divine knowledge—it is because theology is: 'velut

quaedam impressio scientiae divinae', that is to say: the seal of divine knowledge is upon it. And because, thanks to faith, it depends on the First Truth, it (theology) is qualified to know contingent things as they are in God, in their eternal and immutable character, and so it is that at this divine level, contingent facts of revelation and necessary principles of reason are able to meet. They find each other in an atmosphere common to both.

In possession of the double light, faith and reason, both of which come from God and find their unity in him, St Thomas composed a true theological synthesis starting from the formal subject of sacred knowledge: God as known through revelation.

St Thomas says that in sacred science everything is treated of in view of God, whether its object is God himself or whether it is related to God as to its principle or its end. This fundamental assertion will give us the great architectural lines of his structure. 'The object of sacred science being to know God, and not only himself but to know him also as end and principle of creatures, especially of the reasonable creature', it will have to treat:

1. Of God (Ia Pars).
2. Of the return of the reasonable creature to God (IIa Pars).
3. Of Christ as man who is the way by which we should tend towards God (IIIa Pars).

The Ia Pars is subdivided into three parts:

1. God in what concerns the divine essence.
2. God in what concerns the distinction of persons.
3. God as regards creatures proceeding from him:
   (*a*) of the production of creatures;
   (*b*) of their distinctions;
   (*c*) of their conservation and their government.

The *IIa pars* says St Thomas in his Prologue, will treat of man who is the image of God, in so far as he is master of his actions by free will.

After the model, the image. The image in its return to the model in the fulfilment of man's supernatural destiny.

The 'motus creaturae rationalis ad Deum' will include first of all:

1. The end of the return to God: eternal beatitude.
2. The movement towards God by human acts.

St Thomas sub-divides this IIa pars into two parts. First, the study of the principles of human actions in general (Ia, IIae). In it he analyses the principles of human actions:

(*a*) Intrinsic: habits and virtues to which sins and vices are contrary.

(*b*) Extrinsic to man—temptation to evil: the devil and original sin with its consequences.

(*c*) Encouragement to good: God enlightening us by his law and helping us by his grace.

IIa IIae then goes over all man's moral activity in detail, grouping it round virtues.

(*a*) Theological virtues: faith, hope and charity.

(*b*) Moral virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, temperance with all the virtues related to the four cardinal virtues. The IIa pars ends with the consideration of the conditions of the different states of life.

The *IIIa pars*. 'Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, in delivering his people from their sins, as the angel announced, showed himself to us as the way of truth by which it is henceforth possible for us to reach the resurrection and the beatitude of immortal life'. And so St Thomas ends his theological exposition by an economy of salvation.

He considers first:

(*a*) The Saviour himself in the mystery of the Incarnation and of his redemptive life.

(*b*) The Sacraments by which salvation is conveyed to us.

(*c*) The consummation of Christ's work which broadens out into an eschatology.

The double movement of *exitus* and *reditus* as the creature comes from God and returns to God, meets in him who is at once source and end of the universe, for God can only will his goodness, he can only will to communicate his goodness; creation is thus like an immense diffusion of divine goodness, which is at the same time the purpose of the universe: on the part of God, 'diffundere suam bonitatem', on the part of the creature 'assimilari Deo'. How far does this outpouring of divine goodness and this assimilation of creatures to God extend? Taken concretely what is this unique end of the universe? It is the same one that revelation shows us. It is the

plan of supernatural Providence and of our predestination which makes us children of God in the only-begotten Son.

At the summit of the universe is Christ, that is God giving himself in the person of his Son, so that man may return to the Father in and with Jesus, Son of God.

All creation is thus ordered directly to man, the child of God, and beyond him to Christ, the Man-God, in order to establish itself through him in the very heart of the Trinity. Thus, says St Thomas, the universality of the divine work is accomplished when man, last-comer in creation, describing a wonderful circle, comes back to his source, being welded substantially by the Incarnation to him by whom all things were made.

Such is, in its broad lines, the magnificent synthesis given by St Thomas in his *Summa Theologica.*

Nevertheless, the *Summa* ought to be studied parallel with the other writings of the saint and doctor, and very specially with his biblical commentaries and disputed questions, which deliver to us directly the fruit of his oral teaching and help us to understand his thought better, for in the *Summa* this is often condensed, but is more fully developed in the commentaries on the Bible as far as the *auctoritates* are concerned, and in his *Disputed Questions* for what concerns the abundance of information and arguments produced.

St Thomas' many-sided genius conceived other ways of presenting a theological synthesis. It is interesting to note especially his *Compendium Theologiae,* the plan of which is very differently constructed.

The *Compendium Theologiae* (Brevis compilatio theologiae ad Fratrem Reginaldum, Socium suum carissimum: Short Summary of Theology) is arranged around the three theological virtues, faith, hope and charity. Unfinished opusculum, containing only the part concerning faith (245 chapters) and a few chapters (246 to 255) of the *Treatise on Hope.*

The compendium should be dated probably towards 1265–7, thus earlier than the *Summa Theologica.*

Three things, says the saint, are necessary to salvation: the knowledge of revealed truth given us by faith; the deep-seated orientation of our life towards eternal beatitude, object of

hope; the love of God, loved for himself, love expressing itself in perfect fulfilment of his will, and this is charity, the precept of which fulfils all the demands of the law. Therefore, all the perfection of the present life may be summed up in faith, hope and charity. And in these things theology also may be summed up.

The object of faith, necessary to salvation, is contained in the articles of the Creed. Therefore St Thomas builds up all the first part of the compendium on the foundation of the Creed. Faith is the prelude to the vision of heaven. Eternal life consists in knowing the true God and him whom he has sent, Jesus Christ. All faith is thus centred in knowledge of the divinity of the Trinity and of the humanity of Christ.

The chapters on God are arranged as follows: unity of essence, trinity of the persons, the work of God *ad extra*. Under the last heading come the questions: on creation, on the angels, on the human creature, on the problem of evil, on providence and divine government, on the last ends of man; resurrection of the body, eternal life, hell, purgatory.

The chapters on the humanity of Christ are divided into two sections. Christ having come to save men from sin, the state of original justice must be considered first, then the fallen state of man: original sin and its consequences. After that comes the problem of Christ by whom creation returns to God. After treating of the mystery of the Incarnation, St Thomas follows closely the different articles of the Creed, which speak of Christ's life, birth, passion, death, resurrection and ascension, and his sitting at the right hand of the Father, ending with the Last Judgment.

The unfinished treatise on hope is presented as a commentary on the Our Father. For prayer is the expression of our hope, and, says the author, in commenting on the *Pater* we shall explain everything that can relate to the hope of Christians, that is to say its formal motive and its specific object, detailed in the seven petitions.

The originality of the Compendium lies in its being—in a way in which a medieval mind could conceive of such a thing—a catechetic theology, based on the explanation of the Creed and of the *Pater* and probably, if the author had been able to

finish his work, on the explanation of the divine precepts. For what is said of the third part, Charity, as mentioned in the Prologue, leads us to think that St Thomas meant to make it a synthesis of all moral theology, grouped about charity with its double precept: love of God and of our neighbour, with all the other virtues and the other precepts ordered to charity as to their end. In his opusculum 'De duobus praeceptis caritatis et de decem praeceptis', St Thomas introduces his subject thus: 'Three things are necessary for the salvation of man; they are: the knowledge of what he should believe, the knowledge of what he should desire and the knowledge of what he ought to do. The first is taught in the creed, where we learn the articles of faith, the second in the *Pater* and the third in the Law'. This seems to be exactly the plan of the Compendium.

In the opusculum 'De Praeceptis . . .' treating of the knowledge of human action, the author reduces it to the double precept of charity. As a matter of fact, of the precepts of the Decalogue, the first three refer to love of God, the seven others to love of our neighbour; thus the whole law is based on charity. This seems to be the sketch of a moral theology built around the chief of the theological virtues, form of all the other virtues.

V. *Disintegration of the Synthesis and Specialization of Theological Knowledge*

The fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, in spite of some brilliant productions, are a period of decadence for theology. This decline will continue to grow more marked until the beginning of the fifteenth century. Then comes a revival characterized by the restoration of scholasticism, by the birth of positive theology and by the appearance of a new type of writing: controversies.

