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THE PROBLEM OF PASTORAL THEOLOGY

SUMMARIUM

In hac aetate Ecclesiae valde floret theologia 'pastoralis'. Id explicatur ex praeoccupationibus practicis aevi nostri, etiam in sphaera religiosa et morali, ex influxu theologiae 'kerygmaticae', ex indole praesertim pastoralis Concilii Vaticani II. Manet tamen quaestio num theologia pastoralis sit species theologiae vere *scientifica* vel potius nomen commune ad regulas practicas ministerii pastoralis designandas (*ars* potius quam *scientia*).

1. Vox 'pastoralis' immediate desumitur ex Novo Testamento. Christus, qui venit ut homines « vitam habeant et abundanter habeant », est Bonus Pastor (Ioan. 10, 1-21). Ecclesia ministerium 'pastorale' exercet in quantum continuat missionem Christi vivificantem. Attamen nulla exulta est theologia explicita et systematica functionis pastoralis Ecclesiae, sive a Patribus sive a magnis scholasticis aevi medii.

2. S. Thomas expresse agnoscit duas formas 'doctrinae' in Ecclesia: « doctrinam scholasticam » et « doctrinam praedicationis, quae ad praelatos pertinet ». Doctrina scholastica investigat verbum Dei in quantum est *verum*, doctrina autem praedicationis communicat illud verbum in quantum est *bonum* et *salutiferum*. Doctrina scholastica *non* est ex se doctrina praedicationis neque constituit theologiam directe pastorem.

3. Auctor principalis theologiae pastoralis modernae est J. M. Sailer (1751-1832). Prima fundamenta iecit theologiae dynamicae ordinatae ad actionem divinae oeconomiae salutis in mundo.

4. Hodie theologi pastores oeconomiam salutis sub aspectu speciali *historiae* salutis pertractant. *Historicitatem* exsistentiae humanae in genere et ordinis gratiae in specie in lucem proferunt. Theologia pastoralis praesupponit *principia* seu *veritates* quae exponuntur in theologia dogmatica, morali, etc.: agit ipsa de actione seu vivificatione horum principiorum in vita humana concreta, historica.

5. Iustificatio theologiae pastoralis ut formae theologiae veri nominis et relative autonomae invenitur in verbis Ioannis XXIII: « Est enim aliud ipsum depositum Fidei, seu *veritates*, quae veneranda doc-

trina nostra continentur, aliud *modus*, quo eadem enuntiantur, eodem tamen sensu eademque sententia. *Huic quippe modo plurimum tribuendum* erit et patienter, si opus fuerit, in eo elaborandum; scilicet eae inducendae erunt rationes res exprimendi, quae cum magisterio, cuius indoles praesertim pastoralis est, magis congruant ».

Pastoral theology and its allied sciences — pastoral liturgy, pastoral psychology, pastoral sociology, and so on — are very much the fashion today. In the years following the Second World War the volume of writing on 'pastoral' subjects of all kinds increased enormously by comparison with pre-war production in this field of theology. Year by year, at least as many books and articles of a 'pastoral' character appeared as, say, in the field of moral theology in the strict sense: indeed works of moral theology itself took on a 'pastoral' quality and tone, addressing themselves to the heart and spirit of contemporary men coping with moral problems rather than to the direct and impersonal analysis of the problems themselves. A similar 'pastoral' *élan* ran through the field of dogmatic theology. It was now expected of the dogmatic theologian that he should deal with his subject 'existentially' and not merely quidditatively: he must touch the heart and enkindle the spirit, not merely enlighten the mind, of his readers.

A good deal of this pastoral writing, whether in the form of directly pastoral theology or in that of pastorally-slanted dogmatic and moral theology, was of mediocre quality; but much of it was of a very high quality indeed. The origins of this irruption of acute and highly contemporary pastoral concern into academic theology were chiefly two. First, the post-war world *wanted* this kind of theology: it was greatly preoccupied with problems of Christian existence in the modern world of technological construction and destruction, and little interested in abstract principles, theological or otherwise. Secondly, the way had been already prepared for the pastoral development of theology by the 'kerygmatic' movement¹ initiated on a large scale before the war by the publication of Jungmann's *Die Frohbotschaft und unsere Glaubensverkündigung*², H. Rahner's

¹ Cf. E. KAPPLER, *Die Verkündigungstheologie* (Fribourg 1949).

² Regensburg 1936.

*Eine Theologie der Verkündigung*³, and other creative works from the 'Innsbruck school'. The 'kerygmatic' orientation of theology, corrected and improved on some points by the criticisms made of it by 'essentialist' theologians, grew in strength and depth in the post-war years, and provided both theological stimulus and substance for the pastoral approach to theology in general, and to moral theology in particular, which was already well established before the convocation of the Second Vatican Council⁴.

From the outset John XXIII traced a general line for the Council to adopt and pursue, and it was unquestionably a line that commended itself to pastoral and pastoral-minded theologians.

« What is needed at the present time is that the whole Christian doctrine in its integrity be universally accepted with renewed zeal and with peaceful and tranquil minds... What is required and what all sincere lovers of the Christian Catholic apostolic ideal ardently crave is that this same doctrine be more widely known and more deeply understood, and that men's spirits be more fully imbued with it and formed in it. *It is essential that this doctrine... be studied and explained in accordance with the needs of our own age* »⁵.

