

is a very real need for Catholic social scientists to undertake this work. It is to be hoped that too many young Catholics entering our universities will not be put off by the idea current in some quarters that the social sciences are more dangerous to their faith than any other discipline.

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## THE VATICAN DOGMA

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**A** HUNDRED years ago there were four fairly well defined attitudes in the Catholic Church to the question of the papal prerogatives, and to infallibility in particular. First of all there was the Gallican position. Gallicanism, though still strong, had been on the wane in France since the revolution. It may be described—perhaps not quite fairly—as the idea of a constitutional Church in the interests of an absolute monarch. It was really the residue of the late medieval conciliar theory propounded at the Councils of Constance (1415-18) and Basle (1431), carried over into the post-renaissance Europe of absolute rulers. It is conveniently summarized in the four Gallican articles drawn up in 1682 and which (1) reject the pope's power of deposing princes and of interfering in civil affairs; (2) assert the validity of the decrees of Constance (never ratified by any pope) on the authority of general councils over the pope; (3) declare that the exercise of papal authority is to be regulated by the canons, and in France by the customs of the Gallican Church; and (4) declare that in matters of faith and morals, while the pope has the chief part, his judgments are not irreformable of themselves, but only if ratified by the consent of the Church.

At the Vatican Council there was only one full-blooded Gallican bishop present, Maret, and he submitted to the Council's definitions.

The contrary position to Gallicanism was the Ultramontane. It held to the papal, as opposed to the conciliar, view of papal authority. It had been clearly formulated by St Robert Cardinal Bellarmine at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The pope, as head of the Church on earth, is above general councils. It is his right alone to convoke and approve councils. Their acts and decrees have no validity unless confirmed by him. The pope is supreme judge

in questions of faith and morals; and when he teaches the whole Church on these questions, he cannot err.

The pope's dogmatic infallibility, however, does not render councils otiose, for the pope still needs to use ordinary human means to form his judgment, and among such useful means are the deliberations of councils. Furthermore, dogmatic definitions of faith depend upon the Church's apostolic tradition and upon the sense of the local Churches; they are statements, clarifications, of this tradition and sense; and one of the most proper means of ascertaining what is the Church's sense and tradition on any question is the convocation of a council.

This Ultramontane position was going to be proved, in fact, by the Vatican Council to be the authentic Catholic doctrine. Gallicanism after 1870 ceased to be a tenable doctrinal position. But there was a third attitude to the question, too often confused with this Bellarminian Ultramontanism, which developed mightily in the years preceding the Council, and which Abbot Butler names neo-Ultramontanism. It was really more of an emotional, devotional attitude to the Holy See than a theological position: Ultramontanism confused and sloganized by untheological minds. But this only made it the more disconcerting when it threatened to dominate the theological scene. The names associated with it are those of Ward, Manning, and the French journalist Louis Veillot. They tended to confuse infallibility with inspiration, even with impeccability. Thus 'Ward held explicitly that infallibility often amounts to a new inspiration. He did not shrink from saying that dogmatic bulls were to be accepted as the word of God. . . . His attitude to encyclicals and allocutions was much like the Protestant attitude to the Bible.'<sup>1</sup> One quotation from Veillot will suffice: 'We all know certainly only one thing, and that is that no man knows anything except the Man with whom God is for ever, the Man who carries the thought of God'.<sup>2</sup> This amounts to maintaining that no Catholic may think anything about the faith unless the pope has thought it first. It is really genuine Ultramontanism stood on its head, because the genuine doctrine reserves the *last* word to the ultimate judge of faith and morals, but not the first.

Not unnaturally many sober and responsible bishops and theologians were frightened by this tendency. In opposition to it there gradually formed the body of opinion known as Inopportunist. Their leader was the bishop of Orleans, Dupanloup, and they were represented in England above all by Newman. They were not

<sup>1</sup> Cuthbert Butler. *The Vatican Council*, p. 74.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 75.

Gallicans; they would most of them have subscribed to Bellarmine's statement of doctrine. But they were so disconcerted by the extravagances of the neo-Ultramontanes, clamouring for a definition of infallibility, that they were driven to oppose any definition as being theologically, not only politically, inopportune. It would, they feared, give the sanction of authority to devout demagogues of the Veuillot type and their impossible papolatry. A definition would have the effect of separating the pope from the Church, or—what amounts to the same thing—of identifying the essence of the Church with the pope; *l'Eglise, c'est moi* would henceforth be the guiding principle, and bishops would find themselves all of a sudden no more than papal officials and yes-men; theology, the vital penetration by the Christian mind of the mysteries of faith, would be reduced to the dead and abject registration of pontifical oracles.

Of such a sort were the fears that agitated even staunch Catholics like Dupanloup and Newman; such were the illusory forebodings that drove a proud man like Döllinger out of the Church; such, in the mind of many Protestant critics, are to this day the fancied consequences of the Vatican definition.