Restoration of scholasticism. This is primarily due to the fact that St Thomas' *Summa Theologica* supplants the Sentences of Peter Lombard as *Liber Textus* in the great university centres, such as Salamanca in Spain, Coimbra in Portugal, Louvain in the Low Countries. Towards 1500 Peter de Visscher is brilliantly explaining the *Summa* to the Studium

Generale, O.P., at Louvain. In Spain, Francis de Vittoria, initiated into the study of St Thomas by Pierre Crockaert of Brussels, is appointed in 1526 professor at Salamanca and bases his whole teaching on the *Summa Theologica*. Melchior Cano, doctor of the 'loci theologici' is one of his disciples. This is the era of the great commentators of St Thomas: Cajetan, Francis Sylvester of Ferrara, Peter and Dominic Soto, Bartholomew of Medina, Dominic Banez, the Portuguese John of St Thomas, all Dominicans. Among the Jesuits also, we find great names: Suarez, Bellarmine, Molina, Lessius, Vasquez, Peter Canisius, Gregory of Valencia, etc. . . .

Unfortunately, scholasticism only hardens its positions by a too rigid application of the Aristotelian axiom: 'science need not prove its principles'.

Thus a first disintegration will take place in the very heart of theology.

In the hands of a genius such as St Thomas, the dialectical method remains supple. It does not stifle an open mind. Just as St Thomas' thought welcomes the wisdom of the ancients on its introduction into the west, so it also welcomes the experience of Christian faith represented by tradition, to such an extent that it is impossible to interpret properly as a whole the great doctor's theological work without a thorough knowledge of its scriptural and patristic sources.

Scholastic theology, presenting itself more and more exclusively as the science of theological conclusions, suggests to certain theologians the idea of building up alongside of it another form of theology, called 'positive'.

This new direction is caused by both the literary renaissance and the protestant crisis. The literary renaissance penetrating into ecclesiastical circles renews the taste for antiquity for its own sake, brings readers back to the original documents, witnesses of the Church's past, and introduces into this study the concern for the philological accuracy of the texts (in 1516 Erasmus publishes his New Testament 'ad graecam veritatem' accompanied by a Latin translation—Baronius publishes his *Annals* from 1568 to 1607; in Paris, Merlin brings out in 1524 the acts of fifty-five councils and fourteen years later, Pierre Crabbe edits more than one hundred and fifty of them at

Cologne; in 1589 the *Bibliotheca Sanctorum Patrum* of Margerin de la Bigne comes out). Moreover, the needs of controversy with the Reformers obliged Catholic theology to follow the adversary onto the disputed ground and forced on the theologians the study of Scripture and tradition so as to be able to prove that the Church had not varied in her doctrine. This was the task of the controversialists, among whom St Robert Bellarmine holds indisputably the first place. His chief work, the *Controversies*, contains fifteen general controversies grouped in four series of volumes and treating:

1. Of the rules of faith;
2. Of the Church;
3. Of the Sacraments;
4. Of grace.

All the dogmas attacked by the heretics are here studied in the light of tradition. Bellarmine focusses all his proofs on the idea of the Church; the Church and her invisible head, Christ; the Church militant and her visible head, the Pope, her hierarchy, her members; the Church suffering, and the Church triumphant; the sacramental functions of the Church; the sanctifying action of the Church in man's share in his personal sanctification.

Positive theology has come into being. It introduces into theology a new element and creates a new function. Thanks to it revelation will no longer be a starting-point but a terminus. It will be the object of proof, even the principal object of theological proof. An effort will be made to furnish proof of the continuity of dogma.

Nevertheless, the progress of theology towards positiveness took place only slowly and at first without a break with the older theological conception. On the contrary, positive theology appears to be very largely tributary to scholasticism. To realize this one need only read the most remarkable representatives of the oldest positive theology. Not only did they claim a place for scholasticism in their system and justify its role, but their mode of building is obviously inspired by plans adopted from the Middle Ages: concept of science in the Aristotelian sense; a very sharp and to a certain extent compulsory distinction between the principles and the conclusions of science; the

idea of the necessity of proof; logical proof of principles by history; proof of conclusions by dialectic; the idea of ' loci theologici' inspired by Aristotle's 'topoi'.

We may follow the stages of positive theology in its organization of its own functions by reading in succession, for example, the works of Gregory of Valencia (*d.* 1603), Petau (*d.* 1647), Thomassinus (*d.* 1695), Franzelin (*d.* 1886).

Positive theology does not, however, break loose entirely from scholasticism until it succeeds in getting rid of its too rigid dogmatism and acquires a sense of relativeness and the psychology of development. The work of Newman in England and that of the school of Catholic theology at Tübingen, contributed largely to giving theologians the sense of development in the perfect continuity of dogma. Positive theology builds henceforth on a quite different plan from that of scholasticism; by its methods it is related to history and it finds itself in harmony with the historic disciplines that collaborate with it, e.g., bible history, history of dogma, patrology, history of the Church, etc. Speculative theology is often out of its element here and vice-versa.

Besides this separation of the two theologies, positive and scholastic, there is another which also begins in the sixteenth century: moral theology breaks away from dogmatic theology. Separated from the dogma that gave it life, it soon became a practical theory of morality, directly ordered to the solution of practical cases; it becomes casuistry, the art of solving cases of conscience.

It aims at training the priest for his sacerdotal functions. When seminaries were founded, the Council of Trent had put in the programme of training future priests 'everything that seems useful for the administration of the sacraments and especially for the ministry of confession'. Therefore, the confessor must know what sin is and especially mortal sin. How is he to determine what is sin? By referring to the law: therefore moral science is organized around the commandments.

St Ignatius had allotted a special place in the apostolate of his society to the ministry of the confessional, and the Jesuits soon acquired a well-deserved reputation as confessors and casuists. It is not surprising, therefore, to find them sending

out into the world a brilliant group of casuists of whom the most eminent were: Tolet, Henri Quez, Sanchez and later on Bäsenbaum and Lacroix, the precursor of St Alphonsus.

For several centuries moral theology was more studied than dogma and it is a striking fact that the only doctor of the Church produced by the last few centuries was a moralist.

Moral science having thus become above all a science of sin and of the law, the study of the spiritual life in its turn becomes ascetic and mystical theology, which obtains its own status in the schools. Here again the sixteenth century shows the way with its mystical doctors: St Teresa of Avila and St John of the Cross. In their wake came schools of spirituality such as the Berullian school, the school of St Sulpice, the Salesian school, etc. . . .

Thus, the great syntheses of the Middle Ages were replaced by a collection of ecclesiastical disciplines each with its own field and its own methods. Learning is specialized: to-day we distinguish between exegesis and biblical theology, between patrology and the history of dogma, the history of the Church and the history of religions, dogmatic and moral theology, speculative and positive theology, etc. . . .

But that is doubtless a need of the human mind (which proceeds by dividing and putting together: dividendo et componendo) and which is obliged to pass through the way of specialization before proceeding to new syntheses.

II. The Organization of Sacred Studies in the Course of History

1. *The Teaching of Christian Doctrine in the First Centuries*

St Paul's exhortations in his Epistles depend upon a catechesis, a common stock of apostolic preaching. The gospels also presuppose an 'apostolic kerygma', already fixed as to its broad lines. The bishop entrusted with the disciplinary and doctrinal care of the community must, from the earliest times, have kept watch to assure that the Jewish neophytes, and—*a fortiori* the pagans—gave evidence before baptism of sufficient knowledge

of the requirements of the new life into which they were entering. But all this does not presuppose any permanent organization responsible for the transmission of doctrine in the form of teaching of the type given in schools. Probably they were taught as was Paul, whom our Lord sent to Ananaias, an elder instructed in the mysteries of the faith.

Among these elders systematic speculation on the revealed datum was not forbidden, and it is probable that the traditions of rabbinical knowledge were continued under another form among the learned Jews who were converted to Christianity. St Irenaeus often refers to these traditions of the elders, which already bear witness to reflection on the message of the Spirit and even to deviations, as in the case of the chiliast hopes.

Not until towards the year 170, after the canker of gnostic sects had developed, did the churches take definite measures to prevent the not yet fully rooted faith of their neophytes from succumbing to the seduction of daring gnostic speculations. The catechumenate was instituted and continued to grow incessantly in order to secure a healthy absorption into the Church body of the pagan masses crowding in ever greater numbers through the church doors. Parallel to the soaring impetus of this institution, we find a progressive broadening of baptismal creeds; without abandoning conciseness in drawing up their articles, they endeavour to meet the chief errors which threaten the faith.