Paul VI has continued to envisage the work of the Council on the same lines. While « very important points of doctrine » must be kept in view, nevertheless the special importance of the Council lies in the fact that it enables the Church « to study deeply and collectively all the practical and pastoral questions that concern her. »⁶ Conciliar discussions and theological comments on them have in fact kept the pastoral view-point uppermost throughout. The main preoccupation is not with the quidditative

³ Freiburg 1939.

⁴ Cf. L. DE CONINCK, *Les orientations actuelles de la théologie pastorale*, NRT 76 (1954), p. 134-42.

⁵ AAS 54 (1962), p. 785-6. The translation is the official one: underlining mine.

⁶ Allocution to the Italian Episcopal Conference, April 15, 1964, reported in the *Osservatore Romano* of that date. « Esso (the Council) è un'occasione unica e felice perché la Chiesa possa studiare profondamente e collettivamente tante sue questioni pratiche e pastorali specialmente, ma non senza diretti riferimenti anche a punti di dottrina molto importanti ».

truth of propositions but with the practical working of the Church's life in the contemporary world — not so much with the « What? » as with the « How? » of theology.

The kind of theology that results from asking the question « How? » rather than « What? » in theological matters is taken to be and is called pastoral theology. But what exactly is the *theological* nature of this theology? Does it form a coherent theological whole? Is it a *scientific* form of theology resting on a firm basis of principles, or is it rather a general term covering all the practical methods and techniques by which people are led and helped to live the Christian life (an *art* rather than a science)? If it does constitute a relatively autonomous form of theology, what exactly is the relationship between it and other theological disciplines? Pastoral and pastoral-minded theologians have much to say nowadays about pastoral psychology, sociology, and so on. How does their theology (if pastoral theology *is* theology in a scientific sense) reach out to embrace all these fields? In particular, where does moral theology end and pastoral theology begin? Is moral theology to *become* pastoral theology, while still perhaps calling itself moral theology? If it does, is there not a danger that its character as a theology of moral *principles* will be subordinated to its function as a stimulant to the personal Christian life of those for whose benefit the moral theologian is writing?⁷ These and similar questions that might be asked about the contemporary pastoral movement in theology constitute the *problem* of pastoral theology. This article will try to explain the historical and theological background of the problem, and to suggest a theological solution of it.

I

The adjective 'pastoral' as a description of the life-giving work of the Church among men derives directly from Scripture and particularly from the New Testament use of the 'shepherding' metaphor in relation to Christ (cf. John 10, 1-21: 1 Pet. 5, 4:

⁷ Cf. the criticism of J.B. GILLON, *La théologie morale et l'éthique de l'exemplarité personnelle*, ANGELICUM 34 (1957), p. 241-59, 361-78.

Heb. 13, 20), Peter (John 21, 15-19), and others (cf. Eph. 4, 11). Christ came that men «may have life and have it abundantly» (John 10, 10): he was the «good shepherd» (*poimen, pastor*) of men.⁸ In continuing the life-giving mission of Christ the Church exercises a 'pastoral' function dependent on and perpetuating His: it is a summing-of of her whole life and mission in the world. This has always been an assumption of ecclesiology and of ecclesial action in the Church from the beginning; though the idea of a specific theology of her pastoral mission is barely sketched in the so-called 'pastoral trilogy' of the Patristic period (St. Gregory Nazianzen's *De fuga sua*, St. John Chrysostom's *De sacerdotio*, and St. Gregory the Great's *Liber regulae pastoralis*). The need for a specifically pastoral theology was not distinctly felt because the pastoral character of *all* theology was assumed: it was the response of the thinking Church to the actual demands of her mission and work in the world. Even the most speculative thinking of the Fathers on the mysteries of the Incarnation and the Trinity is linked to the pastoral needs of their time: its history cannot be written without constant reference to the historical contexts out of which it grew and in which it developed.⁹ Like Scripture the Fathers offered not abstract but saving truth to men — truth destined to bear fruit in concrete Christian life and action.

The growth of scholastic theology from the 11th century on brought the academic mind into theology — a mind intent on the «What?» of things. Truth in theology was now pursued as truth, without direct reference to the concrete pursuit of the good, in his own life or in that of the Church, by the theologian. He was of course expected to pursue the good also, and theology supplied him with an understanding of what he should do for this purpose, as far as essential *principles* were concerned; but the concrete process of vivifying these principles in practice, the dynamic actualisation of the divine plan of salvation in personal and ecclesial life — these did not belong to the realm of scholastic

⁸ Cf. N. CAVATASSI, *De munere pastoris in Novo Testamento* VERB. DNI 29 (1951), p. 215-27, 275-85.

⁹ Cf. J. LEBRETON, *Histoire du dogme de la Trinité* (7 ed. Paris 1926).

theology as such. As a *science* of theology, scholastic theology far outstripped such systematisations of theology as the Fathers had achieved, and moreover it corresponded to a real pastoral need of the time: the spirit of logical inquiry and analysis was awake in Europe again and men *wanted* an analytic and «disputative» theology, metaphysically anchored, transcending the ebb and flow of history. When the great scholastics read and studied for their spiritual enrichment, they turned to the Fathers¹⁰ and above all to Scripture,¹¹ the direct, life-giving and theological word of God.

