

John Henry Newman and Revelation

- A case study for a contemporary understanding of the term closed revelation

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Abstract

The primary aim of this thesis is to evaluate the legitimacy of the criticism directed against John Henry Newman (1801-1890) regarding a continuing revelation. The secondary aim is to create a contemporary understanding of what a closed revelation in fact entails. The thesis fulfils these aims by answering the research questions regarding the components of Newman's theology and philosophy for understanding his view on revelation and the development of doctrine. Thereafter, the thesis investigates the arguments for and against Newman representing a doctrine of a continuing revelation as presented by various theologians in order to answer whether the criticism is justified. The final part of the thesis analyses what a contemporary understanding of a closed revelation signifies. The results of this thesis are that the criticism against Newman is not justified. The criticism is strongly based on an instruction-theoretical view of revelation which does not sufficiently accommodate Newman's philosophical thought. A deeper understanding of the nature of revelation provides tools for understanding the criticism and its prerequisites. By studying the criticism directed at Newman and why it is not a justified case, the main body of the thesis constitutes a case study for a contemporary understanding of the terminology closed revelation. The most significant meaning of this concept is the normativity of Christ and his apostles, leading to the understanding that Christ represents the culmination of God's self-revelation to mankind. Revelation is ultimately God's act of self-disclosure, rather than the revealing of doctrinal truths.

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Aim of investigation

One of the most important questions which pertain to the question of development of doctrine is the concept of a closed revelation. The essence of the problem is how to unite a closed revelation with the idea of development of doctrine which excludes any form of continuing or new revelation. An attempt to find a balance to this problem was the work *An Essay on the Development of Christian doctrine* (1845) by John Henry Newman. Criticism has been raised towards the argumentation of the book that the development which has taken place during history can according to Newman's writing be considered a form of continuing revelation. Hence, this thesis has two aims:

(A) The primary aim is to evaluate the criticism directed towards Newman and to be able to conclude whether this criticism is justified or not.

(B) The secondary aim is that the investigation into Newman which this thesis provides can serve as a case study for what constitutes a modern understanding of the terminology of a closed revelation.

Research Questions

In order to fulfil the presented aims, this thesis will answer the following questions:

(1) What are the key components to Newman's theology and philosophy for understanding his view of revelation and development of doctrine?

(2) What are the arguments for and against Newman representing an idea of a continuing revelation? Is the criticism justified?

(3) What constitutes a modern understanding of the term closed revelation?

Method

This section will firstly address the broader methodological questions pertaining to the subject of systematic theology, and secondly how this thesis is conducted.

The method-question of Systematic Theology

Depending on how systematic theology is defined, different outcomes will follow as to how the method-question is to be understood. A survey of this question's complexity is beyond the scope of this section. The core of the question deals with the scientific status of systematic theology – again, depending on the definition proposed, both of science and of systematic theology. This thesis subscribes to the definition of theology as suggested by Aidan Nichols that theology is “the disciplined exploration of what is contained in revelation”¹, where it is the task of systematic theology “to show people how the faith hangs together, how it all makes a satisfying design.”² A word often used to describe theology within the discourse of theory of science is *Glaubenswissenschaft*, namely the reason-based systematic reflection on the presuppositions and content of faith. The basis for the term *Glaubenswissenschaft* is an understanding of faith and reason in unity where both share in the same divine origin. What is of controversy is naturally how to account for the scientific status of theology. The starting point is a study of faith which consists of a critical investigation into the elements of faith. This intersubjective understanding and dialogue of the nature of faith is what constitutes *Glaubenswissenschaft*.³

The shift in understanding within the field of philosophy of science is an awareness that there is no neutral ground of interpretation, and concepts of science depend on the presuppositions of your worldview which are often silently presupposed.⁴ Benedikt Paul Göcke exemplifies by referring to the *a priori* presuppositions within a field such as physics, namely the existence of the world outside of and independent of our consciousness, the existence of causal relations or the adequacy of describing reality in term of mathematics. The conclusion reached is that every scientific enquiry rests on initial *a priori* foundations which they themselves cannot

¹ Nichols, Aidan, *The Shape of Catholic Theology – An introduction to its Sources, Principles and History*, The Liturgical Press Collegeville, Minnesota, 1991, p. 32.

² Nichols 1991, p. 34.

³ Böttigheimer, Christoph, *Lehrbuch der Fundamentaltheologie – Die Rationalität der Gottes-, Offenbarungs-, und Kirchenfrage*, 3 Auflage, Verlag Herder, 2016 p. 47–49.

⁴ Göcke, Benedikt Paul, ”Theologie als Wissenschaft?! – Erste Antworten auf die Herausforderungen von Wissenschaftstheorie und Naturalismus”, from *Theologie und Glaube*, 107 Jahrgang Heft 2 April 2017, p. 135.

demonstrate and that an act of faith is always present as a premise for the scientific investigation.⁵

It is with background to the context of the plurality of scientific disciplines that Karl Rahner addresses “the theoretical possibility of giving a justification of the faith which is antecedent to the task and the method of contemporary scientific enquiry, both theological and secular. Thus this justification of the faith includes fundamental theology and dogmatic theology together. It takes place on a first level of reflection where faith gives an account of itself.”⁶ Rahner distinguishes this from faith’s second level of reflection which takes into account the methodological plurality within the theological disciplines. What Rahner phrases and is of interest to any study that deals with questions within faith’s first level of reflection, is the way theology can maintain its scientific status. “So I reflect now with all exactness and rigor, and hence in a scientific way, upon that mode of justifying the faith, and also upon the content of the faith...”⁷ This first level of reflection is antecedent to any particular method which have a right in its own within different theological disciplines.

Systematic theology, defined as a *Glaubenswissenschaft* or a first-level reflection of faith, seeks to stand in relation to truth. Göcke writes that a correspondence theory of truth is most adequate to explain the conditions within which theology functions.⁸ Theology must not be thought of as a closed system only consisting in internal coherence, but instead always correspond and stand in relation to extramental reality. Faith’s first-level reflection is grounded in the commonly shared reality accessible to all. This is the basis for the scientific nature of theology.

⁵ Göcke 2017, p. 131. Göcke writes: “Dass die Theologie allein aus dem Grund keine Wissenschaft sein kann, weil ihre Basissätze teilweise auf Akten epistemischen Glaubens und Anerkennens beruhen, ist somit kein durchschlagendes Argument gegen ihre Wissenschaftlichkeit, sondern ein Charakteristikum jeglicher wissenschaftlicher Tätigkeit. Wir können keine Wissenschaft betreiben ohne bestimmte Annahmen, die selbst nicht weiter zu begründen sind, sondern von der Vernunft durch Aktes des Glaubens als die Prämissen der Wirklichkeitsinterpretation festgelegt werden.”

⁶ Rahner, Karl, *Foundations of Christian Faith – an Introduction to the Idea of Christianity*, The Crossroad publishing company, New York, 2005, p. 9. Translated by William V. Dych. Originally published as *Grundkurs des Glaubens: Einführung in den Begriff des Christentums*. Rahner writes: “Aus dieser Feststellung folgt die wissenschaftstheoretische Möglichkeit einer Glaubensbegründung, die der Aufgabe und Methode des heutigen theologischen und profanen Wissenschaftsbetriebs vorausliegt. Diese Glaubensbegründung enthält so Fundamentalthologie und Dogmatik in Einheit, sie vollzieht sich auf seiner ersten Reflexionsstufe des sich selbst Rechenschaft gebenden Glaubens”. Quoted from Verlag Herder, Freiburg im Bresigau 2014.

⁷ Rahner 2005, p. 10.

⁸ Göcke 2017, p. 121.

Thesis method

This thesis is exclusively an investigation into texts and their interpretation. Therefore, the general principles of hermeneutics and the process of textual interpretation have been applicable. In order to answer the research questions, a vast material of sources had to be distinguished which led to the division of the thesis into four parts. The first part accounts for the meaning of the terms revelation and development of doctrine. This serves as background for interpreting John Henry Newman's writing and that of his critics. The significant point of this thesis is to evaluate the criticism which is conducted in the second part of the thesis. This was done largely by first establishing the framework for Newman's thought, and then by further comparing and analysing texts both by Newman, his critics and defenders in order to draw conclusions upon the justification of the criticism. In the third part of this work, a contemporary understanding of the term 'closed revelation' is presented as a way to further our understanding of the meaning of this term which has been foundational for the previous sections. The fourth part is dedicated to the conclusions of the thesis.