It must not be imagined that this catechetic teaching was in the least like our catechisms of to-day. The neophytes were initiated more by liturgical gestures and words, explained by the president of the meeting in a suitable homily. They learnt the meaning of their own destiny as disciples of Christ by living the drama of the death and resurrection of their Saviour. This catechetic instruction through the mysteries of Christ's life, to which the powerful liturgical movement of to-day is urging us to return, inevitably remained elementary, in spite of its exceptional suggestive power. It could not satisfy the intellectual demands of cultivated minds nor provide the future pastors with the weapons necessary for the defence of their flock.

In the second century we see a former philosopher now

converted to Christianity, St Justin Martyr, grouping about himself, after the fashion of his former pagan masters, a small audience, which he provided with the means of answering the chief pagan and Jewish objections. Tatianus was one of his pupils. In the Church of Rome, however, this school had no official position. It was different at Alexandria, where an enterprising bishop gave Panthenus charge of the regular teaching of doctrine, according to a programme which went far beyond elementary requirements. Many illustrious names will follow his in the chair of the Didaskalé, but nothing remains to us of their teaching: Clement and Origen outshine them all.

Origen's daring ideas and even more a certain want of discipline in the face of episcopal authority, will force him to go into exile at Caesarea. But the result will be a new higher school of exegesis and theology, which will be for a long time in charge of the manuscripts of the Hexapla. Here the complete cycle of classical studies will have to be gone through, before passing on to the teaching of revealed doctrine. Origen's habit of allegorizing, which will remain a characteristic of his school, caused a reaction towards a rather quiet dryness. Lucian, born at Samosate, founded a school of this description at Antioch, which was also made illustrious by many famous names. His pupil, Arius, developing the extreme consequences of his master's tendency to subordinationism in his exegesis, laid the doctrinal foundations of the heresy that was to trouble the peace of the Church for so many years. Out of Antioch came the School of Edessa, intellectual centre of the churches of Mesopotamia, made famous by the great deacon Ephraem, singer of our Lady and doctor of the Church.

The literary production of the fathers is largely the handmaid of their teaching and preaching: for example, St Basil's homilies on the Hexameron and the Psalms, St Gregory of Nazianzos' dogmatic and moral discourses, St John Chrysostom's homilies, St Augustine's and St Leo's sermons, etc.; here we have in a more didactic form the catechetic instructions given according to the scheme of the Apostles' Creed. The twenty-four catechetic instructions pronounced by St Cyril of Jerusalem at Easter 148, belong to this type of literature.

II. *The Middle Ages*

The fall of the Roman Empire and the Barbarian invasion of Western Europe induced the Church to undertake the salvation of ancient culture, both sacred and profane. For centuries she was obliged to assume the role of a 'ministry of education'. Until the end of the Middle Ages, the teaching of theology as well as of the liberal arts was given in schools that were all subject to the authority of the Church.

(*i*) *The Schools*

In the Middle Ages there were parish schools, monastic schools and episcopal schools.

The parish schools taught the people. Their programme was essentially religious; it included reading, writing, church music, knowledge of the Bible, especially the Psalter, and of the law of God.

The monastic schools, intended primarily for young monks, included nevertheless, besides the intra-claustral school, an external school, where teaching was given to all who came. At least this was the general custom.

When Cassiodorus organized studies in his monastery of the 'Vivarium', towards 540, he applied the programme which he had drawn up in his *Institutiones divinarum et saecularium lectionum*. The Irish and Breton and later the English monasteries followed Cassiodorus' example and programme. The Carolingian renaissance stimulated a renewal and extension of sacred and profane studies in Western monasteries. Some monastic schools were renowned far and wide and when at their peak, were most important intellectual centres, for instance, the schools of Lobbe, of Liège and of Rheims in the second half of the tenth century. In the eleventh century the most famous of these schools was that of Le Bec, made illustrious by Lanfranc and St Anselm.

The episcopal schools were meant for the clerics of the cathedrals. Some already existed before the arrival of the Franks in Gaul, but they attained their greatest fame at the beginning of the twelfth century. It is enough to mention those of Rheims, Chartres and Paris. Their renown however de-

pended on the masters who taught in them, and their prosperity must not mislead us into forgetting that there were only a few of these great centres and that elsewhere all over Christendom education was neglected. Father Mandonnet was quite justified in speaking of a school crisis at the beginning of the thirteenth century.

At the beginning of the twelfth century, masters and students flocked to Paris and its schools (besides the cathedral school it had the cloister of St Genevieve and the school of St Victor). When, in the year 1200, the King, Philip-Augustus, officially recognized the rights and privileges of the 'Universitas Magistrorum et scholarium Parisium studentium', Paris was crowned as the intellectual capital of medieval Christendom.

(*ii*) *Programme and method of teaching*

The programme is based on the study of the liberal arts. This expression designates a series of branches of instruction, the aim of which is the general culture of the mind. For centuries the seven liberal arts were the matter of school teaching: they were grammar, dialectic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music (theory).

Since the time of Boethius the seven arts had been divided into two groups. The first three formed the 'trivium', the object of which was to train the students to speak (*artes sermocinales*); the last four formed the 'quadrivium', applied to the four orders of realities: number, extension, the celestial globe, harmony (*artes reales* or *physicae*).

The expression arts and sciences characterizes fairly accurately the two groups of liberal arts.

Serving at first as introduction to the 'lectio divina', the liberal arts will later on be considered as so many degrees of knowledge, leading up to the one wisdom: 'Philosophia', the summit of which is 'Theologia', the science of divine things.

In theory a man had to have been through the circle of the liberal arts in order to be thought cultivated. In practice, many students neglected the quadrivium, and chose their courses according to their own taste, or according to the reputation of the lecturer. In the twelfth century the craze for dialectics attracted thousands of students to the professorial chairs where

the most renowned masters were teaching, and notably to Abelard.

In consequence of the introduction of Aristotle's writings in the thirteenth century, the Faculty of Arts at Paris developed into a Faculty of Philosophy. The great Greek philosopher's classification of the sciences came back into honour. Philosophy is the totality of rational and experimental sciences and includes logic, physics, metaphysics and ethics. Henceforward, according to the statutes of the universities created after this epoch, a student is obliged to pass through the faculty of arts, before entering himself in any other faculty. The faculty of arts becomes the mother of all the rest.

We have already told how medieval school teaching was based on text. In 1255 at Paris, the faculty of arts fixed in its curriculum that Porphyrus and Boethius were to be read in 'vetus logica' and Aristotle in 'nova logica'; likewise in physics and in metaphysics the reading of certain of the Stagyrite's books was obligatory.

In theology, students work on the text of the Bible, which remains all through the Middle Ages the fundamental book for the teaching of sacred science.

So that to teach is actually to read, the course is a 'lectio' and the professor is a 'lector' or lecturer.

The text is explained according to a method of interpretation which takes into account the different meanings of Scripture. In the first questions of his *Summa*, St Thomas reminds us of the different scriptural meanings: the literal or historical, the spiritual or the signification of things expressing other realities, which is again subdivided into the allegorical, the moral and the anagogical meanings. In these different meanings, the master began with the literal and immediate exegesis and ended with the deep understanding of the text in its doctrinal content.

(iii) The three parts of teaching

The three parts of teaching are: first, the 'lectio', then the 'praedicatio' and lastly the 'quaestio'. The 'lectio' is the course of exposition we have just described. The 'praedicatio' is the part of teaching which consists of sermons or 'collationes'

given to the students. These are not mere sermons in the ordinary sense of the world, but addresses with a very dense theological content, as one can see by reading the 'sermones et collationes' of St Thomas. The third part of teaching is the 'quaestio'.

Reading the Bible brings to the front certain difficult and disputable points which the class attempts to unravel during the 'lectio'. Later all the problems brought to light by the reading of the text, even if they are not disputable, are made into questions: e.g., 'Is there a God?' Finally, the problems and their solutions are examined independently of the text. The question thus detached from its Biblical context creates a new school exercise, independent of the 'lectio' and this is called the disputation: 'disputatio'.

The disputation is thus a part of the master's teaching in which he submits to his colleagues and students for discussion, a question chosen by himself. The others state their objections, argue for and against ('videtur quod, sed contra . . .') and the debate is closed by the master's summing-up.