Accordingly, for St. Thomas, scholastic theology — theology pursued academically and scientifically — is not and cannot be the *whole* of theology. It is one of two forms of theology in the Church, the other being *doctrina praedicationis*, which aims directly at the spiritual good of men.¹² The first kind of theology is expounded by *magistri theologiae*, the second by those who are entrusted with the office of preaching in the Church.¹³ The root of the modern concept of kerygmatic and (more broadly) pastoral preaching, and ultimately of the modern concept of pastoral theology, far from being a departure from St. Thomas's understanding of the nature and function of theology, is already contained in his clear distinction between the two kinds of theology.

Doctrina praedicationis, the teaching that is imparted by preaching, was not subjected to analysis and synthesis *in its own*

¹⁰ CASSIAN'S *Collations* were standard spiritual reading all through the Middle Ages. «Benedict and Dominic alike came again and again to these quiet springs, and Thomas Aquinas would read a page or two of Cassian, when speculative divinity became too subtle, and the fire of love grew cold» (H. WADDELL, *The Desert Fathers*, London 1936, p. 27).

¹¹ «De divinis non facile debet homo aliter loqui quam sacra scriptura loquatur» (ST. THOMAS, *Contra errores Graecorum*, c. 1).

¹² *Doctrina scholastica* is distinguished from «*doctrina praedicationis*, quae ad praelatos pertinet» (*Contra impugnantes* II, c. 1, n. 32).

¹³ «Docere sacram doctrinam dupliciter contingit. Ex officio praelationis, sicut qui praeedicat, docet... Alio modo ex officio magisterii, sicut magistri theologiae docent» (*Super IV Sent.* dist. 19, q. 2, a. 2, ad 4). Cf. ST. THOMAS'S division of *instructio fidei* (a form of *doctrina praedicationis*): «Triplex est instructio fidei. Una admonitoria, qua quis ad fidem convertitur, et haec est proprie sacerdotum, quorum est praedicare et docere... Alia est instructio disciplinaris... Tertia, quae sequitur baptismum» (dist. 6, q. 2, a. 2, sol. 2).

right by St. Thomas or the scholastic *magistri* in general, though of course any number of points capable of being integrated into a theology of preaching, and into pastoral theology as a whole, can be extracted from their writings. Their theological method was *not* directly pastoral, but magistral, as St. Thomas emphasises: they addressed themselves to the *intellect* of their disciples, not to their heart and will: they spoke and wrote in order to impart knowledge, not to provoke conversion of heart.¹⁴ To treat St. Thomas as *the* master in the *whole* of theology on the one hand or to regard him as employing an out-of-date, because non-pastoral, method of theology on the other is to confuse the whole question of method in theology. Both views rest on the supposition that there is only one method in theology, scholastic or pastoral according to the view taken. Neither corresponds with the reality of theology as the science of the word of God in the Church in *both* its aspects (the word as intelligible and the word as good and fruitful), and the first view contradicts St. Thomas just as much as the second: «Docere sacram doctrinam *dupliciter* contingit».

It was a misfortune of the medieval Church that it had no real science of *doctrina praedicationis* and no real pastoral theology to guide its pastoral activity. What pastoral theology there was — sometimes extraordinarily deep and rich in substance, sometimes superficial and crude, but in any case never gathered into a systematic whole — has to be pieced together from the historical records of the time, from medieval art and religious pageantry, from sermons, *Summae confessorum*¹⁵ and other products of medieval pastoral thought. The one branch of pastoral action that attained theological expression in its own right was the ascetico-mystical training of candidates for the life of Christian perfection, especially in monasteries and religious houses;

¹⁴ Preaching on the other hand is immediately directed to the spiritual good of the hearers: it communicates the word of God in Scripture vitally to them. «Ad diaconum pertinet recitare evangelium in Ecclesia, et praedicare ipsum per modum catechizantis... sed docere, idest exponere evangelium, pertinet proprie ad episcopum, cuius actus est perficere... Perficere autem idem est, quod docere» (III, q. 67, a. 1, ad 1).

¹⁵ On these cf. L. VEREECKE in B. HÄRING, *La loi du Christ* I (Paris 1957), p. 70s.

but this was of its nature a theology for a spiritual *élite*, not for the Christian people in general. Nevertheless the continued existence of this theology throughout the medieval period side by side with scholastic theology, both being combined in the person of Eckhart and his more disciplined successors in the combination of *doctrina scholastica* and a mystical *doctrina praedicationis*,¹⁶ is a fact of great importance for the *theory* of pastoral theology. Ascetico-mystical theology *is* pastoral theology, though only in a limited field: it aims directly at imparting spiritual life to men — those, namely, who aspire to the fulness of spiritual life. As we shall see, the modern theory of pastoral theology involves the setting of a similar practical goal for all thought and action in this field, but the goal is now seen as universal and ecclesial — the bringing and giving of life in Christ to *all* men in and through « his body, which is the Church » (Col. 1, 24).