Material

The research question stated is to evaluate the criticism against John Henry Newman and his critics, therefore the material used is divided according to the following:

A) Major Works by John Henry Newman

- *Fifteen Sermons preached before the University of Oxford between A.D. 1826-1843*
- *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine* (1878 edition)
- *An Essay in the Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1874)

B) Authors critical of Newman's doctrine of revelation

- Chadwick, Owen (1916-2015), *From Bossuet to Newman – the idea of doctrinal development*, Cambridge University press, 1957
- Lash, Nicholas (1934-2020), *Newman on development – the search for an explanation in history*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1975

- Misner, Paul (1936-), "Newman's concept of revelation and the development of doctrine," *The Heythrop journal*, volume 11, issue 1, 1970

- Stephenson, Anthony A, "Cardinal Newman and the development of doctrine", *Journal of Ecumenical studies* 3, 1966

- Egan, Philip Anthony (1955-), "Newman, Lonergan and doctrinal development", PhD Thesis University of Birmingham, 2004

C) Authors in defense of Newman's doctrine of revelation

- Ker, Ian T (1942-), "Newman's Theory: Development or continuing revelation?", *Newman and Gladstone Centennial Essays*, ed. James D Bastable, Veritas Publications Dublin, 1978

- Walgrave, Jan Hendrik (1911-1986), *Unfolding Revelation – the nature of doctrinal development*, the Westminster press, 1972

- Siebenrock, Roman (1957-), *Wahrheit, Gewissen und Geschichte: Eine systematisch-theologische Rekonstruktion des Wirkens John Henry Kardinal Newman*, regio Verlag Glock und Lutz, Sigmaringendorf, 1996

- Graf, Jutta (1979 -), *Von Schatten und Bildern zur Wahrheit: Die Erschließung der "Offenbarung" bei John Henry Newman*, Peter Lang Verlag, 2009

- Hofmann, Stefan (1978 -), *Religiöse Erfahrung – Glaubenserfahrung - Theologie: eine studie zu einigen zentralen Aspekten im Denken John Henry Newmans*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2011

Limitations

This thesis has chosen to focus on Newman's concept of revelation and the critique of a continuing revelation. In doing so, a selection has been made from the broad authorship of Newman and also from the vast amount of literature dedicated to Newman. Therefore, this thesis is not an all-encompassing analysis of the entire *Essay on development* or any other work by Newman. The works consulted by Newman have been utilised in order to fulfil the aim and research questions of this thesis, not to provide a summary or evaluation of his entire theological or philosophical enterprise. An integral part is to discuss and evaluate the criticism directed towards Newman in the question of a continuing revelation. As the literature available is comprehensive and vast, so too is the general criticism and evaluation of Newman. But in order to provide a stringent focus on the aim and research questions, many aspects of Newman's thought have been left out. In this thesis Newman is studied exclusively from the perspective of systematic theology. This in itself is a limitation since the historical details from Newman's life and his legacy are subject to extensive research within church history. The works by Newman have themselves a reception history and cast important light on how Newman was understood and received as a theologian.⁹ Nevertheless, such questions despite their inherent relevance, have been excluded from this thesis since it would extend the limitations both in size and stringency.

Previous research

The amount of research which Newman in his entirety have been subject to is extensive and international in range. Yet previous research into the specific criticism regarding a continuing revelation and evaluation thereof is scarce. Several theologians address the issue in varying detail, yet a systematic study of the question at hand which additionally takes into consideration recent scholarship both in English and German has to this authors knowledge not been conducted. This is the motivating factor in showing the relevance of this particular thesis for contemporary research into Newman's understanding of revelation.

⁹ For historical and biographical works related to Newman, see: Shea, C Michael, *Newman's early Roman Catholic Legacy 1845-1854*, Oxford University Press 2017; Pereiro, James, 'Ethos' and the Oxford Movement: At the Heart of Tractarianism, Oxford Scholarship Online, May 2008; Ian Ker, *John Henry Newman – A biography*, Oxford University Press, 2010.

Ian Kerr deals with the criticism of Chadwick, Lash and Stephenson in his article from 1978, and provides a defence for Newman. A survey of this debate is presented by Aidan Nichols in his book *From Newman to Congar: the Idea of Doctrinal Development from the Victorians to the Second Vatican Council* (1990). A PhD dissertation from 1994, *Divine revelation and the infallible church: Newman, Vatican II and Arcic* by Michael Robert Peterburs, addresses the question of a continuing revelation briefly and defends Newman from this criticism. Another PhD dissertation draws the opposite conclusion namely *Newman, Lonergan and doctrinal development* (2004) by Philip Anthony Egan. Egan's treatment of the question is more extensive than Peterburs. Egan cites Walgraves book *Unfolding revelation – the nature of doctrinal development* (1972) yet he never addresses how Walgrave criticizes Chadwick's account. Nevertheless, Egan's dissertation is not completely focused on Newman so a comprehensive survey of the question can be said to be outside of his scope. A brief online-essay by PhD student Christopher Mooney "Newman's theory of Doctrinal Development and the question of New Revelation"¹⁰ (2019), presents an account of Newman's understanding of development and why it is not new revelation, but new developments. Mooney does not consult or mention any of the works by Chadwick, Lash, Stephenson or Egan in his text, but in a footnote refers to the bibliography provided by Ian Kerr in his article and a further article of similar literature in the Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman.¹¹ Therefore Mooney's article will not be further highlighted in this thesis.

At the center of this thesis is Newman's understanding of revelation. For the theological aspects of this question the work by Jutta Graf, *Von Schatten und Bildern zur Wahrheit: Die Erschließung der "Offenbarung" bei John Henry Newman*, has been of immense value. Likewise, Roman Siebenrocks work, *Wahrheit, Gewissen und Geschichte: Eine systematisch-theologische Rekonstruktion des Wirkens John Henry Kardinal Newman*, has provided solid foundation of interpreting Newman's view of revelation. Both of these works mention the criticism of a continuing revelation and reject this interpretation. However, Graf and in particular Siebenrock addresses several other themes in Newman which are beyond the limits of this investigation. Both emphasize the philosophical aspects of Newman's theology of revelation. In order to further this understanding Stefan Hofmann's work on religious

¹⁰ <http://www.humanitasreview.com/26-theology-spirituality/49-newman-s-theory-of-doctrinal-development-and-the-question-of-new-revelation>.

¹¹ McCarren, Gerard H,"Development of doctrine" in *The Cambridge Companion to John Henry Newman*, Cambridge University Press 2009, Edited by Ian Ker and Terrence Merrigan.

experience provides several important philosophical dimensions which aid in the understanding of Newman and the question of the new revelation.

Relevance of thesis

The primary aim of this thesis is to evaluate the criticism directed towards Newman regarding whether or not his texts allow for an interpretation of a continuing revelation. As the survey of previous research shows, a recent evaluation of the question has not been conducted to this author's knowledge. A comprehensive analysis that takes into account recent scholarship, especially the contribution from a few German theologians, provides the question of a closed revelation in Newman's authorship with new insights. This thesis connects the philosophical foundations of Newman's thought with the question of a closed revelation, thereby challenging the presuppositions of the criticism. Upon reviewing the material utilized for this thesis, no recent work deals with both critics and defenders of Newman while at the same time clarifying the concept of a closed revelation. This motivates a contemporary evaluation of whether Newman allows for new revelation.

This thesis is also written with a secondary aim, namely that the investigation into Newman can serve as a case study for a modern understanding of the term closed revelation. The evaluation of Newman, his defenders and critics in Part II of the thesis, serve the purpose not only of evaluating the actual question at hand, but also provides a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the terminology of a closed revelation. By looking at the philosophical and theological presuppositions involved in the interpretation of all the authors in Part II, it not only answers the question of whether the criticism is justified or not but answers the more fundamental question of what the terminology of a closed revelation actually entails. This is done by and through a study of Newman as is conducted in the second part of this thesis.

The second and third part of this thesis mutually add to each other's relevance since a contemporary understanding of the term closed revelation could not be reached as clearly without Newman, and the significance of the modern theologians would not be seen if an in-depth analysis into a theologian such as Newman were not provided. In addition, the history of the concepts provided in the first part of this thesis lays the important groundwork for the remainder.

Thesis Introduction

“All theories of the development of doctrine and the history of dogma, is nothing but an attempt to give a more precise answer to the question, how can the new truth really be the old.”¹²

Any investigation which deals with the question of development of doctrine and the nature of revelation can relate to these words. It is worthwhile to recognize at an early stage in this investigation that the underlying notion of truth is up for discussion. At the centre of theology is the truth of the Christian faith with its universal claims of such truth. It stipulates a correspondence between the human life and divine reality that obligates theology to deal with the question of truth.¹³ This is a foundation to build on and it certainly was so for John Henry Newman, particularly when he wrote his *Essay on the development of Christian doctrine* which led to his conversion to the Roman Catholic church. He was asking questions about doctrine and its relation to history while seeking continuity. The initial citation has bearing on Newman’s questions – how possibly can the “new truth” be in accordance with the old. At the time when Newman wrote his *Essay*, the very fact of development was a disputed question. It is of relevance to note that Newman did not always believe in development, but through an increased historical awareness, his own thought developed in the areas of dogma and revelation. Newman’s *Essay* is a benchmark achievement in the history of theology when it comes to accounting for truth, history and continuity.