Although the debate was held under the direction of the master, at first his 'bachelor' answered the questions, helped, if necessary, by the master himself. This was the first stage of the disputation; a second stage followed which bore the name of the 'master's conclusion'. It was the master in theology's exclusive privilege to conclude the debate by deciding authoritatively the doctrine to be held.

This literary style gave rise to another type of 'disputed questions' namely the 'quodlibetic' discussion, 'de quolibet', on any subject you please. The most varied, the most unexpected, the funniest questions might be put to the master by anyone, e.g., 'Utrum veritas sit fortior inter vinum, regem et mulierem'. It was not the professor but the audience who took the initiative in choosing the questions. Only masters competent in almost every subject could risk engaging in these jousts of wit, which could at times be most embarrassing. St Thomas was one of the initiators of the 'quodlibetic' debate. The collection of the 'quodlibetales' constitutes with that of the 'disputed questions' one of the angelic doctor's educational masterpieces.

(iv) The teaching of the Bible

The statutes regarding the teaching of the Bible drawn up at Paris in the thirteenth century. were later adopted in the other university centres.

The student in theology had to follow for two years the courses of the biblical bachelor, who read cursorily, 'cursorie', the whole of Holy Writ, keeping to the text itself with the help of glosses, but without stopping for 'quaestiones'. Then he went on to the study of the 'Sentences' of Peter Lombard, under the direction of the bachelor of sentences. This second cycle also lasted for two years.

The last two years were devoted to a deeper study of one or other book of the Bible. The doctrinal exposition of the Biblical text was the special function of the Master in theology, 'magister in sacra pagina'. The commentaries, 'expositiones', of St Thomas on different books of the Old and New Testament are thus the fruit of his teaching as master in theology.

Thus, in the theological schools of the Middle Ages, the understanding of Holy Writ was the goal of all the subjects studied and the crown of all the students' efforts.

III. *Modern Times*

For this period we shall limit ourselves to a few brief notes.

The direction of sacred studies at the beginning of the modern period was determined by a series of events which belong to the history of the Church at that date.

1. The renaissance, denouncing the hardened formalism of scholasticism in its decline, invited students to return to the sources and to read the text according to their original intention.

Hence came the impulse given to textual criticism in the study of Scripture. A more scientific exegesis is demanded and to this end the College of the three tongues 'Collegium Trilinguae' was founded at Louvain by Jerome Bussleyden.

About the same time, the importance of Biblical questions causes some universities to create professorships of Holy Scripture, distinct from those of theology.

2. The struggle with protestantism gives a polemical flavour

to the teaching. To the 'disputationes' of the Middle Ages, succeed controvesries against heresy in which positive arguments are far more effective than dialectic. This stimulates patristic study, conciliar collections, research into the history of the Church. Nevertheless, patrology and ecclesiastical history are not yet taught for themselves, but for their apologetic value in theology.

At Louvain, for instance, ecclesiastical history will not be taught *ex professo* before the end of the eighteenth century.

3. It is also in reaction against the protestant reform and to counteract the influence of Luther's catechism in German countries that St Peter Canisius published his *Catechism*: the 'little catechism' minimus, for children and the illiterate; the 'catechismus parvus catholicorum' for students in beginners' classes and for young men; the 'summa', corresponding in its original intention to Luther's big catechism, destined for the universities and the higher classes in colleges.

A new literary genre has been created and Catholics and Protestants will vie with one another in zeal for the diffusion of their respective catechisms. Some universities even created professorships of catechism: one of these was set up at Louvain in 1546.

4. The substitution of St Thomas' *Summa* for Peter Lombard's *Sentences* as 'Liber textus' in the universities, brought about the creation of chairs of Thomist theology. At Louvain an official course in theology according to St Thomas began about Easter 1598. Two Thomist professorships were provided, and their courses lasted seven years.

5. Among the reforming decrees of the Council of Trent, one of the most important deals with the erection of seminaries.

In its fifth session, the council had already set up professorships of Holy Scripture in all the cathedrals. The decree on seminaries transferred these chairs to the seminaries themselves.

A double training is henceforth provided for the seminarists: a humanist and an ecclesiastical training.

The seminarists must first be instructed in grammar, singing, ecclesiastical computation and the other liberal arts.

The ecclesiastical training will include the study of Holy Writ, books on Church history, the homilies of the saints, and

everything that seems useful for the administration of the sacraments, especially for the ministry of the confessional, and lastly the study of rites and ceremonies.

The humanist culture will therefore replace the study of the medieval *trivium* and *quadrivium* and a new curriculum with a practical trend will prepare the future priest for his pastoral duties. Besides the university programme, more advanced and more scientific, there will be another of ecclesiastical studies meant for the generality of the candidates for the priesthood.

All this was a gradual progress towards the organization of sacred studies as we know them to-day.

IV. *Studies in Vigour To-day in Institutes of Clerks Regular*

(*i*) *The requirements of Canon Law*

Can. 589, §1. Religious 'in inferioribus disciplinis rite instructi' must study philosophy for at least two years and theology for four years, adhering to the doctrine of St Thomas, according to the instructions of the Apostolic See.

According to the declaration of 31 May, 1910, the two years of philosophy and the four of theology may not be diminished, not even by including the holidays. The theology must last for four 'academic years', that is to say, including the holidays, forty-five months. After the completion of the course in theology: One must always study, as least sufficiently not to forget the little one knows. Two prescriptions will help in this:

Can. 590. Every year for at least five years, the religious undergoes an examination, in the presence of grave and learned fathers, on the different branches of sacred doctrine, according to a programme indicated in advance. The major superiors cannot dispense from this except for a grave reason. Religious who teach theology, canon law or scholastic philosophy are exempt from this.

Probably one might add those who teach subjects related to these: liturgy or church history, but not the sciences.

Can 591. In each house, there will be cases in moral theology or liturgy proposed for solution. If the superior thinks fit, an exposition of dogmatic theology or of other sacred sciences may be added. All the professed clerics who are doing their

theology or have finished it and are at home, are obliged to assist at this, unless exempted by the Constitutions.

(*ii*) *The ratio studiorum of the Apostolic Constitution* Deus scientiarum Dominus, of 24 May, 1931.

It regulates as follows the curriculum and the method of studies in Catholic universities:

In theology the positive method and the scholastic method are required, the latter according to the principles and the doctrine of St Thomas. In philosophy study of the method and the principles of St Thomas must come before the examination and appreciation of the various philosophical systems. Besides the scholastic discussions in philosophy and theology, art. 30 requires in all faculties, in addition to the lecture, practical exercises, in which the pupil may learn under the direction of the master, scientific methods of research and the art of giving the result in writing. The duration of studies for the doctorate is five years in theology, three years in canon law, four years in philosophy, five years at the Biblical institute, at the Oriental Institute and at the Institute of Christian Archaeology, etc. . . .

The chief subject in the faculty of theology is fundamental theology with dogmatic theology, moral theology, Holy Writ (i.e., introduction to the exegesis of both Old and New Testaments), church history, patrology, Christian archaeology and the institutes of canon law.

The auxiliary subjects are the Hebrew language and biblical Greek, digests of liturgy, asceticism, theological questions concerning the Eastern Churches.

In the faculty of philosophy, the chief subjects are scholastic philosophy, with a general introduction beforehand and the history of philosophy; scholastic philosophy must be set out in all its parts: logic, cosmology, psychology, criticism or criteriology, ontology, theodicy, ethics and the natural law.

The auxiliary subjects include experimental psychology, the scientific questions connected with philosophy and taken from biology, anthropology, mathematics, physics, chemistry and lastly, interpretation of texts from St Thomas and Aristotle.

Chapter III

TOWARDS A CATECHETIC THEOLOGY

By P.-A. Liègé, O.P.

At the beginning of an exposition which must be discreetly handled and which must of necessity be incomplete, I hope to dispel some ambiguity by suggesting a few remarks about the title chosen.

1. The term catechetic must not be confused, as often happens, with the word catechistic. Probably it is a sign of the times that we are again talking about catechesis and catechetic pastorals. A sign, perhaps, that we are reflecting on the requirements for transmitting the message of salvation to all men, within as well as outside the Church. By catechesis we actually mean, speaking very broadly, every realization of the Church's prophetic function, in view of sanctity and of missionary expansion; without making this an exclusive condition, the word catechesis is probably usually applied to living oral transmission in the most varied forms. As for catechism, the term merely connotes, much more restrictedly, a technical realization of catechesis for schools, in a form suitable for children. Thus the two words need not be confused.