The pastoral renewal of the Church that followed the Council of Trent, enormously effective as it was in many spheres, suffered the consequences of having no coherent and normative *science* of pastoral theology to guide its progress. It drew its inner inspiration from the best in medieval tradition: for its norms of action it depended on the medieval sciences of scholastic theology and canon law, adapted to the needs and circumstances of the new age, and on the lessons of experience. The Christian-humanist effort, before, during and after the Council of Trent, to get behind medieval theology, law and tradition *as such*, and to recreate the pastoral and spiritual life of the Church on lines more directly drawn from Scripture and the Fathers, achieved only a very limited success.¹⁷ It failed to win through in the Counter-Reformation movement in Europe¹⁸ and in the movement of

¹⁶ See TH. STEINBÜCHEL, *Mensch und Gott in Frommigkeit und Ethos der deutschen Mystik* (Düsseldorf 1952).

¹⁷ H. JÉDIN in his historical studies of the Council of Trent has given full attention to their outlook on the pastoral problems of the time. See especially his *Geschichte des Konzils von Trient II* (Freiburg 1957). Cf. also F. HEER, *Die Dritte Kraft. Der europäische Humanismus zwischen den Fronten des konfessionellen Zeitalters* (Frankfurt 1959).

¹⁸ John III, king of Sweden, received into the Church by the papal legate Possevino on May 16, 1578, asked for three interim dispensations from the disciplinary decrees of the Council of Trent as a means of reconciling the nation

missionary expansion overseas,¹⁹ both of which made demands on scholastically and juridically trained theologians which were not provided for in their accustomed framework of thought and with which they had to cope as best they could from within that framework.

The moral theology of this period begot the *Institutiones morales* which, from 1600 on, provided the pastoral Church with what were felt to be her needs in this sphere.²⁰ Basically the moral teaching of the *Institutiones* was a practical selection from the far more broadly based *doctrina scholastica* of the Christian moral life. The selection was made in view of the pastoral need of training priests to be competent confessors, and so it was completed by a thoroughgoing treatment of the casuistic aspect of moral life. Nowadays the methodology of the *Institutiones* is much criticised for its piecemeal character, its over-rationalisation, its negativism, legalism, and so on;²¹ but in fairness it should be seen as an honest effort by the scholastic mentality to adapt itself to the pressing pastoral need of the time for properly instructed confessors. The fact that the work of adaptation was often defectively accomplished was a simple consequence of the fact that the scholastic mentality *as such* is ill-adjusted to pastoral practice *as such*. Being a *magister* in scholastic theology is one thing, being a pastoral *praelatus* quite another. A *magister* pursues truth in studious solitude and communicates it in his lectures and writings. A *praelatus* has to cope with real people in the historical complexity of their lives: he mixes with them, knows all their cares and troubles, and has to guide them through

with the Holy See - permission for a married clergy, for communion under both kinds, and for a wholly vernacular liturgy. It would have been an entirely acceptable solution to the pastoral humanists of the time, but the prevailing pastoral current was against it. John's request was rejected and he returned to Lutheranism a year later. See O. GARSTEIN, *Rome and the Counter-Reformation in Scandinavia* I (Oxford 1964).

¹⁹ See V. CRONIN's accounts of the adaptive missionary efforts of Ricci in China and de Nobili in India, *The Wise Man from the West* (New York 1955) and *A Pearl to India* (1959).

²⁰ Cf. L. VEREECKE, *op. cit.*, p. 21s: *Preface à l'histoire de la théologie morale moderne*, *Studia moralia* I (Rome 1963), p. 89s.

²¹ Cf. B. HÄRING, *Heutige Bestrebungen zur Vertiefung und Erneuerung der Moralthologie*, *Studia Moralia* I (Rome 1963), p. 24s.

everything to Christ. He knows all their sins and follies, but he knows their hidden capacities for goodness too: he knows when and how to make a bold and successful appeal to their instinct for sanctity. The school-mind, not accustomed to hard daily working in (and *from within*) the temporal and historical dimension of human life, tends to abstraction in dealing with people: it sees the things they *do* (and the bad things more easily than the good ones) rather than their real selves. So it gravitates towards casuistry, and especially a casuistry of sin, as the appropriate form of moral theology for the common people. It is interesting to observe the limitation of pastoral vision, side by side with the presence of unquestionable pastoral zeal, in the type of moral theology that post-Tridentine scholasticism produced for the guidance of pastors. Pastors, St. Thomas drily notes, do not devote themselves much — *non multum intendunt* — to the study of scholastic theology;²² but they have to have some theology to guide them in their work, so they take what professional theologians give them. The post-Tridentine moral theologian offered the post-Tridentine pastor a pastorally adapted, casuistic *doctrina scholastica* to serve him as a *doctrina praedicationis*, and it was willingly and gratefully accepted, since there did not as yet exist in the Church a *doctrina praedicationis* theologically founded in and developed from *the Gospel message itself* — a strictly pastoral theology directly focused on the word of God, not as *intellectually* true, but as sound and secure ('true' in the Biblical sense)²³ and destined for the salvation of mankind in accordance with the divine plan of salvation.

As a moral theologian St. Alphonsus worked with the categories provided for him ready-made by the tradition, now firmly established, of the *Institutiones morales* and text-books deriving from them. But it is clear that his pastoral spirit experienced the limitations as well as the advantages of their methodology. Not only did he write abundantly on pastoral subjects in general — on preaching, on prayer, on the love of Christ as the summing-

²² «...doctrina praedicationis, quae ad praelatos pertinet... doctrina scholastica, cui praelati non multum intendunt» (*Contra impugnantes* II, c. 1, n. 32).