Nevertheless, this investigation is aimed towards a critique of Newman. Despite his tantamount achievement in his *Essay*, criticism exists that discusses whether the *Essay* contains a teaching of a continuing revelation; or phrased differently, can revelation be considered “closed” according to Newman? It should be stated at the outset that Newman does in fact write that he believes so. However, this criticism is based on Newman’s theological and philosophical arguments as they appear in his writings. The difficulty consists in the interpretation of Newman. He never wrote a *Summa Theologiae* or anything similar to a modern dogmatic manual. His style of writing is prosaic and essayist. Perhaps the closest to a systematic treatment is the so-called *Newman-Perrone papers*, in which Newman attempted to express his thoughts

¹² Rahner, Karl & Lehman, Karl, “Geschichtlichkeit der Vermittlung”, in Feiner, Johannes & Löhrer, Magnus, *Mysterium Salutis – Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik Band 1*, Benzinger Verlag, Einsiedeln Zurich Köln p. 732.” Alle Theorien der Dogmenentwicklung und der Dogmengeschichte sind nichts anderes als die Versuche einer genaueren Antwort auf diese Frage, wie wirklich die neue Wahrheit die alte sein kann.”.

¹³ Böttigheimer, Christoph, “Wahrheit des Glaubens”, in Beinert, Wolfgang & Stubenrauch, Bertram (Eds) *Neues Lexikon der Katholischen Dogmatik*, Verlag Herder, 2012 p. 683.

from the *Essay* in scholastic language. But as this investigation will show, this too has its limitations for understanding the depth of Newman. A study of Newman's thought naturally has a place of its own where conflicting positions can be brought into dialogue with each other and subject to evaluation. Yet a secondary aim is to allow Newman to be a case-study for a contemporary understanding for the meaning and implication of the concept of a closed revelation. This deals with the areas of the development of doctrine and the nature of revelation. Therefore, the first part of this study will provide the theological tools and the relevant contexts for ultimately evaluating the critique and defence of Newman.

PART I

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CONCEPT OF REVELATION

Chapter 1. Paradigms of revelation

1.1 The critique of revelation

The term revelation has not always been a foundational topic within Christian theology. Nevertheless, there has always been a reflection regarding God's communication to mankind. Yet it is not until quite recently in history that the term revelation and the questions connected to it has acquired the meaning with which it is associated today. What is referred to as Modernity or *die Neuzeit*, ushers in a period of history which would change the conditions for understanding the term revelation. The end result between the meeting of Modernity in all its aspects with a Christian theology of revelation can be described as a paradigm shift for the understanding and interpretation of a theology of revelation.¹⁴ It was the challenges presented, especially during the Enlightenment that led to a critically reflected understanding of what is meant by the term revelation.¹⁵

The critique of revelation during the Enlightenment consisted in a question of the validity and claims of revelation. The era known as the Enlightenment can be described as a process of emancipation through reason, thereby posing serious challenges to arguments solely based on authority, tradition or ideology. As a consequence, mankind became the empirical point of reference and subject of all reality. The developments within the natural sciences led to an increasing immanent explanation of reality without reference to its transcendental side.

¹⁴ Seckler, Max & Kessler, Michael, "Die kritik der Offenbarung" in Kern, Walter; Pottmeyer, Hermann J & Seckler, Max, *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie Band 2 Traktat Offenbarung*, A Francke Verlag Tubingen und Basel, 2000, p. 37.

¹⁵ Böttigheimer, Christoph, *Lehrbuch der Fundamentaltheologie – Die Rationalität der Gottes-, Offenbarungs-, und Kirchenfrage*, 3 Auflage, Verlag Herder, 2016 p. 412.

Therefore, the very meaningfulness of addressing the subject of revelation at all was seriously put into question.¹⁶ The historical origin can be traced to the influence of nominalism at the end of the High Scholastic era (13th-14th century). Nominalism paved the way for Modernity. According to the school of nominalism, human thought does not have access to reality. There is no correspondence between thought and reality since the universals are mere names (*nomen*). With the influence of nominalism, it triggered the decline of the metaphysical tradition. Thought and Being became separated. For the role of theology, it meant the relegation of reason and a one-sided emphasis on faith.¹⁷ Therefore, with the initiation of the era known as Modernity, the philosophical conditions for addressing the question of revelation had drastically shifted. Only human reason was accepted as a standard of knowing. The critique of the Enlightenment ultimately led to the disintegration of the instruction-theoretical view of revelation, to a deeper and more historically oriented understanding of the nature of revelation which would ultimately see its mature development in the document of the Second Vatican Council – *Dei Verbum* (1965).¹⁸

1.2 Paradigms of Revelation

The *Handbuch der Fundamentaltheologie* and the *Neues Lexikon der Katholischen Dogmatik*, both divide the history of revelation-theology into three paradigms (*offenbarungsparadigmen*): the epiphanic (*epiphanisches*), the instruction-theoretical (*instruktionstheoretisches*), and the participative-communicative theoretical paradigm (*Kommunikationstheoretisch-partizipatives*). A brief recollection of the development of these paradigms in the history of theology will provide us with the necessary framework for closer investigation.

1.2.1. The epiphanic paradigm

Neither in antiquity nor within the Bible is there any formal concept of revelation. However, what does exist is the persevering experience as expressed in Hebrews 1:1 that “God spoke to our ancestors in many and various ways”. In the New Testament we find the awareness of previously recognizing revelation in the plural, until when the ultimate revelation has occurred

¹⁶ Kern, Pottmeyer & Seckler 2000, p. 15–16.

¹⁷ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 74–75.

¹⁸ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 508–510.

in Christ. The salvific events of the biblical narrative are seen as an epiphany of God's self and his majesty. The multitude of God's epiphanies has led to the one breakthrough and culmination in history through the incarnation. It constitutes a real experience of God's revelation, in contrast to a set of divinely appeared rules or truths. Instead, the emphasis is placed on the level of salvation history, not as a formalized doctrine of salvation, but as a true encounter with God. This does not exclude the fact that a biblical concept of revelation indeed sometimes contains a more cognitive aspect, nor do the models of this section in all ways exclude each other.¹⁹

The transition from an epiphanic model can be explained through Christianity's encounter with Gnosticism. The Christian faith had to be consolidated in opposition which led to a *regula fidei*, a rule of faith being developed. As a result, a new concept of revelation slowly started to emerge, especially considering the meeting between the Christian faith and Greek philosophy. The shift of focus became towards faith being based on a divine Logos (Joh 1:1) and that God's revelation was a matter of truth (Joh 14:16).²⁰

1.2.2 The instruction-theoretical paradigm

The gradual shift from the epiphanic to the instruction-theoretical paradigm marks an increasing separation between revelation and salvation history.²¹ Revelation is conceived in terms of a transmitted knowledge, a revealed body of truths. Naturally, as above stated, the epiphanic model contains a cognitive element, yet the contrast is that the instruction-theoretical view is a reduction to its doctrinal content.²² It is expressed clearly in Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) who describes revelation as an instruction process necessary for salvation.²³ As a result, revelation is discussed solely on a level of knowledge.²⁴ In contrast to what traditionally has been called natural revelation which states the existence of God, revelation became increasingly synonymous with the supernatural content of revelation as communicated by salvation history. Again, this signifies a separation between salvation history and revelation, since revelation does not imply the reality of God's communication, but truths of doctrine. This results in an understanding of revelation known as *extrinsic*. It is the attempt by reason alone to prove the

¹⁹ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 465-467.

²⁰ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 492.

²¹ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 492.

²² Kern, Pottmeyer & Seckler 2000, p. 45.

²³ Summa Theologiae I 1, 1 c. Respondeo dicendum quod necessarium fuit ad humanam salutem, esse doctrinam quandam secundum revelationem divinam, praeter philosophicas disciplinas, quae ratione humana investigantur.