2. All authentic catechesis is nourished by a theology, but catechesis is not itself theology. Catechetic theology is truly theology because it is the application of the Word of God to a universal plan, controlling the specific applications of concrete catecheses; because it is expressed in the form of a certain general systematization of the whole. Although it does not present itself with the technical detail of a more learned theology, catechetical theology must not be confused with preaching by example, not with spirituality.

3. With this remark we nearly get to the bottom of the subject. In speaking of a catechetic theology, I mean to show

the limits of my exposition. I do not wish to treat theoretically the vexed question of diverse theologies or of the diverse functions of the one and only theology.

One fact is historically certain: the age of the fathers provides us with a type of reflection on the Word of God suitable for a catechesis, because it was made by pastors in the very heart of the Church's life and in view of the catechetic mission of the Church. In proportion as theology became specialized in its scholastic form it tended to lose in catechetic quality what it gained in intellectual technique; it became the sphere of professors who had specified within the framework of the schools. What was a great advantage for the Church's Magisterium (in the narrow sense of the word), was not so beneficial to the ensemble of the prophetic mission of the Church, of which the Magisterium is only the most doctrinal and least usual function. In this way catechesis has become the popularization of a learned theology of which our catechisms are the finished type: one scarcely ventures to speak of catechesis with regard to them. . . . The present-day needs of the life of the Church, and especially the renascence of evangelization, make us feel the want of a theological reflection which might recover its pastoral and catechetic purpose: we need, in a word, a more decidedly catechetic theology. We are not referring to a kind of anti-intellectualism nor to a 'new theology' as some seem to fear; but of an orientation of theology as old as the life of the Church itself, so that one is surprised at having to apologize for it. But this being said, whenever we mention learned theology and catechetic theology, we do not intend to contrast them with one another nor to suggest a comparative study of these two types of theological reflection.

Remember the equality of doctors and preachers in the ministries of the medieval church: *ordo doctorum id est ordo praedicatorum* is a famous dictum as old as the Papacy of St Gregory. A doctor studied theology with a view to preaching, not in order to become a university specialist. What a good thing it would be if we could recover the unity of expression of the Word of God as revealed by their vocabulary, keeping the while all the advantages of later developments! The Apostle Paul was among the first to become a type of the catechetic doctor.

Having said this, we shall try to show the requirements of an authentic catechetic theology. I hope to do so briefly, yet sufficiently for practical purposes. It seems to me that the whole of catechetic theology is built upon a few fundamental assumptions which I shall attempt to show first of all; then will come the exposition of the great aims of such a theology and the manner of its organization. Then it should be easy to show the advantages of its use in the doctrinal training of nuns.

I. *Presuppositions of Catechetic Theology*

At the beginning of any theology we find fundamental ideas which, according to our interpretation of them, orientate our further reflections in different directions: revelation, faith, mystery, truth, doctrine, the supernatural, etc. . . . It is no chance that in modern times crises in religious knowledge have drawn discussion and misunderstandings upon these ideas. Historically, it appears certain that, in order to safeguard the objectivity of their content, modern theology had tended to assert nothing but their intellectual content, differing in this from the Bible and from Christian experience which fill them with a personal and synthetic content. Let us take some examples:

(*a*) Theological reflection issued entirely from the Word of God and is entirely at the service of that Word. There is one conception of the Word of God, more usually expressed by the term revelation, in which God is considered as the sovereign master of truth, transmitting speculative truths to the human mind in order to illuminate it divinely. There is another which understands by the expression Word of God, the act of God's glory becoming present for love in human history and life: an act taking shape at once as the happening of salvation, enlightenment and dynamism creating a new life. God is not satisfied with instructing man by his Word; he makes his presence and his plan known. A catechetic theology will not hesitate between these two conceptions, for the second alone expresses the religious totality which is at the beginning of Christianity.

(*b*) To the Word of God as act of God living through human

intermediaries corresponds on man's side *the act of faith*. And here we find the dual conception again. On the one side an adhesion-by-faith to principles of supernatural intelligibility taking the form of dogma in the Church. On the other side conversion-by-faith to the God of the Word recognized by the heart (in the biblical sense of the word), an acceptance of God's salvific plan by the whole person, although it is not possible to isolate the objective expression of that plan from the act by which one enters into communion with it.

(*c*) And now *the mystery*. One may define it as a proposition containing a divine assertion transcending human understanding. Or as God's action in human history, continuing to give a divine meaning to all that history, without his ever being spoken of except in the act of his historic manifestation. There is no contradiction here any more than in the preceding ideas, but there is transition from a partial to a total viewpoint: in the one case we are trying to express in manifold statements and in objects of faith what is really transcendental; in the other, we are trying to contemplate the ever-present act of salvation which unites divine transcendence with immanence in history.

(*d*) The idea of *truth*, related to the preceding notions, lends itself to the same comments: either one will insist, in defining Christian truth, on the point of view of orthodoxy, or else, as our biblical vocabulary suggests, one will insist on the aspect of glory and fidelity, including of course orthodoxy as well. It is of the greatest importance that the 'katekhetes' should never lose sight of the fact that the truth he is transmitting is the truth of an infinite love giving itself, and that Christian doctrine can never be reduced to a body of propositions that can be separated from a personal message. Catechetic theology must take this need for granted. To-day the originality of Christianity is often questioned, either in connection with philosophic and classical wisdom or with reference to non-Christian religions. This is a salutary question which we think we can answer with the help of these assumptions of a catechetic theology. Every theology bears within itself the danger of drifting away from the Word of God, of losing something of its religious density, of forgetting what makes the perpetual originality of a reflection which should be inscribed within the

act of revelation. Therefore it seems important to us to look once more at the great ideas which express the essence of Christian reality, before proceeding to a theology which aims at sustaining the life of faith among Christians.

II. *The Great Aims of a Catechetic Theology*

What are the requirements of any real Christian catechesis? To answer this question will be to state at the same time the aims of a theology equal to sustaining Christian catechesis.

These essential requirements appear to us to be reducible to six.

(*i*) *Catechesis should present the different aspects of the mystery with the desire to reduce them to unity*, for a living faith, like all spiritual life, is sustained at first by synthesis. A catechesis which did not continually show the unity of Christianity would not bring to birth within men's hearts the one reality of the Word of God which reveals man to himself.

Consequently, catechetic theology will aim at showing (while keeping as faithfully as possible to the Word of God) the oneness of Revelation. Not according to logic, *a priori*, or in virtue of a philosophical necessity, but according to the logic of the salvific happenings by which God has inscribed his will and realized his presence in history. Historical events rarely show the coherence which links them together; but when these events are God's happenings, then sacred history becomes the bearer of a divine intention which unifies it, and it will be the work of theological contemplation to reconstitute this organic unity.

(*ii*) *The concrete logic of revelation leads us to place the mystery of Christ in the centre of catechesis.*

Jesus Christ is the fulness of the Word of God. This means that by Jesus Christ as a historical event God manifested his glory definitively in the heart of history, and that in him—by his resurrection—the kingdom has been actually founded. To be converted is to recognize the exact identity of Jesus Christ, to confess that God has made the fulness of divine power dwell in his historical humanity for the salvation of men.

A catechetic theology cannot but be Christo-centric. Jesus Christ being the subject to whom the whole content of the Word of God is attributed, whatever aspect of the Christian mystery is occupying us, it will always have to do with Christ. Such a theology will be able to sustain a catechesis which, while searching the depths of the Christian Creed, will always bring the believer back to the initial act of his conversion to Jesus Christ, an act which in some way no one ever gets beyond.