The Vatican Council opened then with the prospect of a triangular contest. Gallicanism was not really an issue. The field was divided between Ultramontanism in the centre, neo-Ultramontanism on one side of it, and Inopportunism on the other. Let us see how these three theological attitudes have affected, and are reflected in, the final definition.

Papal infallibility is defined in the fourth chapter of 'The First Dogmatic Constitution on the Church of Christ', the constitution *Pastor Aeternus*. This first constitution on the Church was not followed by a second, as had been planned. Moreover, when it became clear that the Council was unlikely to complete its programme, the proposed *schema* for a constitution on the Church was so re-arranged as to bring forward the subject of the papacy at the beginning of the statement of Catholic doctrine on the Church, instead of in its natural place in the middle. If this had not been done, the revealed doctrine of papal authority and infallibility would not have been defined at all; that it was done represents the triumph of the neo-Ultramontanes over the Inopportunistes. At the same time it has to be realized that the Vatican Council's dogmatic definition is *professedly* incomplete, and that while the sketch of the dogma's context or background given in the constitution itself is indeed inadequate, this background or context is still there in current, though 'undefined', Catholic tradition; and that the Vatican Council's unfinished and hastily re-arranged proceedings

were not intended to erase this tradition, nor must they be regarded as so doing.

This is clear from the preamble of *Pastor Aeternus*, which does serve to localize the papacy in its proper doctrinal context. It runs:

The eternal shepherd and bishop of our souls, in order to perpetuate the saving work of redemption, decreed the building of a holy Church in which all the faithful might be held together by the bond of one faith and charity. . . . Just as he sent the apostles, therefore, as he himself had been sent by the Father, so also it was his will that there should be shepherds and teachers in his Church till the end of the world. But in order that the episcopate might be one and undivided, and that 'by the mutual solidarity of the high priests the whole multitude of believers might be preserved in unity of faith and communion, he set blessed Peter before the other apostles, and established in him the abiding principle and visible foundation of each unity' [sc. of faith and of communion-charity].<sup>3</sup>

Here the papal primacy is set in the context of the episcopate, and the episcopate in the context of the Church; there is a pope for the sake of the bishops and bishops for the sake of the faithful—all three grades simultaneously instituted by Christ. This preamble represents a modest but important success for the Inopportunist, in that it meets one of their main fears, that the definition would set the pope over against the Church and the bishops, and reduce the status of bishops in the Church to that of mere papal functionaries. In the draft text of the constitution (as also in the original *schema* before the re-arrangement already mentioned) the opening account of the Church's institution by Christ proceeded immediately from the Church to the papacy, without mentioning the bishops or the apostles at all. The impression of the Church thus given would be of a vast level plain dominated by a single tower; of a sea of faces massed indiscriminately in St Peter's Square, all looking up to one lonely figure, and one alone. That was indeed the neo-Ultramontane vision of the Church; it remains the devotional emotional picture of the Church, reflected in the popular Catholic press, to the present day; after all, it is no more easy than it is necessary or desirable to be emotionally, devotionally, affected towards the episcopate at large. But the episcopate *has* a divinely appointed place in the Church that no over-simplified popular devotion to the Holy See can take away from it; and this place is acknowledged and guaranteed in the final text of the Vatican decree.

The fourth chapter of *Pastor Aeternus* is entitled 'On the Infallible

<sup>3</sup> St Leo. *Sermon IV, on the anniversary of his elevation*; PL. 54, 150.

Magisterium of the Roman Pontiff'. The first draft read simply 'On the Roman Pontiff's Infallibility'. The alteration was made because in some languages—they had German in mind—the translation of *infallibilitas* cannot clearly distinguish between infallibility and impeccability unless there is a qualifying word to limit the *infallibilitas* in question to teaching—to what the pope says as distinct from what he does. A more important consideration was that 'infallibility' by itself might be taken to signify a permanent quality of mind inherent in the Roman Pontiff, just as agility, equability, humility, sensibility, are permanent qualities inherent in the agile, equable, humble, or 'sensible' person. But the Roman Pontiff enjoys no inherent habit or virtue of infallibility. He is not infallible while he is having his dinner or taking a nap, as a person endowed with wisdom or humility is still wise or humble in such circumstances. What the pope is assured of is such divine assistance as will make his *teaching* infallible, when and where he actually teaches. To say that the pope is infallible is not indeed untrue, but it is an imprecise statement of truth that can be misleading. It is his *teaching*, his *magisterium*, that is defined by this decree as infallible.