²⁴ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 495.

rationality of faith. The evidence consisted of the biblical miracles, fulfilled prophecies and reliability of the testimony of revelation, thereby establishing its credibility. The content, the doctrines of faith, should thereafter be accepted based on God's authority. But as the history of theology/philosophy has shown, this method has failed to convince.²⁵ Yet the instruction-theoretical perspective would develop from the medieval emphasis on the mere cognitive and intellectual aspect to the neo-scholastic, conceptual (*konzeptualistisch*) and doctrinal (*doktrinalistisch*) view of revelation. The conceptual view distinguishes revelation as a divine causation of doctrine which results in a depositum of truths. In addition, the doctrinal aspect distinguishes revelation as a transmission of supernatural and unchangeable doctrines.²⁶

1.2.3 The participative-communicative theoretical paradigm

The Dogmatic Constitution of Divine Revelation – *Dei Verbum* – promulgated in 1965 at the end of the Second Vatican council (1962-1965), marks a definite transition to a deeper understanding of revelation. This development naturally did not occur overnight or even during the council but has its historical traces in the response to the Enlightenment critique of revelation. The critique was in matter of fact a prerequisite for the mature development which emerged in *Dei Verbum*. Revelation was once again united with salvation history, and furthermore revelation was first and foremost God's self-revelation and self-communication. It was a deepened understanding which entails that man even participates in the salvation reality of God.²⁷

Shifts in patterns of thought throughout history usually take place over time with several contributing facts. The term revelation is no exception. An important dimension lacking in the instruction-theoretical model was an historical awareness. With Modernity also followed the beginning of historical biblical studies, and the Reason of the Enlightenment had to make room for history. Likewise, the foundation of the historical-critical method ended the literal identification of the biblical text with the Word of God. As a result, the biblical text became seen as an immanent expression of human experience. These challenges sparked a renewal of what is really meant with the term revelation.²⁸ The conclusion reached was that revelation is

²⁵ Kern, Pottmeyer & Seckler 2000, p. 37.

²⁶ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 497.

²⁷ Kern, Pottmeyer & Seckler 2000, p. 47.

²⁸ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 521.

expressed as faith in God's seeking communication with man, not as a special epistemological way of knowing.²⁹

1.3 Conciliar views on revelation

This section will in brief outline the significant aspect regarding revelation in three church councils: Trent, the First and Second Vatican councils.

1.3.1 The Council of Trent (1545-1563)

The central text for the purposes of this investigation was issued on 8th April 1546:

The holy, ecumenical, and general Council of Trent, lawfully assembled in the Holy Spirit...has always this purpose in mind that in the Church errors be removed and the purity of the gospel be preserved. This gospel was promised of old through the prophets in the Sacred Scriptures; our Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, first promulgated it from his own lips; he in turn ordered that it be preached through the apostles to all creatures (cf. Mk. 16:15) as the source of all saving truth and norms of conduct. The council clearly perceives that this truth and rule are contained in the written books and unwritten traditions that have come down to us, having been received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself or from the apostles by the dictation of the Holy Spirit, and have been transmitted, as it were, from hand to hand. Following, then, the example of the orthodox Fathers, it receives and venerates with the same sense of loyalty and reverence all the books of the Old and New Testament – for the one God is the author of both – together with all the traditions concerning faith and practice, as coming from the mouth of Christ or being inspired by the Holy Spirit and preserved in continuous succession in the Catholic church.³⁰

²⁹ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 523.

³⁰ Denzinger, Heinrich, *Enchiridion symbolorum definitionum et declarationum de rebus fidei et morum / Compendium of Creeds, Definitions and Declarations on Matters of Faith and Morals*, revised, enlarged, and in collaboration with Helmut Hoping, edited by Peter Hünermann for the original bilingual edition, and edited by Robert Fastiggi and Anne Englund Nash for the English edition, Ignatius Press San Francisco (43rd edition), 2012. Latin text § 1501: Sacrosancta oecumenica et generalis Tridentina Synodus, in Spiritu Sancto legitime congregata, ... hoc sibi perpetuo ante oculos proponens, ut sublatis erroribus puritas ipsa Evangelii in Ecclesia conservetur, quod promissum ante per Prophetas in Scripturis sanctis Dominus noster Jesus Christus Dei Filius proprio ore primum promulgavit, deinde per suos Apostolos tamquam fontem omnis salutaris veritatis et morum disciplinae 'omni creaturae praedicari' (Mc 16.15) jussit; perspicuensque, hanc veritatem et disciplinam contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus, quae ab ipsius Christi ore ab Apostolis acceptae, aut ab ipsis Apostolis Spiritu Sancto dictante quasi per manus traditae ad nos usque pervenerunt, orthodoxorum Patrum exempla secuta, omnes libros tam Veteris quam Novi Testamenti, cum utriusque Unus Deus sit auctor, nec non traditiones ipsas, tum ad

As the text shows, the word revelation is not mentioned. Instead the word “Gospel” has priority. The gospel or doctrine of salvation is the object of our faith. As Latourelle remarks, this text makes three essential statements:

- a) The gospel has been given in stages. It was announced/promised (*promissum*) by the prophets, promulgated (*promulgavit*) by Christ, and preached (*praedicari*) by the Apostles. This is the source of all saving truth (*fontem omnis salutaris veritatis*).
- b) This saving truth is contained in the inspired books of Scripture and in unwritten traditions (*contineri in libris scriptis et sine scripto traditionibus*.)
- c) With equal reverence the council accepts the Scripture and traditions “received by the apostles from the mouth of Christ himself” (*ab ipsius Christi ore ab Apostolis acceptae*).³¹

As illustrated, the object of faith is described as doctrine i) taught by Christ, ii) transmitted by the Apostles and iii) preserved by the Church.

1.3.2 The First Vatican Council (1869-1870)

In broad terms, the council had a defensive and apologetic agenda. It was positioning itself against Rationalism, Naturalism and Fideism. In this context Rationalism “refers to the view that assent to faith rests on rational insight and that the truth of faith can be demonstrated by reasoned argument – but also that the credibility of faith is not positively provable.”³² On the other end of the spectrum is Fideism which is defined as the view that “ Grace alone makes it possible to recognize the truth of revelation through an interior experience, and not through the external signs, or motives of credibility, that accompany revelation.”³³

The Council Fathers saw very clearly how the foundations of faith were being threatened on several fronts. This confrontation did not engage in dialogue but in the form of setting boundaries and condemnations.³⁴ The council’s understanding of revelation fit the shape of the

fidem, tum ad mores pertinentes, tamquam vel oretenus a Christo, vel a Spiritu Sancto dictatas et continua successione in Ecclesia catholica conservatas, pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia suscipit et venerator.

³¹ Latourelle, René, “Revelation”, in *Dictionary of Fundamental theology*, Latourelle, René & Rino Fisichella (Eds), Crossroad New York, 1995 p. 924.

³² Groth, Bernd, “Rationalism” in *Dictionary of Fundamental theology*, Latourelle, René & Rino Fisichella (Eds), Crossroad New York, 1995, p. 808.

³³ Latourelle, René, “Fideism and Traditionalism” in *Dictionary of Fundamental theology*, Latourelle, René & Rino Fisichella (Eds), Crossroad New York, 1995, p. 318.

³⁴ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 498.

instruction-theoretical model where it was primarily seen as doctrines of truth bestowed in an immutable depositum.³⁵ A few examples from the texts further highlights the point. The main focus is not placed on God's self-revelation but on that which has been "proposed for belief as having been divinely revealed."³⁶ Revelation is described as a teaching³⁷ and a revealed truth to be believed on God's authority.³⁸ This way of describing revelation was the standard praxis up until and including the beginning of the Second Vatican Council whose initial text on revelation was entitled *De fontibus revelationis*. That text bore all the trademarks of a text addressing revelation in the style and manner of the instruction-theoretical model.

1.3.3 The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965)

The literature on the Second Vatican council and its teaching on revelation is vast and extensive. For the purposes of this investigation, it can be noted that the council's understanding coincides with model expressed in 1.2.3. In all its conciliar documents, the ambition was to be a pastoral council. The church was presented not as an authoritative teacher, but as a listening Church to the Word of God. Revelation constitutes all of reality, not just a specific revealed part. As such, this new understanding of revelation led to a new mode of existence for the believer. Despite all emphasis on what is new, *Dei Verbum* itself expresses that it stands in continuity with both Trent and the First Vatican council. Nevertheless, the Second Vatican council clearly states that revelation has its complete fulfilment in Jesus Christ and maintains a close identity between salvation history and revelation. This "new" model, which bears resemblance to the epiphanic model can be described as dialogical, personal, communicative and interaction-based.³⁹

Comparing *Dei Verbum* to *Dei Filius* (the conciliar text on revelation from the First Vatican council), an initial difference is that the First Vatican council addressed first God's revelation to creation and then historical revelation, whereas the Second Vatican council reversed the order. *Dei Verbum* commences with the personal revelation of God in Jesus Christ. The language used is thoroughly biblical and the aim is to express the communication and exchange between God and man. This is clearly seen in the language used: "man might in the Holy Spirit

³⁵ Kern, Pottmeyer & Seckler 2000, p. 7.

³⁶ DH § 3011: "tamquam divinitus revelata credenda proponuntur".

³⁷ DH § 3027: "revelationem divinam...doceatur".