²³ See J.B. BAUER, ed., *Bibeltheologisches Wörterbuch* II (2 ed. Graz 1962) p. 1190, s. v. «Wahrheit»: J. GUILLET, *Thèmes bibliques*, (Paris 1950), p. 41s.

up of the whole Christian life, and much else — but he composed the directly pastoral *Praxis confessarii*, with its ascetico-mystical chapter IX, and had it added to his *Theologia moralis* from the third edition (1757) onward, saying that the *Theologia moralis* would be «incomplete and inadequate» without it.²⁴ He was reaching out beyond the accepted framework of moral theology towards a practical theology of Christian living in all its forms and degrees.

II

The foundation of pastoral theology as an autonomous form of theology dates from the last quarter of the 18th century. Even the name was new, apart from the occasional and incidental use of it before that time. As planned in its original context — the socio-religious reform of the Austrian Empire undertaken by Maria Theresa and Joseph II — pastoral theology was to be a directive theology of good Christian citizenship: a disciplined and well-behaved clergy, acting as the spiritual servants of the State, were to train and guide a disciplined and well-behaved people, and the norms and methods for doing this would constitute the subject-matter of pastoral theology. This was, however, to reckon without J. M. Sailer (1751-1832) and other deeply spiritual men of the time who made of the new pastoral theology a real *theology*, far transcending both in purpose and in scope what its secular designers had in mind.²⁵ More than any other one man, Sailer is the real founder of modern pastoral theology. As a theologian he expounded a dynamic theology of the divine plan of salvation, and as a bishop he put this theology into practice.

²⁴ Cf. L. GAUDÉ, ed., *Opera moralia* IV (Rome 1912), p. 524-5.

²⁵ Maria Theresa deserves personal credit for putting Felbiger in charge of the reorganisation of religious teaching in schools (1774). He introduced Biblical history as a school subject - a permanent contribution to religious pedagogy. On the history of the development of pastoral theology in the socio-religious world of the time see F. DORFMANN, *Ausgestaltung der Pastoraltheologie zur Universitätsdisziplin und ihre Weiterbildung* (Vienna 1910): R. FLÜGISTER, *Die Pastoraltheologie als Universitätsdisziplin* (Freiburg 1951): F.X. ARNOLD, *Dienst am Glauben. Das vordringlichste Anliegen heutiger Seelsorge* (Freiburg 1943: French trans. *Serviteurs de la foi*, Paris 1957).

He was a Scripturally-minded man and in his conception of it pastoral theology was an «introduction to the practical study of Scripture». All pastoral action in the Church, whatever may be its external form, is ultimately the service of the «one word of God which has been proclaimed in Christ, the salvation of the world».²⁶ Man's response to the word of God is contained in the act of personal «conversion», which is not merely conversion *from* sin but above all positive conversion *to* God and so capable of indefinite growth in a positive sense.²⁷

Sailer insists on the necessity of basing the proclamation of the word of God on a «central vision» (*Zentralblick*) of the reality which is proclaimed. This makes Christian preaching and teaching coherent, effective and constructive: it becomes a real instrument of the realisation of the Kingdom of God among men.

Thus Sailer created a pastoral theology which owed no intrinsic allegiance to the scholastic method in theology.²⁸ It had its own method, developed in accordance with its own purposes and needs. The *end* in view was practical from first to last — the faithful service of the life-giving word of God in the world, the bringing of Christ to men and of men to Christ. This was *pastoral* action, and pastoral theology must be the theology of this action, and of this action *only*. It must not be tied to *any* categories of thought or method except those that served its end. The scholastic method of theology was *not* normative for pastoral theology.

With all its positive merits Sailer's conception of pastoral theology had its limitations. He did not realise the positive contribution that scholastic theology could make to pastoral theology as he himself understood it. Clarification of the *meaning* of the word of God in intellectual terms can and should be used to make it more fruitful in the realm of action. Scripture itself attaches great importance to the right *meaning* of the word of God as a necessary preliminary to its actualisation in life and

²⁶ *Pastoraltheologie* III, 2.

²⁷ On the theme of «conversion» in Sailer see H.J. MÜLLER, *Die Ganze Bekehrung. Das zentrale Anliegen des Theologen und Seelsorgers Johann Michael Sailer* (Salzburg 1958).

²⁸ His pastoral model was St. Francis de Sales, the saint of post-Tridentine Christian humanism.

history, and the Fathers bear witness at every point to the theological necessity of getting *meanings* right so that the meaningful word of God may bear its destined fruit in the Church. Scholastic theology, intent on the meaning, explicit and implicit, of the word of God, grows out of Scripture and the Fathers in one direction as *doctrina praedicationis* (now given its first real theological formulation by Sailer) grows out of it in another. The method of pastoral theology is different from that of scholastic theology, because the end envisaged in each case is different, and it was Sailer's chief merit to insist once for all that pastoral theology be allowed to develop its own proper method and not have the scholastic method imposed on it; but it still remains true that pastoral theology will derive substantial and necessary nourishment from the *findings* (not the method) of scholastic theology.