The chapter has four paragraphs leading up to the actual definition. The first rehearses some of the authorities for the doctrine from scripture and tradition, the second is a summary description of the manner in which the Roman Pontiffs have exercised their infallible *magisterium*, in terms which mark yet another concession to the fears of the Inopportunist. Here are the key sentences:

Therefore the bishops of the whole world, now singly, now assembled in synods . . . , sent word to this Apostolic See of those dangers especially which sprang up in matters of faith, 'that the losses of faith might there be most effectually repaired where the faith cannot fail'.<sup>4</sup> And the Roman Pontiffs, according to the exigences of times and circumstances, sometimes assembling ecumenical councils, or asking for the mind of the Church scattered throughout the world, sometimes using other helps which divine providence supplied, defined as to be held those things which with the help of God they had recognized as conformable with the sacred Scriptures and apostolic traditions. For the Holy Spirit was not promised to the successors of Peter that by his revelation they might make known new doctrine, but that by his assistance they might inviolably keep and faithfully expound the revelation or deposit of faith delivered through the apostles.

Two important points are made here; that the pontifical *magis-*

<sup>4</sup> St Bernard. *Letter* 190. PL. 182, 1053.

*terium* is not exercised without any reference to the responsibilities of the bishops as witnesses and judges of doctrine; and that the divine assistance given to the Roman Pontiffs is in *no sense* an inspiration or new revelation. The Inopportunist, however, had wanted something more than this. They had wanted to have embodied in the definition itself what might almost be called constitutional conditions for the exercise of the supreme and infallible *magisterium*, such as that the pope must use the advice and seek the help of the universal Church before he can teach infallibly. But this was very properly rejected, because they were not engaged in emending the Church's constitution (which neither pope nor council has any power to do), but in defining a particular point of that constitution as it was established by Christ himself.

There are two more short preliminary paragraphs, stating first the purpose of what is called 'this charism of truth and never-failing faith conferred upon Peter and his successors'—to call infallibility a charism is to assimilate it to those *gratiae gratis datae*, such as the gift of tongues, mentioned in I Corinthians xii; and secondly the present necessity for solemnly defining it. And then we come to the actual definition, which it would be as well to gloss in full.

We teach and define that it is a dogma divinely revealed: that the Roman Pontiff, when he speaks *ex cathedra*, that is when in discharge of the office of pastor and teacher of all Christians . . . 'When he speaks *ex cathedra*, etc.', is inserted in order to make it clear that we are concerned with the pope as a public person discharging an office, not as a private person; he enjoys the *charism* of infallible *magisterium* in virtue of his office, and when he is discharging his office, and not otherwise. We should note that this clause does not impose a condition limiting the exercise of the infallible *magisterium*, as the Inopportunist would have liked, but merely states a sign by which we may tell whether or no it is being exercised. Like all signs, it is not always clear.

. . . by virtue of his supreme apostolic authority he defines a doctrine regarding faith or morals to be held by the universal Church . . . ,

The infallible *magisterium* of the pope which the Council is defining is extremely narrow; it is limited to *ex cathedra* definition. I can think of only one papal utterance since 1870 which comes within the scope of the Vatican dogma, the definition of the Assumption by Pius XII. Thus *defined* infallibility is limited to what we might call papal last words of the most solemn sort. But the decree goes on to identify the pope's infallibility with that of the

Church. This has never been precisely defined, but it is theologically certain, something no Catholic may lawfully deny, that the Church's infallibility has a far wider scope than dogmatic definitions of faith and morals; though precisely how wide is a matter of argument. It follows that over and beyond what this decree obliges us to believe *as of faith* about papal infallibility, we have to acknowledge its wider extension; for example to condemnations of errors and to decisions on dogmatic facts such as Anglican orders. But the exact mode of this extension has yet to be clarified and defined. The decree continues:

. . . by the divine assistance promised to him in blessed Peter is possessed of that infallibility with which the divine Redeemer willed that his Church should be endowed for defining doctrine regarding faith or morals; and that therefore such definitions of the Roman Pontiff are irreformable of themselves, and not as a result of the Church's consent.

This last phrase, 'and not as a result of the Church's consent', is a direct refutation of the fourth Gallican article. It was added literally at the last minute, almost as an afterthought, as though to make sure of nailing Gallicanism for good. And this indeed it has done.

## PERSONAE

### 7. Dom Lambert Beauduin

(†11 January 1960)

IT might seem excessive to claim that a Belgian diocesan congress, held fifty years ago, could mark a decisive date in the history of the Church. But it was the Congress called at Liège in 1909 to further an interest in the Liturgy, inspired by a young monk of Mont César, Dom Lambert Beauduin, that was the true beginning of the modern liturgical revival, and the radical changes of recent years have their root in his prophetic understanding of the authentic place of the liturgy in the life of the Church. He freed the Liturgy from all that was antiquarian or derived: he saw it as the *Piété de l'Eglise* (the title of his first and fundamental book) and St Pius X found in him the most faithful interpreter of his intention to restore the Liturgy to the Church as its 'most authentic form of Christian piety'.

It was small wonder that the *Centre de Pastorale Liturgique*, and the vigorous pastoral-liturgical movement that grew up in France after