(*iii*) *Christian catechesis should allot to every aspect of the Christian mystery the structural place which belongs to it objectively in the totality of revelation.*

The 'katekhetes' is responsible for this inward poise of Christian reality in those to whom he transmits the datum of faith. This presupposes his theological reflection on the Christian mystery. The mystery of Jesus Christ can be analyzed only by constantly returning to its centre which is the Person of Christ, the whole faith is already contained in the complete confession of Christ's divine reality and analysis of the content of revelation continuously deepens the first act of faith. Consequently any particular aspect of the Christian mystery will be important in the degree in which it is closer to the centre of the mystery, and not because it lends itself all the more to curious research that revelation is more discreet about it . . . and not because the point is one about which there once was controversy . . . and not because it is in harmony with contemporary devotion. A treatise of catechetical theology could not, for instance, assign more space to the place of the Pope or of the Blessed Virgin than to the place of the Holy Ghost in the Church, to transubstantiation than to communion, to grace than to sin, etc. . . . This cuts us off at the same time from empty pseudo-speculative curiosity which is devoid of religious value and useless for salvation.

(*iv*) *Christian catechesis creates Christian fellowship.*

It addresses itself to a people, not to a number of individuals: it will bring out the ecclesiastical nature of the whole Christian mystery. As Christ is at the centre, the Kingdom is everywhere

present. There is no question here of a special aspect of the mystery that could be contained in one treatise among others, but of an aspect which must affect all the others.

(*v*) *Christian catechesis is inseparable from dogma, moral theology and liturgy.*

Because it is the same living Christ in whom we believe and who, in immediate dependence on faith, gives a new meaning to the whole life of the believer, and obliges him on his side to change his whole conduct. And it is again the same Christ who comes in the sacraments to consecrate by his vivifying presence all the believer's human situations and make them a part of the mystery.

Here the theologian's task will be to manifest the aspects of the Christian mystery by their significance, as much as, or more than, by explanation of their content. The meaning concerns the whole man and seizes him in his actions as much as in his convictions, whereas explanation addresses itself above all to the intellect. This will lead him to suggest living and personal analogies taken from human experience, rather than purely conceptual analogies, in order to penetrate the mystery of Christ. The conduct of God in Jesus Christ reveals human experience to itself and it dictates its laws at the very time when human experience reflected upon permits us to glimpse the meaning of love in faith. So we restore to anthropomorphism a place that the Bible grants it but theology has too often refused it. For human spirituality and intellectuality when they try to be conceptual are often confused with abstractions, whereas concrete spirituality is lived by the whole person.

Catecheses normally show in concrete cases doctrinal, moral or sacramental stress. But to prevent this from becoming a dangerous distinction, the task of catechetic theology will be to emphasize the unity of faith in Christ and the moral and sacramental actions involved.

(*vi*) *In its expression, catechesis ought to keep alive the traditional Christian language, while creating a modern vocabulary for it.*

There exists a vocabulary which is part of the patrimony of the Judaeo-Christian tradition. Everyone knows the important part played by language in creating fellowship and transmitting a spiritual tradition. When such a language has in addition the guarantee of biblical inspiration, we realize that one of the tasks of Christian catechesis will be to transmit it as a living heritage. We are thinking not so much of dogmatic formulae as of the great divisions of revelation: kingdom, life, glory, world, mission, mystery, etc. . . . on which Christians have to fix their thoughts. But such an effort will have as its necessary complement the creation of modern equivalents, by which Christian reality may be implanted in the minds and feelings of our contemporaries: on the level of expression we come back here to the search for living analogies mentioned above.

A catechetic theology should therefore strengthen itself with biblical theology, so that at the school of Scripture it may absorb the great themes that express the unvarying aspects of God's plan. Only in stability of its traditional roots can the Christian mystery forge modern expressions for itself. It will readily be granted that a work of theological reflection such as this could easily be superficial if it were improvised in the actual course of catechetic instruction; for it is not merely a question of rhetoric as people are apt to think, but really of theology.

III. *Plan of an Exposition of Catechetic Theology*

This plan is necessarily to be found in the thoughts we have just suggested. The centre of it (to be apprehended by the intellect) will be the kingship of Christ. Just as the progressive absorption of the faith starts from the fundamental acceptance of Christ, in the same way an exposition of catechetic theology will develop organically from the same unifying principle. The necessary systematization of all theology will restore what we called just now the concrete logic of revelation in Jesus Christ.

We have precedents for this: the first Christian centuries have bequeathed to us, in the baptismal credo, the outline of

their fundamental catechesis and their catechetic reflection. The difference has been rightly pointed out between this credo issuing from the daily pastoral life of the Church, and other formulae of faith composed during a period of technical controversies and chiefly about heresies. It simply proclaims what St Augustine said should be the object of catechesis: *mirabilia Dei*, the wonderful works of God's love, still being done among men. In the centre, Christ and his work of salvation, fulness of the word of God. Through Christ, revealing God's plan, there are manifested in their true meaning the fatherly power of God and the whole of his creation. In ever-present dependence on Christ, the action of the spirit in the Church is building the kingdom for which creation was willed. Such is the organic unfolding of the credo.

Using at the same time both the outline of the baptismal credo and that of liturgical life, I should like to propose a plan of catechetic theology in three parts:

(*i*) *Catechesis based on the Epiphany.* The mystery of Christ's person manifesting his Father's glory and his purpose for creation.

(*ii*) *Catechesis based on the Paschal Mystery.* After Christ's person, his resurrection, by which the work of salvation is realized in history and our human condition is transformed by its inclusion in Christ's risen person.

(*iii*) *Catechesis based on Pentecost.* Showing how Christ's personal passover expands into the Church-Kingdom, and continues by the Church-Institution, under the vivifying breath of the Holy Spirit until the return of the Lord.

It would be easy to show how every treatise in our manuals of scholastic theology finds its place in this rapidly sketched plan, with the added advantage of being explicitly animated by the sovereign mystery of Christ, source of all intelligibility for living faith. Evidently each of these catecheses needs the other two, which is merely a sign that the divine intention realized in Christ is entirely present from the first stage of its realization. But these stages are sufficiently distinct to leave room for successive presentation and for analytic reflection, without which there would be no serious theology.

Conclusions

I have not forgotten that the purpose of this exposition was to throw some light on the concrete problem of doctrinal training of nuns. Although I have not yet made any allusion to it, I have not lost sight of it. I shall now conclude by justifying myself:

It seems to me that the object of doctrinal training of religious is to give them the means of realizing the true unity of their life in the mystery of Christ: what was called in the past the *mystical life* and which consists of three inseparable elements: the gaze of faith, the moral imitation of Christ, and the taking part in Christian worship. This is true for all Christians, whatever be their state in life, therefore especially for consecrated Christians such as nuns, who need solid spiritual sustenance.

If their state in life is contemplative, catechetic theology will reanimate their meditation by bringing it back constantly and objectively to the essentials of the Christian mystery. It seems to me that the contemplative spirit is nourished first of all by a constant return, more and more simplified and with an ever-increasing qualitative intensity, to its fundamental object. The taste for specifically speculative theological research, besides concerning only certain relatively few minds gifted for metaphysical reflection, is not the first consideration in the contemplative life. And, indeed, I think that, when it occurs among nuns, this taste should be seriously examined: for there is a danger that theological studies, of a type more scientific than catechetic, might become an intellectual or merely an imaginative escapism, or even lead to illusions. Again one fears that feminine psychology might dispose nuns to hold with the same positiveness the things which have essential values in a theological systematization, and details which belong to the accidentals of a systematized thought, without referring to the concrete synthesis of the Christian mystery. In any case one may not link doctrinal training with intellectual systematization of religious thought; doctrinal training, in contrast with subjective spirituality, pious literature and religious impressionism, designates essentially a training based on the revealed word.

As for religious who devote themselves to apostolate, they will find in a catechetic theology sustenance for a positive testimony bearing its credentials in itself.

It is not for me to enter any further into practical methods of realizing the programme I have just roughly sketched; nor can I deal here with the requirements involved if it is to bear all its fruit.

It might be feared that such a theology might not be sufficiently educative, that it would not give enough intellectual exercise, nor sufficiently exact ideas. I understand this possible danger but am not inclined to give it much consideration in the case of theological reflection such as I have just described. Nor must people allow themselves to be taken in by the deceptive sense of security sometimes given to the mind by manuals of Christian doctrine, which are only mediocre by-products of scientific theology.

It is certain, however, that catechetic theology pre-supposes a minimum of metaphysical ideas and the assimilation of a dogmatic formulary. Probably the ideal would be for solid scholastic theology—leaving out some very specialized questions—to provide a synthesis of catechetic theology; in the same way as St Thomas conceived his *Summa* as an initiation subordinate to the master's teaching which consisted in 'reading' the Bible. Although this would be desirable for those responsible for the training of other nuns, it would not be possible for all. For the generality, it seems to me that the *Catechism of the Council of Trent*, which, incidentally, we do not use enough, would if briefly explained, constitute a good basis, and prevent the teaching of a catechetic theology from being received vaguely and inexactly.