³⁸ DH § 3032: "ut revelata veritas propter auctoritatem Dei revelantis credatur".

³⁹ Böttigheimer 2016, p. 527–528.

have access to the Father and come to share in the divine nature”⁴⁰; eventually stating that: “Through divine revelation, God chose to show forth and communicate Himself and the eternal decisions of His will regarding the salvation of men.”⁴¹ In closing, *Dei Verbum* recaptures biblical and patristic insights after having faced and met the challenges of the critique from Modernity.

Chapter 2. A closed revelation: the history of the concept

The question about a closed revelation, meaning the normativity of the beginning of Christianity, unites the Christian confessions. Agreement exists that Christ and his apostles determine the Christian faith today. The traditional formula in catholic dogmatics is that revelation *closed with the death of the last apostle*. But what does this entail and how has this formula developed? This chapter seeks to answer these questions as groundwork for an interpretation of Newman.

2.1 The Biblical account

In the New Testament, Jesus Christ is understood both as the content and final aim of all prophecy. It is clear from the New Testament that Jesus is seen as the ultimate fulfilment of the Old Testament, implying that it cannot be superseded. Hebrews 9:26 refers to Christ appearing once and for all. Since the early church, attested by the New Testament, the idea that salvation in Christ is unsurpassable and definite, is a cornerstone. At no place in the New Testament is there any reference to the fulness of truth ever being added to or amended in any way. Christ is the peak and fulfilment of all revelation, and that which has been handed to the church (depositum) is to be guarded (2 Tim 1:14; 1 Tim 6:20). To this revelation the apostles have a unique and privileged position. According to Joh 15:15 all truth has been communicated to the

⁴⁰ DH § 4202: “homines per Christum, Verbum carnem factum, in Spiritu Sancto accessum habent ad Patrem et divinae naturae consortes efficiuntur.”

⁴¹ Latourelle, René, “Dei Verbum II: Commentary”, *Dictionary of Fundamental theology*, Latourelle, René & Rino Fisichella (Eds), Crossroad New York, 1995, p. 219; DH § 4206: “Divina revelatione Deus Seipsum atque aeterna voluntatis suae decreta circa hominum salutem manifestare ac communicare voluit.”

apostles. Already in the New Testament do we find evidence for the unsurpassable status of Christ and the exclusive position of his apostles.⁴²

2.2 The Patristic era

As always it is difficult to draw a distinct line between one era in history and another. Nevertheless, in what we refer to as the patristic era, with the early founding of the church, there was an outspoken awareness between the actual founding of the church and the apostles. Clemens of Rome (35-99 AD.), Ignatius of Antioch (d. 108 AD.) and Polycarp of Smyrna (65-155 AD.) all consider themselves distinctly separate from the Twelve Apostles. They are focused on that revelation is not to be distorted and that it must remain intact.⁴³

One of the most vigilant combatants against Gnosticism was Irenaeus (130-202 AD). He spoke of Christ in terms of the Truth. The fulfilment of revelation was given therefore in the incarnation. This same fullness is found in the apostolic preaching.⁴⁴ In general it can be said to be a theme in the patristic fathers of continual reference to the apostle's role in transmitting the revelation and the peak of such revelation in Christ. Irenaeus and Clemens both make reference to the Apostles having "complete knowledge" at Pentecost.⁴⁵ Similarly the usage of words such as *doctrina apostolorum*, *praedictio apostolorum*, contains the same meaning as a closed deposit of faith.⁴⁶

Of the late patristic period Vincent of Lerins (d.445 AD) writes: "What is 'the deposit'? That which has been entrusted to you, not that which you have yourself devised: a matter not of wit, but of learning; not of private adoption, but of public tradition; a matter brought to you, not put forth by you, wherein you are bound to be not an author but a keeper, not a teacher but a disciple, not a leader but a follower. Keep the deposit. Preserve the talent of Catholic Faith inviolate, unadulterated... Yet teach still the same truths which you have learned, so that though you speak after a new fashion, what you speak may not be new."⁴⁷

⁴² Schumacher, Joseph, *Der Apostolische Abschluß der Offenbarung Gottes*, Freiburger theologische Studien, Herder, 1979, p. 81-82.

⁴³ Schumacher 1979, p. 84.

⁴⁴ Schumacher 1979, p. 85.

⁴⁵ Blum, Georg Günter, *Offenbarung und Überlieferung – Die dogmatische Konstitution Dei Verbum des II. Vaticanums im Lichte altkirchlicher und moderner Theologie*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1971, p. 86. "Nec enim fas est dicere, quoniam ante praedicaverunt quam perfectam haberent agnitionem."

⁴⁶ Schumacher 1979, p. 86.

⁴⁷ Commonitorium, chapter 22. For English translation: <https://www.newadvent.org/fathers/3506.htm>. For Latin translation see: <https://archive.org/details/commonitoriumofv00vinc/page/86/mode/2up>. "Quid est depositum? Id est, quod tibi creditum est, non quod a te inuentum quod accepisti, non quod excogitasti; rem non ingenii sed

In his *Commonitorium*, written 434, we see the first historical traces of the problem of development and identity of the Christian faith. As the above citation shows, Vincent rejected any real development. Here we again see the problem with a too one-sided intellectual understanding of revelation, where it is equated with dogma. Nevertheless, Vincent's argument was an attempt to solve the tension between development and the immutability of the Christian revelation.⁴⁸

Without hesitation the idea of a closed revelation is unanimous in the patristic period. However, as a term or concept it is unprecise and under development. As Schumacher notes, the difference is often disregarded between private revelation, special revelation, or the act of accepting revelation in faith. Despite this, consensus exists of a closed revelation in terms of the revelation on Christ not being able to be superseded.⁴⁹

2.3 *The Medieval era*

The purpose of this chapter is not an account of the history of revelation, but rather with a few historical examples illustrate that the idea of a closed revelation belongs to the core of revelation theology. Therefore, an exhaustive presentation of what is meant by revelation during the medieval era is not within the range of this investigation. What is relevant, however, is to observe that the term revelation, as today commonly understood within theology, had a different meaning in the medieval era. What theology after the Council of Trent would call revelation – in the sense of a deposit of faith, is often what mediaeval theologians would call faith.⁵⁰ In general, from patristic to medieval time, the doctrine of revelation was materially not developed as would later be the case.⁵¹ Again, the normativity of Christ was never in dispute, yet an unprecise and broad notion of revelation existed. Thomas Aquinas may suffice as an example. He clearly writes of the fulfilment of grace in Christ: “It is not possible to add or diminish

doctrinae, non usurpationis priuatae sed publicae traditionis; rem ad te perductam, non a te prolatam; in qua non auctor debes esse sed custos, non institutor sed sectator, non ducens sed sequens. Depositum, inquit, custodi; catholicae fidei talentum inuiolatum inlibatumque conserua...Eadem tamen, quae didicisti, doce, ut cum dicas noue, non dicas noua.”

⁴⁸ Blum 1971, p. 128.

⁴⁹ Schumacher 1979, p. 90-91.

⁵⁰ Schumacher 1979, p. 96.

⁵¹ Rahner, Karl & Ratzinger, Joseph, *Quaestiones Disputatae 25, Offenbarung und Überlieferung*, Herder, 1965, p. 67.

anything to Christ's teaching".⁵² Revelation is clearly described as closed in the meaning of being unsurpassable.

At the root of the issue regarding the term revelation in medieval times is that we today do not have any word which fully corresponds to its contemporary meaning. As pointed out by Schumacher, it is possible to find theologians speaking of *revelationis novae divinae*, however this hardly constitutes evidence for a doctrine of "new revelation" or a continued revelation as understood today. Instead, we find the beginnings of a discussion regarding the sufficiency of Scripture. As is sometimes the case, those medieval theologians who do speak about new revelation, are really voicing an authoritative understanding of Tradition, but not calling into question Christ's normativity.⁵³

2.4 Tridentine theology

Despite that the specific terminology was not used of a closed revelation, the council of Trent gives clear expression to the content of the doctrine. Foundational for revelation is Scripture and Tradition (see section 1.3.1). In comparison to the traditional church doctrine which states that revelation is complete with the apostles its traces can be found already at Trent which manifests that revelation is still ongoing after Jesus death and resurrection since the apostles received Tradition from Christ directly or through the Holy Spirit. By implication, the revelation given to the apostles via the Holy Spirit ended with the death of the last Apostle. Similarly, to the previous section, the authors who wrote in the aftermaths of the Tridentine council did not specifically write of a closed or ended revelation.⁵⁴

2.5 A response from the Magisterium

The subject of revelation came to occupy the attention of the Magisterium during the 19th century. With the historical context of the Enlightenment and Rationalism the questions of revelation, faith and reason became acutely relevant. The very possibility and meaningfulness

⁵² Schumacher 1979, p. 98. "doctrinae quantum ad essentialia fidei nec addere nec diminuere licet."