The same quite unnecessary clash — unnecessary once the question at issue is rightly understood — between scholasticism and pastoralism in theology reappeared in a more acute form in 19th-century Germany in connexion with the catechetical work of Hirscher and his followers. Tübingen inherited the pastoral outlook and spirit of Sailer, and Hirscher's catechism (1842) brought it into the highly practical and contentious field of fundamental religious education. Struggling, as he claimed, «for the Gospel against scholasticism», Hirscher found himself more than ever embroiled with scholasticism once the neo-scholastic movement got under way in Germany in the middle of the 19th century. The details of the resulting controversy between the pastoral and the scholastic catechists need not detain us here, nor need we analyse the misunderstandings and misrepresentations with which both parties could be and were charged.²⁹ The essential point at issue was whether or not the scholastic method of theology is valid and normative for catechetics and for pastoral theology generally. Hirscher and his followers said it was not, monopolist neo-scholastics said it was. All this ground was worked over again in new terms in the discussion that followed the emergence of kerygmatic theology from 1936 onward. On essential

²⁹ See ARNOLD'S treatment of the subject in *Dienst am Glauben*, chap. III.

points this long-standing controversy is now fortunately closed. Pastoral theology has established its right to exist as, methodologically, a non-scholastic form of theology, just as Biblical and Patristic theology have done in their fields. Thomist theologians now play an outstanding part in the further development of pastoral theology, but they do so with full consciousness of the specific and independent method of pastoral theology. They bring the riches of St. Thomas's *findings* in theology into their work as pastoral theologians, but they do not impose the *method* of his *doctrina scholastica* on the *doctrina praedicationis* which pastoral theology deals with scientifically and practically.

III

The continuity in purpose and method between modern pastoral theology and the pastoral theology of Sailer is quite clear. Nevertheless modern pastoral theology expressly develops a dimension of pastoral reality and action that is only adumbrated in Sailer — that of the *historicity* of the divine plan of salvation and of the pastoral mission of the Church through which this plan is actually realised in space and time.³⁰ Sailer thought in mystical, intuitive ways where today we think in terms of the history of salvation. We are saved through a graduated and interconnecting series of divine events in history, culminating in the Death, Resurrection, Ascension and Second Coming of Christ. The Church too is a divine event: it is the Body of Christ in space and time: in her the divine plan of salvation becomes concrete, real, dynamic, historical. Our salvation consists in being taken up through the Church into Christ and through Him into the life of the undivided Trinity. Thus the divine work of salvation accomodates itself to the historical condition of man — for man is necessarily historical in his mode of existence.

The category of historicity which figures so largely in

³⁰ Cf. O. CULLMANN, *Christus und die Zeit* (Zürich 1948: revised ed. 1964): J. DANÉLOU, *Essai sur le mystère de l'histoire* (Paris 1952): G. THILS, *Théologie de l'histoire* (Paris 1949).

present-day pastoral theology is derived from Scripture and the 'sacred history' it records.³¹ Scholastic theology is and always had been well aware of the reality of 'sacred history', but it extracts supra-temporal meaning and significance from the events of this history: the *historicity* of the process of salvation does not as such come directly into its field of thought, just as it does not directly dwell on the historicity of the mode of existence proper to man. It can define man without reference to his historicity, whereas pastoral theology sees him in his historicity from first to last. I said earlier that the scholastic mentality *as such* does not prepare a man for intelligent and effective action in the pastoral field. The reason is that this mentality is non-historical, whereas the pastoral mentality *must* be historical. The core of the difference between the two mentalities and the two theologies lies there. The root of past quarrels between the two theologies also lies there. The historical mind as such tires quickly of metaphysics and the exact pursuit of meaning; the metaphysical mind as such thinks itself competent to deal adequately with history, supposing, as men do who think hard and well but do not dwell *in sinu historiae*, that all history needs to be tidied up is to have a right ideal impressed on it by those whose business it is to work out right ideals and present them in clear, systematic form. Once the distinctive dimension of historicity in human life is clearly discerned and once the corresponding dimension of historicity in the work of human salvation is seen as *revealed*, then the methodological independence of pastoral theology is not only assured but is set on its right foundation. Of course there is no *intrinsic* problem in the combination of metaphysical talent and historical vision in the one mind, nor therefore in the one theologian being able to write scholastically today and pastorally tomorrow; but the point is that these are not only two different kinds of theology but require two different *approaches* to reality to produce them.

³¹ It was, however, Hegel who first brought historicity into the foreground of philosophic reflection on human existence. Having 'discovered' historicity, he proceeded to annul his own discovery by imposing his idealist dialectic on the historical process, as Marx later imposed a materialist dialectic on it. See I. BERLIN, *Karl Marx. His Life and Environment* (2 ed. Oxford 1948); A. DARLAPP, *Geschichtlichkeit* in H. FRIES, ed., *Handbuch theologischer Grundbegriffe* I (Munich 1962), p. 491-7.

Pastoral theology is the dynamic and practical theology of the history of salvation and requires a sharp, flexible sense of the historicity and concreteness of human life in the pastoral theologian.³² He must have this particular kind of insight into life and have it in theological form. The more he has of it and the more theologically he has it, the better he will be as a pastoral theologian. If he is weak in this insight, he will at best tend to write scholastic rather than pastoral theology. If he has a natural gift for historical and concrete insight into life but does not have it in theologically developed form, he will produce practical counsels and directions for the exercise of the pastoral ministry but not pastoral theology. Actually the name 'pastoral theology', taken out of the context of the work of Sailer and his successors, was commonly applied in the last century to works containing many and various practical rules for the guidance of the pastor, some of them taken over from the pastoral parts of the post-Tridentine moral theologians, others given on the basis of contemporary pastoral experience. What they gave was *ars pastoralis* of unequal quality, not pastoral theology in the modern sense. Modern pastoral theology has full place and scope for the giving of practical guidance for the actual carrying-out of the Church's pastoral work: indeed it insists on this part of the overall work of pastoral theology being done with the greatest care and realism. But even for the sake of its own proper accomplishment this part of pastoral theology must be set back firmly in the context of theological historicity: it must be based on and spring from a *fundamental* pastoral theology, which is quite a different form of theological science from, say, fundamental moral theology of a quidditative nature.