Chapter IV

WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

By A. Motte, O.P. and A. Ple, O.P.

THE STUDY-DAYS that prepared this volume had evidently no authority to prescribe remedies. Nevertheless, there stand out from the discussions some reports and principles, facts and suggestions, which we should like to bring together here as conclusions. Again, they can be no more than suggestions with the sole aim of exciting some initiative which may be accepted and controlled by the hierarchy.

I. *Data of Problem*

(*i*) The contemporary phenomenon, christened more or less felicitously the 'promotion of woman', invited nuns to acquire a more advanced doctrinal training than they received in former times. The level of profane studies reached at present by most girls, their active role in professional, social and political life, the religious training given to militants of Catholic action, the quality of nuns' apostolic activity, all these require a solid doctrinal training for religious—in no way opposed, quite the contrary, to the requirements of faith and of their religious status. The directives and initiatives of the Sacred Congregation for Religious point in this direction, and thus the principle appears to us to be indisputable.

(*ii*) But this doctrinal training needs to be carefully adapted both to the common requirements of the religious state for women and to the widely differing ends proper to each institute; as also to the intellectual level and capacity of each sister and lastly, to the demands and the mentality of our time.

(a) Common requirements of the religious life for women

It would be a mistake to give nuns the same doctrinal training that seminarists receive. Nuns have no priestly ministry, they have not to preside over public worship, to distribute the sacraments, to rule a parish, to preach, etc. Their apostolic activity is in the order of bearing witness to their faith by the works of mercy, or else, at its highest, in the order of religious or catechetic teaching.

Nuns are women, whose intelligence and psychology are not suited to the same purposes as those of men.

Nuns are 'consecrated' women and are by profession vowed to evangelical perfection.

The pedagogy, the programmes and the aims of this training must therefore take these needs into careful consideration. Something new is called for.

This work of adaptation is as necessary as it is difficult of realization. It requires a great pedagogic effort for which we are not yet properly equipped. We shall not find the right formulae until we have done some exploring.

Whatever the result may be, this doctrinal training must aim at providing nuns not so much with theological luggage, as with theological culture, not so much with knowledge as with a 'habitus', in short: with wisdom. We must give them a sure judgment, able to taste and penetrate the things of God and we do *not* want to make them (except perhaps in exceptional cases) specialists in religious sciences. This theological wisdom is 'infused' (when it is the fruit of the virtue and of the gifts of the Holy Ghost), but there is also room for 'acquired' wisdom: that which comes from the knowledge of the things of God. (Cf. St Thomas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia pars, q.1, a.6, c. et ad 3 um.)

Doctrinal training of nuns must therefore aim at acquiring this twofold wisdom (hence the necessity of avoiding amateurishness and fulfilling the needs of serious and systematic work). It must aim also at acquiring the virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost (hence the importance attached to the teaching of the laws of evangelical perfection, of religious life, of union with God).

(*b*) *The scale of Institutes and of the intellectual level of each sister.*

The aims, the methods and the practical means of realization must be adapted to the special end of each institute: the doctrinal training of a contemplative cannot be thought out and realized in the same way as that of an active sister, and among the active institutes we must take into account the nature of the work to which they devote themselves; teaching and nursing nuns must receive not only a different kind of professional instruction, but also a doctrinal training adapted to their intellectual level and to their form of life.

Moreover, even in the same institute or the same monastery, the girls who enter the noviciate possess very different levels of culture and intellectual capacity. We must therefore think out a doctrinal teaching which should take into account at least three different levels: primary, secondary and university. There too, it would be useful to draw up for each of the three degrees, a curriculum, a pedagogy, and suitable means of adapting these.

(*c*) *The demands of our time and of our world.*

These demands cannot be neglected. Even the teaching, the most unchanging in its object, for it treats of eternal realities, must itself be renewed with a view to the renewal of the minds to which it is given and the ideological contexts that impose conditions on them.

We have been told of the pedagogic needs of present-day youth. We have to take into account its thirst for truth and sincerity, its horror of formulae and subtleties, its liking for team-work, as well as its weaknesses: inattentiveness, scepticism, pessimism, arrested development and want of balance.

But the needful bringing up-to-date does not concern only the methods of teaching: the content of the teaching must itself be renewed. For new data are intervening: divine data and human data dependent on the same providence. The former enrich the Christian mind directly: they are vital actions of the Church, such as the promotion of the laity, the missionary,

oecumenical, liturgical directives. The others, the scientific, philosophical, sociological, religious human data interest sacred science in the degree in which their appearance renews the statement of the problems or conditions their solution. To take an example, an explanation of the dogma of creation can no longer afford to ignore the scientific claims for the evolution of the world: moral theology meets with eugenics encroaching upon its domain; modern archaeological discoveries are reinforcing biblical exegesis. Neither history nor dogma nor ethics can be taught exactly as they were fifty years ago. Therefore, in order to respond fully to the needs and the demands of to-day's minds, as well as to its own dignity as true wisdom, traditional teaching, unchanging in its essence, requires to be presented in the light of the problems and of the resources that the development of modern thought has brought to the aid of theology.

In short, doctrinal training must be adapted (to the many requirements we have just enumerated) and arranged in grades. Thus in planning realizations we must turn not towards one, but several conclusions. The doctrinal training of religious in order to be suited to all must be of many kinds.

3. It would seem that the pedagogic principles common to these diverse realizations might be stated as follows:

(*a*) *Requirements common to all doctrinal training.*

Sacred doctrine is accessible to us through the Church which proposes and guarantees it in the name of the Apostles and of Christ. Reference to the living Church is therefore the first step in religious study.

Under the guidance of the Magisterium and starting from its authoritative directions, we have to absorb the deepest, the most complete and the most systematic knowledge of divine teaching.

Two ways of reaching this end present themselves.

(*a*) Divine teaching may be studied *in its historical ordering* by Providence throughout the ages: this is the history of revelation, including the history of the people of God and the history of the Church; one grasps the Word of God at its

source in the Bible and in its outpouring by the Church in the midst of humanity.

(*b*) Divine teaching may be studied *in its doctrinal content* arranged in a coherent whole and composing a Christian vision of the world and of life.

The same point of Christian teaching, for example, the beatific vision, may thus be studied from two standpoints. In the perspective of Bible history, we follow the development of the doctrine of reward and punishment through the Old and New Testaments, then through Christian reflection on these data, ending in the fourteenth century (when errors crop up), with the definition of Benedict XII, reaffirmed by the Council of Florence. In the doctrinal perspective, on the contrary, we try to grasp as completely as possible what this intuitive vision of God is that the elect enjoy, what are its conditions, its extent, its content and we consider this dogma in its connection with other dogmas: the immediate creation of the soul by God, predestination, grace, redemption, Eucharist, hell. . . .

This twofold study, historic and speculative, pursued in the light of faith, necessarily presupposes the help of auxiliary human studies: languages, archaeology, exegesis, historical sciences on the one hand, philosophical notions and scientific data on the other, all necessary for the production of a Christian synthesis. There is no such thing as a serious theological culture without a proportionate intellectual equipment.

(*b*) *Requirements proper to the doctrinal training of nuns*

It is for the religious of to-day that the suitable teaching must be prepared. Hence three special requirements:

(*a*) *The needs of the feminine mind* have been mentioned above. It is especially important to take into account women's physical and nervous limitations also her psychological coherence in which all her faculties function in close interdependence; and her more intuitive and concrete turn of mind which is more interested in life than in ideas.

(*b*) *The needs of religious life* have also been mentioned here. These, of course, differ according as we think of contemplative or directly apostolic life. Christian life has, as it were, three

dimensions, which must always be dealt with simultaneously: adherence to doctrine, participation in divine worship, practice of Christian law. Study for nuns, like catechism for children, cannot be carried on without regard to the other dimensions of their lives. The doctrinal effort must be harmoniously inserted into the whole which we call religious life, not only without ousting other efforts (liturgical or sacramental, ascetic, mystical, apostolic) but by throwing light on them and using them as supports.