⁵³ Schumacher 1979, p. 102.

⁵⁴ Schumacher 1979, p. 103-104.

of a revelation was under threat. Quite a few theologians set out in a course which would prove not compatible with official church doctrine. Schools of thought such as semi-rationalism, Traditionalism, and Fideism all resulted in an imbalance in the relationship between faith and reason where one was emphasized at the expense of the other.⁵⁵ In 1846 pope Pius IX condemned Rationalism in his Encyclical *Qui Pluribus*. He writes: “And with no less deceit certainly, venerable Brothers, those enemies of divine revelation, exalting human progress with the highest praise, with a rash and sacrilegious daring would wish to introduce it into the Catholic religion, just as if religion itself were not the work of God but of men, or were some philosophical discovery that could be perfected by human means.”⁵⁶ The themes of progress and development were all characteristic of the time, but the pope made it clear that revelation was not an area of human progress. In the brief *Eximiam tuam*, it is written that: “all those things are disturbed which should remain most stable, not only concerning the distinction between science and faith, but also concerning the eternal immutability of faith, which is always one and the same...”⁵⁷

As a consequence of the parallel schools of thought, pope Pius IX in 1864 issued the *Syllabus Errorum* which was a collection of errors of thought by the theologians of the time which was condemned by the Magisterium. For the interest of this investigation, the following proposition was condemned: “Divine revelation is imperfect and hence subject to continual and indefinite progress, which ought to correspond to the progress of human reason.”⁵⁸ As the Bull *Ineffabilis Deus* would proclaim about dogmatic development, the church “never changes anything, never diminishes anything, never adds anything to these...and they grow according to their own nature, namely, within the same dogma and in the same sense and the same meaning.”⁵⁹ The First Vatican council managed to find a midpoint position which prevented a substantial growth in the doctrines of faith but permitted a deeper understanding of the idea of development.⁶⁰

⁵⁵ Schumacher 1979, p. 107.

⁵⁶ DH § 2777: “Neque minore certe fallacia, Venerabiles Fratres, isti divinae revelationis inimici humanum progressum summis laudibus efferentes in catholicam religionem temerario plane ac sacrilego ausu illum inducer vellent, perinde ac si ipsa religio non Dei, sed hominum opus esset aut philosophicum aliquod inventum, quod humanis modis perfici queat.”

⁵⁷ DH § 2829: “quae firmissima manere debent tum de distinctione inter scientiam et fidem, tum de perenni fidei immutabilitate, que una semper atque eadem ist...”

⁵⁸ DH § 2905: “Divina revelatio est imperfecta et idcirco subjecta continuo et indefinito progressui, qui humanae rationis progressui respondeat”

⁵⁹ DH § 2802: “Christi enim Ecclesia, nihil in his umquam permutat, nihil minuit, nihil addit...ac in suo tantum genere crescant, in eodem scilicet dogmate, eodem sensu eademque sententia.”

⁶⁰ Schumacher 1979, p. 110-111

2.6 The Modernist crisis

The ultimate purpose of Modernism – which was a variety of theological and philosophical streams of thought, was to harmonize the data of revelation with history, the sciences and culture.⁶¹ The Roman Catholic church was not prepared for this challenge and responded authoritatively instead of seeking dialogue. It was a crisis for the church that feared revelation being reduced into blind religious feeling.⁶² As a reaction towards the extrinsic view of revelation (section 1.2.2), the modernist tendency was to replace it with immanentism. Dogma was seen solely as symbols without lasting value, in combination with an evolutionary concept of dogma – thus negating a closed revelation.⁶³ In lack of a profound answer to the challenges of Modernism, the catholic church firmly reiterated the functions of preserving and safeguarding the deposit.⁶⁴

For the purposes of the question pertaining to this section, the decree *Lamentabili* (1907) is of utmost importance. It was a complete condemnation of the various thoughts expressed by Modernism. The decree *Lamentabili* condemned that both “Revelation, constituting the object of the Catholic faith, was not completed with the apostles”⁶⁵ and that “The dogmas the Church presents as revealed are not truths fallen from heaven, but a certain interpretation of religious facts that the human mind has acquired by laborious effort.”⁶⁶ Both of these condemned theses express the fundamental nature of a closed revelation. The reaction from the Magisterium was an emphasis on the immutability and the transcendence of doctrine as expressed in the condemnation that “Christ did not teach a determined body of doctrine applicable to all times and all men but, rather, inaugurated a religious movement adapted or to be adapted to different times and places”.⁶⁷

⁶¹ Latourelle, René, “Revelation”, in *Dictionary of Fundamental theology*, Latourelle, René & Rino Fisichella (Eds), Crossroad New York, 1995 p. 927.

⁶² Latourelle 1995, p. 928.

⁶³ Schumacher 1979, p. 115.

⁶⁴ Schumacher 1979, p. 116.

⁶⁵ DH §3421: “Revelatio, obiectum fidei catholicae constituens, non fuit cum Apostolis completa.”

⁶⁶ DH §3422: “Dogmata, quae Ecclesia perhibet tamquam revelata, non sunt veritates e caelo delapsae, sed sunt interpretation quaedam factorum religiosorum, quam humana mens laborioso conatu sibi comparavit.”

⁶⁷ Schumacher 1979, p. 118; Denzinger § 3459: “Christus determinatum doctrinae corpus omnibus temporibus hominibus applicabile non docuit, sed potius inchoavit motum quondam religiosum diversis temporibus ac locis adaptum vel adaptandum.”

2.7 Manuals of catholic dogmatic theology

Johannes Kuhn writes in the second edition of his *Katholische Dogmatik* that divine revelation in Christ is “abgeschlossen und vollendet”.⁶⁸ Kuhn is important for this question since his clear connection between Christ and his apostles – the carriers of revelation, starts to address the question of development of doctrine. Having in mind the decree of *Lamentabili*, we find the historical traces here in Kuhn who argues that it is impossible to separate the teaching of Christ from the apostles. In this sense it became understandable that revelation is closed with the death of the last apostle.⁶⁹

One of the most significant theologians of the Roman school was Giovanni Perrone (1794-1876). In his work *Praelectiones theologiae* he writes that revelation is both complete and has ceased with the death of the last apostle. Through the influence of Perrone the formulation of a closed revelation with the death of the last apostle gained increasing influence.⁷⁰ Another theologian of the 19th century of vast influence was M.J. Scheeben who in his manual *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik* also addresses revelation as “abgeschlossen”.⁷¹ The revelation given in Christ is the ultimate fulfilment and cannot later be superseded. As in the case of Kuhn, the question of a closed revelation addresses the issue of the development of doctrine. Scheeben writes that the substance of revelation does not objectively grow, only a more complete and clear understanding is presented.⁷² The only thing that can be said to grow is the total amount of revealed truth, but this is truth which can implicitly be understood to have already existed with Christ and his apostles.⁷³

The same established terminology continues in the dogmatic manuals of the 20th century. R. Garrigou-Lagrange (1867-1964) writes that revelation is complete after Christ and the apostles and thereafter no new revelation exists.⁷⁴ Likewise Ludwig Ott (1906-1985) writes in his

⁶⁸ Kuhn, Johannes von, *Katholische Dogmatik*, Erster Band Zweite Auflage, 1859 P. 12. Downloaded through Munchener DigitalisierungsZentrum Digitale Bibliothek. Available online at: https://reader.digitale-sammlungen.de//de/fs1/object/display/bsb10398549_00005.html

⁶⁹ Schumacher 1979, p. 122.

⁷⁰ Schumacher 1979, p. 123.

⁷¹ Scheeben, Mathias Joseph, *Handbuch der Katholischen Dogmatik*, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1873, p. 38.

Available online at: https://books.google.se/books?id=LHTMYRh7nsC&pg=PP11&hl=sv&source=gbs_selected_pages&cad=2#v=onepage&q&f=false

⁷² Scheeben, p. 37. “dass die Substanz der Offenbarung (oder das objectum fidei) nicht objektiv gewachsen,

sonder bloß vollständiger und deutlicher vorgelegt worden sei”.

⁷³ Scheeben, p. 38.