The historicity of human life and the corresponding divinely ordained historicity of the work of man's salvation goes back

³² This is what in psychology and aesthetics is called «the open mind» - or the «impersonal» mind, in the sense that it can surpass the «pre-conceived plans» of the person himself. «The closed mind is personal. The open mind is impersonal. When the mind opens, something original can come in. The open mind is not something that can be learned or switched on at will. It happens naturally. It is in the instant that the mind opens» (G. ONSLOW-FORD, *Painting in the Instant*, London 1964).

ultimately to the fact that human life is necessarily composite and complex. Man in his concrete existence combines stability with mutability of being — 'being' with 'becoming'. He is always the same — man — yet never *quite* the same from day to day, from situation to situation. He is a synthesis of the unchanging and the ever-changing. His task as man is to achieve a *satisfactory* synthesis of the two: his task as a Christian is to achieve the *divinely-willed* synthesis of the two at the supernatural level. The synthesis can never be final and fixed: it *must* change, since in one respect man is ever-changing, and *should* as far as possible change for the better from stage to stage. « Qui non progreditur retardatur. » That old maxim of ascetico-mystical theology shows a truly historical insight into life and bears out the point made earlier in these pages, that ascetico-mystical theology is truly pastoral theology, though of a limited kind.

The pastoral theologian, then, reckons always with the changeability as well as with the unchangeability of man. He is prepared for change in the pastoral life of the Church in all its dimension, he *welcomes* change (for the alternative to change is stagnation and regression), and aims at guiding it into positive and productive channels. It is here that the specific character of pastoral theology comes out at the level of experience and practice. Change is never merely a problem or unpleasant necessity for the pastoral theologian. He attaches no normative value for the present to human traditions from the past *as such*. The very nature of his theological science prevents him from being a 'laudator temporis acti'. He is always interested in the positive possibilities inherent in the process of change in human life and in the exercise of the Church's pastoral mission. At the same time he keeps the other element in the human existential synthesis — stability — always in mind too. Just as he does not worship the past because it is the past, so he does not opt for change for the sake of change. His question at the practical level always is: « What synthesis of pastoral action is required *here and now* in this time of human and ecclesial history? » He faces this question firmly but calmly and prudently, and works out the synthesis that seems best to him from *all* the available material, old and new,

and humbly submits it for consideration by other pastoral theologians and finally, if need be, by the Church.

There are many definitions nowadays of pastoral theology as a theological science in its own right, but all of them go back to the fundamental perception that it is the dynamic theology of the divine plan of salvation. For Noppel (1959) pastoral theology is the theology of «the building up of the body of Christ» (cf. Eph. 4, 12-16).³³ For Liégé (1957) it is «the theological science of ecclesial action».³⁴ For K. Rahner and his collaborators it is the theology of «the fulfilment of the Church» (*der Vollzug der Kirche*).³⁵ These are only different ways of expressing the fact that pastoral theology is the theological science of all that is concrete, dynamic and historical in the real life of the actually existing and saving Church.³⁶ Pastoral theology never gets away from its steady, hard-working, confident concentration on the dimension of the Church's historicity and on the real requirements of her historic mission in the world here and now.

We have dwelt on the methodological difference, based on difference of end, between pastoral and scholastic theology. We must now return to the question raised at the beginning of this article as to the kind of positive relationship that exists between pastoral theology and other theological disciplines. Clearly, as Paul VI reminds us, «very important points of doctrine» must always be kept in mind not only in the work of individual pastoral theologians but in the Conciliar effort «to study deeply and collectively all the practical and pastoral questions» that concern the Church. Pastoral theology needs *principles* to work with, for

³³ C. NOPPEL, *Aedificatio Corporis Christi. Aufriss der Pastoral* (Freiburg 1949).

³⁴ Introduction to F.X. ARNOLD, *Serviteurs de la foi* (Paris 1957), p. xv.

³⁵ Formerly they spoke of the «self-fulfilment» (*Selbstvollzug*) of the Church (cf. V. SCHURR, *Konstruktive Seelsorge*, Freiburg 1962, p. 32s), but on account of the ambiguity of this term, especially in the context of ecumenical discussion, they now speak of «fulfilment» merely. A *Handbuch der praktischen Theologie* which will appear simultaneously in several languages is in preparation by K. Rahner and a group of collaborators. Rahner prefers 'practical' to 'pastoral' as a description of «the theology of the fulfilment of the Church».

³⁶ Cf. K. RAHNER, *Das Dynamische in der Kirche* (Freiburg 1959); *Sendung und Gnade* (Innsbruck 1961).

carelessness about principles would only undermine it as theology and reduce it to the level of pastoral pragmatism.