(*c*) *Practical types*

The requirements we have just analysed in theory need to be fulfilled simultaneously in concrete formulae adapted to the different levels of culture. It would seem that, in practice, the educational organization to be recommended ought to be directed, at any level required, towards the following four objective points:

1. *Teaching unified* in a specifically theological light: it is essentially important to learn what God says of God, and all the rest in the same perspective: God who reveals and God who reveals himself through everything. Philosophy especially must be set in her proper place as *ancilla theologiae*, not making a separate whole as though a world without grace and sin, without the Trinity, the Incarnation, and the Redemption really existed. The indispensable philosophical knowledge should always be presented in its specific role and with its specific value, and when possible in connection with the theological effort it is called upon to support (as, for example, St Thomas speaks of the One, the Good, the True, in the Ia Pars) in connection with the study of the divine attributes. Exegesis and history should be used similarly. As for the diverse parts of theological teaching, their distinction should never make us lose sight of the deep oneness which holds them together and the coherent whole they constitute: the pupils must really be initiated into a wisdom, *the* true wisdom.

2. *Living teaching*. There are dangers to be avoided: naturally the unverifiable nature of the doctrine taught and the indisputable character of the teaching authority lead to a certain passivity on the part of the auditor, as well as to word—

unreality or mere hair-splitting; logical deduction with no contact with reality thus to a theology that will be anachronistic, or rather *a*chronistic, timeless, without any grip on the fact of existence.

Yet one would set out upon a fatal road were one to try to make theology come alive by means of appeals to the feelings, and by suggesting doubts or substituting experimental research for docile adherence to the Magisterium or by trying to measure everything according to the criteria of practical usefulness.

The solution is to be looked for in the well-articulated efforts that combine to form theological wisdom.

At the basis, through the living Church of to-day, there must be permanent contact with the biblical and traditional starting-point, that is to say, beyond text and formulae, with the great realities with which our faith is in touch: our Lord, God's great friends in the Old and New Testaments, the Church, heaven, God one and three, who acts and reveals himself in time.

From that opening a solid systematization will present things in their order and their truth, as St Thomas did in his *Summa*, by means of a sober, supple and firm use of the best acquisitions of human thought.

Lastly, at the end of the effort, there must be connection with vital problems and especially with those proper to religious, which will be essentially those of religious and apostolic life: this is the whole concrete perspective that will be lit up by the doctrinal training, thanks to the practical as well as speculative value of the theology.

3. *Personal work, with help.* Well-arranged courses, presenting the unified and living knowledge of which we have just spoken, are the first requirement of a good doctrinal training, but not the only one. The sisters must certainly be encouraged to make a personal effort of reflection and assimilation, animated by home work, reports of lectures, personal research on texts, discussions, summaries, oral expositions, proportioned to each one's ability. This obviously assumes that the sisters will be allowed time, and have books at their disposal, and that each one's work is personally supervised. This last point seems especially important: coaches, not necessarily the teachers

themselves, could prevent the sisters from losing their time in useless gropings and from leaving gaps which will be a nuisance later. This would also encourage the sisters to make the best use of their own mental resources in view of the greater success of their effort.

4. *A balanced student life.* All the specifically students' effort of which we have been speaking must be inserted into the heart of the religious life, as a living thing, if it is to bear any fruit. Division of time between diverse occupation risks producing a state of mind among the sisters which would prevent their giving themselves to study as much as they should and without any pricks of conscience. This difficulty *must* be overcome by a correct idea of what a student nun is—a *nun* always and before anything else. As such she takes part in the life of prayer, in office, in the common observances, in the sisterly life, in the service of the community, perhaps even in a very restricted degree, in the apostolate and the concrete search for God organized by that religious life, which should seem to her to converge into her student life. But she is a *student* nun; within the common 'professional' duty, she has a special duty of her state which is study: she should be able to give herself to it with all necessary studious care and professional conscientiousness, encouraged and supported by her superiors and by a sisterly environment able to understand and appreciate her effort. To allow for the specific needs of a student life certain dispensations might be granted, or better still the convent time-tables might be altered (timetables are made for the sisters, not the sisters for timetables). The superiors can solve these problems experimentally with the advice of the teachers, and with an intelligent, motherly solicitude for the sisters going through this important and delicate period of their training.

II. *The Solutions*

1. *Utilize, intensify, improve what already exists.*
Many practical realizations already exist, which allow nuns to acquire a valuable doctrinal training. Even if these realizations are not perfect they are indisputably useful. Also there is no

reason why they should not be improved when an opportunity occurs.

It is desirable that even now all the resources which are at the disposal of nuns should be fully realized: the Institute Superior of religious sciences at Rome, the Institute Superior for doctrinal training of nuns at the Institute Catholique at Paris, the courses planned for them in the different Instituts Catholiques of France, and in certain dioceses, congregations and monasteries.

Let me mention here the importance of libraries containing books and reviews. In many congregations and monasteries there is still an effort to be made in the direction of renewing, enriching, and bringing the libraries up-to-date and making it easy for the sisters to utilize them.

Lastly, we hope that the clergy will take to heart more and more their work for religious, and that they will help the superiors effectively, not only to fulfil the obligations of Canon 509, 2 (which recommmends a 'pious exhortation' to the community every fortnight), but also to secure a more doctrinal teaching.

A movement in this direction is beginning among the clergy, from which a happy result may be expected.[1]

2. *New realizations.*

Much time will certainly be needed for finding the many practical solutions of which we may be dreaming. Three of them have stood out during these days of study and it is perhaps possible to outline them roughly.

1. *Teachers training schools of sacred doctrine.* At present it does not seem possible for the clergy to give all nuns the doctrinal training they require. It does seem possible for the big congregations to find in their own communities nuns able to receive a theological training sufficiently advanced for them to teach their sisters sacred doctrine in the primary and secondary degree, of course under the supervision of the hierarchy and of theologians.

These training schools for theology should fulfil the condi-

[1] Cf. The Congress, Sept. 1953, and the *Directoire des Prêtres chargés des religieuses*. (Ed. du Cerf.) English translation in preparation (Blackfriars Publications).

tions for adaptation which we have pointed out. It would perhaps be possible to group student sisters from different congregations in a convent especially arranged for this and situated near a Catholic university. Such houses exist here and there abroad for sisters studying profane subjects, which proves that the practical difficulties they present are not insuperable.[1] The sisters would find there library, seminary, coaches, tutors and, above all, an atmosphere of prayer and religious life, very necessary for assuring all the advantages of their training.

2. *Correspondence courses.* To secure doctrinal teaching at all but especially at the secondary level, one might organize correspondence courses on the model of what is being done in England.

These courses even seem the only possible solution for contemplatives. They should not only send printed or roneotyped lectures, but direct each religious by indicating and supervising the necessary reading, giving and correcting 'home-work', in a word the teachers should also be 'tutors'. Perhaps for contemplatives, the religious who are assistants of the federations of contemplative nuns might exercise this function, either in person or with the aid of their brethren.

3. *Summer Courses.* In America and in England, summer courses have already proved their usefulness and their comparative facility of organization. The activity of the three unions, the organization of 'months' of retreat and study for superiors, have shown our sisters' spirit of fraternal collaboration so clearly that we may hope to see an initiative of this kind beginning soon.

We quite understand that these realizations, and others in the same order are not easy to start. They exact, especially from the superiors general, great generosity, for it is obvious that these months or years devoted to the doctrinal training of their religious lengthen the years of formation, add to the financial burdens of the congregation and postpone the date

[1] At Milan, the religious of various Institutes who follow the lectures at the University of the Sacred Heart, live together in a religious house (Castel Nuovo, Fogliani) the regulations of which have been approved by the Sacred Congregation for Religious. An initiative of the same kind exists in New Zealand (Normal School of the religious of Loreto Hall) in England, in Belgium, etc. (Cf., *Caritas*, Bulletin of former pupils of the Sacred Heart in France, February, 1953, pp. 14–18).

when the sisters may be of service in the institute's good works. But the superiors-general cannot but see that by making this effort they will assure the future of their congregation, the quality and quantity of their recruitment and the apostolic value of their function in the Church. We have no doubt that with the encouragement of the hierarchy, congregations and monasteries will soon assure the doctrinal training of their religious and continue to assure it better and better.

If we measure the immense strength represented by the world of nuns, its generosity, its resources of intelligence and faith, one may believe that the good direction of its doctrinal training will be extremely fruitful.