⁷⁴ Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald, *De revelatione per ecclesiam catholicam proposita*, 1926, p. 82. “Unde post Christum et Apostolos, Revelatio est completa, non fit nova Revelatio communis, fiunt solum nova revelationes privatae quae non pertinent ad infallibilem doctrinam Ecclesiae.” Available online at:

Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma that general revelation was concluded with Christ and the apostles, further he admits to the problem of development of doctrine through accidental development, which is where what was previously only held implicitly has become explicitly known.⁷⁵

The well-established conclusion of this overview of the catholic dogmatic manuals of the 19th and 20th century is that the terminology of a closed revelation with the death of the last apostle is a natural component. Schumacher writes that the problem of development is dealt with more expressly after the Second World War, due to an increased awareness of biblical exegesis. Furthermore, in the Latin manuals compared to the German, there is a shift in usage between speaking of the *Abschluß* of revelation or, as is done in the Latin manuals, completion of revelation.⁷⁶

Chapter 3. The development of doctrine

John Henry Newman wrote his *Essay on the development of Christian doctrine* to account for the fact of development and the continuity of doctrine. Throughout history, any theory of doctrinal development presupposes a teaching of a closed revelation. It is worth restating the words from the introduction to this thesis – how can there be continuity between the “old” and “new” truth. The presupposition of any theory of development is that what appears as “new” in fact is somehow related to and found within the apostolic revelation of Christ. The extent of Newman’s success in this particular question will be the pivotal point of focus in the following chapters. Therefore, this chapter will provide the theological context of how continuity of doctrine has historically been accounted for in relation to a complete revelation in Christ and his apostles.

3.1 Dogma

What do we mean when referring to dogma? The short answer is that it is a binding and normative church teaching based on divine revelation with consideration taken to its historical

<https://ia800807.us.archive.org/25/items/GarrigouLagrangeDeRevelatione/Garrigou-Lagrange%20De%20Revelatione.pdf>

⁷⁵ Ott, Ludwig, *Fundamentals of Catholic dogma*, Tan books and Publishers, Illinois 1974, p. 7.

⁷⁶ Schumacher 1979, p. 135-136.

process of reception.⁷⁷ This definition which might be considered an age-old definition is in fact a modern phenomenon. In fact, the meaning of “dogma” has itself been subject to a process of development. It is of importance to note that the biblical usage of the word dogma does not correspond to the modern definition. It was not until the time of Neo-Scholasticism that the word dogma underwent a more magisterial definition and became a word of theological terminology.⁷⁸ The Greek word dogma means decree. Within catholic theology a biblical point of reference for understanding the word dogma has been Acts 16:14 when Paul and Timothy inform of the decision at the meeting in Jerusalem. This of course have connotations of an official teaching of the church. However, Luke also uses the word dogma to describe the decree of emperor Augustus for his tax registration (Luk 2:1).⁷⁹ The varying usage is also seen in Augustine (354-430) who uses dogma to denote a heretical stance. On the other hand, Vincent of Lerins in his *Commonitorium* used the word in a mere recognisable fashion as a church teaching (*dogma ecclesiasticum*).⁸⁰ The first traces of what can correspond to a modern understanding of dogma is found in 1674 in the writings of Francois Véron. He used the expression “dogmes certains de foi”. Véron emphasized that dogma refers to the degree of obligation required for a specific teaching.⁸¹ Yet it took another hundred years for a closer definition which resembles the current. Philip Neri Chrismann wrote of three marks of a dogma of faith in 1792: i) a teaching of divine revelation, ii) it is taught by the Church as binding for faith and iii) that the opposite standpoint is considered heresy. As a word applicable in the usage from the Magisterium it became implemented not until the papacy of Pius IX (1846-1878).⁸²

3.2 Development and a closed revelation?

There exists an apparent difficulty in explaining development while at the same time accounting for continuity. The solution must be sought in how the “new dogma” is implicit in the old.⁸³ Michael Seewald (1987-) expresses the problem of development of doctrine as grasping the simultaneity of discontinuity and continuity.⁸⁴ At the same time as development is clearly seen

⁷⁷ Böttigheimer, Christoph, “Dogma/Dogmatische Aussagen”, in *Neues Lexikon der katholischen dogmatik*, 2012, p. 128.

⁷⁸ Seewald, Michael, *Dogma im Wandel – wie Glaubenslehren sich entwickeln*, Verlag Herder, 2018, p. 24-26.

⁷⁹ Seewald 2018, p. 25-26.

⁸⁰ Seewald 2018, p. 29.

⁸¹ Seewald 2018, p. 31.

⁸² Seewald 2018, p. 34-36.

⁸³ Rahner, Karl & Lehman, Karl, “Geschichtlichkeit der Vermittlung”, in Feiner, Johannes & Löhner, Magnus, *Mysterium Salutis – Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik Band 1*, Benzinger Verlag, Einsiedeln Zurich Köln, p. 732.

⁸⁴ Seewald 2018, p. 52.

throughout the history of theology, it always needs to be related to the idea of a closed revelation. Augustine provides an example which is easy to follow. The council of Nicaea (325 AD) reached a decision of the *homoousios to patri*. Augustine writes that by this definition nothing “new” is really reached since its content is the same as Jesus words in John 10:30: Me and the Father are one. The discontinuity was in the terminology, but a way was found to establish continuity in the language.⁸⁵ Schumacher refers the example of the papacy where the self-understanding of the Roman-Catholic church is the reference to Peter (Matt 16:18). Yet to the development of this doctrine the first letter of Clemens testifies to the significance of the bishop of Rome. This illustrates as Schumacher points out, the difficulty when a doctrine is not explicitly stated in the New Testament and in addition to Scripture the historical context of its development is taken into consideration. Furthermore, it also sheds light on the concept of “closed” revelation since it by no means implies that no new single statement can enter the consciousness of the church, only that the supernatural content cannot be expanded. Schumacher explains that as in the idea of a closed revelation, both in the patristic, medieval and up until today, the notion exists that the apostles had complete knowledge of the contents of revelation. There it is important to clarify that this does not entail them having a complete grasp of every dogma but a deep rooting in the true nature of Christianity. To say contrary would not in itself be in accordance with the idea of a historical development. Nevertheless, development of dogma never entails a development in its substance.⁸⁶

3.3 Development of doctrine in the Patristic era

The incitement to consolidate a Christian canon came by the confrontation with Gnosticism. Throughout the patristic era it was a unanimous idea that “new” teachings are only explications of the original teachings of Christ and his apostles.⁸⁷ The first theologian to give an in-depth account of development was Vincent of Lerins. An important component of his work, *Commonitorium*, is his distinction between *profectus* and *permutatio*. *Profectus* being when one and the same thing expands and *permutatio* being when something is formed into something else. The criteria used to investigate what actually is catholic doctrine is his famous dictum: “*quod ubique, quod semper et ab omnibus credendum est*” – that which is believed everywhere, always and by everyone. As Seewald remarks, all of these points require plenty of

⁸⁵ Seewald 2018, p. 54.

⁸⁶ Schumacher 1979, p. 171-173.

⁸⁷ Schumacher 1979, p. 175.

clarification, but as a historical benchmark Vincent of Lerin has had a profound influence especially since the 16th century.⁸⁸

3.4 Development of doctrine in the Medieval era

The problem of development and a closed revelation is a phenomenon of Modernity. Nevertheless a few historical remarks can be made which illustrate important traces of the question. In the discussion between the Eastern and Western part of the Church, the common example usually highlighted is the *filioque* debate. Anselm of Canterbury (1033-1109) argued that the Spirit proceeds both from the Father and the Son – by way of logical reasoning. This was something which could be seen as implicitly being contained and could be deduced logically. This leads Anselm to conclude that: “we ought to accept with certainty not only those things which we read in Sacred Scripture but also the statements which follow from them by rational necessity and which no other rational considerations contradict.”⁸⁹ Explaining development by way of logic would be the dominant approach up until the 20th century.⁹⁰ One of the most influential theologians of the medieval era was Thomas Aquinas. When understanding Thomas view on the questions of growth in matters of faith, it is essential to point out that it was not until the 19th century that the discussion of theological conclusions by logic was placed in the context of development of doctrine. Within the logical theories of development, the distinction between implicit and explicit was used. Originally when used in early Scholasticism it referred to the question of faith:

- *Fides explicita*: a clear confession of the content of faith
- *Fides implicita*: a confession of faith that has not been articulated.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Seewald 2018, p. 123-124.

⁸⁹ Hopkins, Jaspers; Richardson, Herbert, “The procession of the Holy Spirit”, from *Complete Philosophical and Theological treatises of Anselm of Canterbury*, The Arthur J Banning Press, Minneapolis, p. 502. Quoted online from <https://jasper-hopkins.info/DeProcessione.pdf>. Latin translation: Quare non tantum suscipere cum certitudines debemus quae in Sacra Scriptura leguntur, sed etiam ea quae ex his, nulla alia contradicente ratione, rationabili necessitate sequuntur. Quoted from <https://archive.org/details/patrologiaecurs55unkngoog/page/n162/mode/2up>

⁹⁰ Seewald 2018, p. 150.