Liégé makes dogmatic theology the source of first principles for pastoral theology.³⁷ Pastoral theology takes over these principles and verifies and vivifies them for its own purposes.³⁸ Liégé proposes three first principles from dogmatic theology as a basis for the vivificatory work of pastoral theology: the Christological principle, the ecclesiological principle, and the principle of unity of mission in the Church.³⁹ A similar insistence on a sound dogmatic foundation for pastoral theology appears in the pastoral writings of Congar,⁴⁰ K. Rahner, Schillebeeckx,⁴¹ and many others. This is entirely right, obviously, but it may be asked if there is not sometimes a too one-sided insistence on the strictly dogmatic principles that underlie pastoral theology, even though these principles are set forth with full attention to the Scriptural origin of dogma and to the living expression of dogma contained in the liturgy of the Church. The fact is that, as Liégé notes, contemporary pastoral theology has largely grown out of modern ecclesiology.⁴² It has therefore a dogmatic emphasis at its foundations which is not in the least excessive as such but which, I think, needs to be balanced by more attention to moral, juridic and other such principles involved in the functioning of the pastoral action of the Church.

It seems best, both in theory and practice, to establish the divine economy of salvation as the *one first principle* of pastoral theology — the principle which it will verify and vivify in the pastoral sphere, to use Liégé's terminology. Dogmatic theology, moral theology, the science of canon law: ⁴³ Biblical and Patristic

³⁷ « La théologie pastorale reçoit ses principes de la dogmatique » (Introduction to Arnold, op. cit., p. xxi).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ P. xxiis.

⁴⁰ E.g. *Jalons pour une théologie du laïc* (Paris 1954); *Sainte Eglise. Etudes et approches ecclésiologiques* (Paris 1963); *Sacerdoce et laïc* (Paris 1962).

⁴¹ E. g. *Christus, Sacrament van de Godsontmoeting* (Bilthoven 1960; English trans. *Christ the Sacrament of Encounter with God*, London 1963).

⁴² Introduction, p. xxiv: cf. M.-J. CONGAR, *Le Christ, Marie et l'Eglise* (Paris 1952).

⁴³ On the pastoral-theological aspect of canon law see A.M. STICKLER,

theology also: pastoral psychology, sociology and other such pastoral sciences involving the linking of empirical data to theological principles — all these will in their different ways and degrees serve to draw out the implications of the divine economy of salvation and so provide pastoral theology with an abundance of *secondary* principles. Its specific task will then be to co-ordinate all its principles into a coherent whole in view of its own proper end — the actual realisation of the divine economy of salvation among men — and to stimulate and guide the pastoral action of the Church accordingly. It is certainly an enormous task and requires a collaborative effort from pastoral theologians nowadays, just as pastoral action itself requires a higher degree of collaboration between pastors than was necessary in earlier and less technological periods of human and ecclesial history.

In particular where does moral theology end and pastoral theology begin in the complex whole of contemporary theology? As we noted in the first section of this article, the frontier between them has become partly blurred nowadays, both in theory and in practice. From our discussion of the true nature of pastoral theology, however, it should be clear where the line of division between the two sciences should be drawn. Moral theology is the science of moral *principles*; pastoral theology is concerned with the *concrete working-out* of these principles in given historical circumstances. The two spheres of operation are quite distinct, though of course closely related. It would be to the advantage of both sciences to adopt this line of demarcation once for all, and to assign the aspect of moral life involving human historicity quite definitely to pastoral theology.⁴⁴ At present the pastoral theologian sometimes intrudes on the sphere of the moral theologian and discusses *principles* of moral life, even when he has no particular competence for this task — discusses them not only in the sphere of historical application (which *is* his sphere) but in their intrinsic quality as principles

Das Mysterium der Kirche im Kirchenrecht in F. HOLBÖCK, T. SARTORY, ed., *Mysterium Kirche* (Salzburg 1962).

⁴⁴ For a practical example of this see S. O'RIORDAN, *Courtship* in E. McDONAGH, ed., *The Meaning of Christian Marriage* (Dublin 1963).

(which is the sphere of the moral theologian). At other times the moral theologian ventures into the sphere of human historicity, again without adequate competence for this work, and applies his principles, sound in themselves, in an unreal and impractical way. The necessary collaboration between moral theology and pastoral theology in the moral sphere will be all the more harmonious and fruitful if the difference between the two sciences in end and method is frankly accepted on both sides.⁴⁵

Roma, Academia Alfonsiana.

⁴⁵ The distinction between *truths* and the *mode* of communicating them (the latter being the proper subject-matter of pastoral theology) is clearly stated in JOHN XXIII's Allocution at the opening of the Second Vatican Council. «Est enim aliud ipsum depositum Fidei, seu veritates, quae veneranda doctrina nostra continentur, aliud modus, quo eadem enuntiantur, eodem tamen sensu eademque sententia. Huic quippe modo plurimum tribuendum erit et patienter, si opus fuerit, in eo elaborandum; scilicet eae inducendae erunt rationes res exprimendi, quae cum magisterio, cuius indoles praesertim pastoralis est, magis congruant» (AAS 54, 1962, p. 792). The express recognition that not only truths but the right *mode* of communicating them enter into the functioning of the Church's *magisterium* gives a high status to pastoral theology. Indeed the *magisterium* itself is «primarily pastoral in character».