⁹¹ Schulz, Winfried, *Dogmenentwicklung als Problem der Geschichtlichkeit der Wahrheitserkenntnis: Eine erkenntnistheoretisch-theologische Studie zum Problemkreis der Dogmenentwicklung*, Typis Pontificiae Universitatis Gregorianae, Rome, 1969 p. 75; Seewald 2018, p. 158.

An example from Thomas says that all articles of implicit faith is contained in some primary explication of the faith. But as Schulz maintains, in the writing of Thomas there does not exist any theory of development only what later has been used in that context.⁹²

3.5 The birth of the question of development

As several studies on the development of doctrine testify to, the theological question of development as we recognize it today starts in the 19th century.⁹³ Depending on how revelation is previously defined, either in the form of the instruction-theoretical or communicative-participative view, it will have consequences for how development is explained. The explanation given by Anselm in the *filioque* question sets the tone for how development was explained in the late medieval era and the Neo-Scholastic line of thought in modernity. Development was explained through logic and syllogism. Seewald comments that the controversy was not the use of rationality and logic, but the theological status ascribed to the *conclusio theologica*.⁹⁴ The major criticism of such a way of reasoning is based on the understanding of revelation. All of the so-called logical theories presuppose that revelation is equivalent to propositional truths.⁹⁵ The question of development is solely understood in terms of logical explications through syllogism.⁹⁶

The term development used in catholic theology needs to be understood in relation to the romantic/idealistic context of the 19th century and the protestant project of *Dogmengeschichte*. Starting with the undertaking of the historical-critical research and the writing of a history of dogmas, they proposed a challenge towards the traditional catholic way of understanding dogma as static and immutable.⁹⁷ It is at this point that two patterns of understanding emerge: on the protestant side, dogma was viewed in the form of a history of decay (*Abfallsgeschichte*) where the original teachings of Christ had been corrupted through the influence of the Church; on the catholic side, the history of dogma was seen in light of progress (*Fortschrittsgeschichte*). What is here being treated is the foundational question of the relationship between truth and

⁹² Schulz 1969, p. 76. Thomas writes: "...omnes articuli implicite continentur in aliquibus primis credibilibus, scilicet ut credatur Deus esse et providentiam habere circa hominum salutem." Quoted in Schulz 1969, p. 75.

⁹³ Schumacher 1979, p. 178.

⁹⁴ Seewald 2018, p. 213.

⁹⁵ Hammans, Herbert, *Die neueren Katholischen Erklärungen der Dogmenentwicklung*, Ludgerus Verlag Hubert Wingen KG, Essen, 1965, p. 164.

⁹⁶ Schumacher 1979, p. 186; Seewald 2018, p. 214.

⁹⁷ Seewald 2018, p. 59.

history.⁹⁸ The protestant theologian Johann Salomo Semler (1725-1791) views the history of Christianity not only in terms of decay, but he was likewise influenced by the Enlightenment ideal of perfectibility. This idea expressed the notion of religion always in the movement from a lower to a higher degree of perfectibility. The consequences seen in hindsight was a growing discontinuity between the language and teaching of Jesus, and the official Church doctrine.⁹⁹

During the 19th century, a historical period which saw the rise of a historical consciousness, posed a serious challenge to the dominant neo-scholastic theology. However, two exceptions exist, one is John Henry Newman and the other is the school of thought referred to as the Catholic Tübingen School. The founder of this school was Johann Sebastian von Drey (1777-1853), the first catholic theologian to engage with research of the history of dogma in relation to a theory of development.¹⁰⁰ Drey argues that there is “ein gewisses Wachstum”, a certain growth of the Christian dogmas. Drey sets himself apart from Semler’s idea of perfectibility. Instead, he argues, not from a deficiency in the Christian beginning, but from its completeness. Christ sent his apostles to preach the gospel to all people. This was nothing that could be accomplished all at once and since different cultures have varying degrees of receptivity. Christ founded the Church with this awareness and sent the Holy Spirit to guarantee the faithfulness of the growth in dogma. Drey was convinced that development was a principal component of Catholicism – in comparison to the static *sola scriptura* of Protestantism.¹⁰¹

Drey’s student, Johann Adam Möhler (1796-1838), continued to expand on his teacher’s thoughts. Möhler envisaged an organic ecclesiology with the Holy Spirit as the life principle of the Church. The used analogy of the developments was of the human body to explain dogmatic developments. Despite the changes which a human body undergoes, what remains the same is the human consciousness (*Bewusstsein*). Continuity is a question of consciousness. Möhler uses the term Spirit (*Geist*) to describe the inner consciousness of the Church which in turn is the source of doctrinal development.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ Böttigheimer, Christoph, “Dogmengeschichte”, in *Neues Lexikon der Katholischen Dogmatik*, 2012, p. 137.

⁹⁹ Seewald 2018, p. 59-60.

¹⁰⁰ Seewald 2018, p. 64.

¹⁰¹ Seewald 2018, p. 182.

¹⁰² Seewald 2018, p. 188-189.

The work on development which would make its clearest mark in the history of theology and inspire several aspects of the Second Vatican Council was John Henry Newman's *Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*.

PART II

NEWMAN, REVELATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

In this part of the thesis, we have reached John Henry Newman. The point of focus will be his understanding of revelation and development of doctrine. The research question stated at the beginning of the thesis is to evaluate the critique against Newman concerning the idea of a continuing revelation. The critique of Newman will be outlined in chapter 7. For the purposes of the chapters until that point will be to outline the structure of Newman's thoughts on revelation and development of doctrine. In order to answer the research question whether Newman does represent a doctrine of continuing revelation, it needs to be established how Newman accounts for development and how this in turn accounts for his view on revelation.

Chapter 4. The beginning of Newman's theological thought

In this chapter we will outline the beginning of Newman's thought on revelation and development.

4.1 The early years of Newman's thought

Newman was a prolific theologian, and his own thought was not exempt from development. At the beginning of Newman's theological thought, he was strongly opposed to any type of development. He only accepted the Bible and nothing outside of it as the instance of justifying faith. It was not until Newman began at Oriel College that he started to revise his strong views on *Sola Scriptura*.¹⁰³ As Newman developed in his Anglo-Catholic thinking, he became further

¹⁰³ Graf, Jutta, *Von Schatten und Bildern zur Wahrheit: Die Erschließung der "Offenbarung" bei John Henry Newman*, Peter Lang Verlag, 2009 p. 48.

convinced that an interpretative instance of the faith was required.¹⁰⁴ Newman's theological thinking developed through his patristic studies and resulted in the book *The Arians of the Fourth century* (1833). Newman's patristic studies caused him to realise what he later would describe as the principle of dogma, that Christianity has a divine origin and a revealed content.¹⁰⁵ In order to determine this revealed content, the search must focus on Scripture and Tradition as a unity. Newman uses the example of the doctrine of the Trinity where several sects appeal to the same biblical passages. According to Newman this is clear evidence against the sufficiency of Scripture and the need of Tradition.¹⁰⁶ The position outlined in *Arians* would serve as groundwork for his coming theory of development.¹⁰⁷

As is relevant to this thesis, it is important to note that in *Arians*, Newman maintains that the deposit of revelation exists "hidden in the bosom of the Church". Doctrine was perceived as an explication or conceptualisation of what was implicitly transmitted by the church.¹⁰⁸ As Nichols explains: Revelation exists as an inner tradition, not in and of itself credally formulated...".¹⁰⁹ Egan rightly acknowledges that Newman's usage of implicit reasoning will later become apparent.¹¹⁰

4.2 The Anglo-Catholic years

An early example of Newman's Anglo-Catholic development is his critical correspondence with the Abbé Jager. Newman advocates the stance that Anglicanism represents the middle ground between Roman Catholicism and Protestantism. As Newman argued, both the Roman Catholic and the protestant side had been corrupted over the centuries and did not preserve the original faith. His argument with Abbé Jager consisted around the fact – as Newman saw it – that the Roman Catholic church had added to the faith.¹¹¹ In debate with the Abbé Jager, Newman explains his idea on Tradition under three aspects: a) a tradition which interprets

¹⁰⁴ Graf 2009, p. 48–49.

¹⁰⁵ Graf 2009, p. 53.

¹⁰⁶ Graf 2009, p. 58.

¹⁰⁷ Graf 2009, p. 60.

¹⁰⁸ Egan 2004, p. 11.

¹⁰⁹ Nichols 1990, p. 29.

¹¹⁰ Egan, Philip Anthony, "Newman, Lonergan and doctrinal development", University of Birmingham, 2004 p. 12.

¹¹¹ Peterburs, Michael Robert (1994) *Divine revelation and the infallible church: Newman, Vatican II and Arcic*, Durham theses, Durham University. Available at Durham E-Theses Online:

<http://etheses.dur.ac.uk/5368/>, p. 12. For a complete survey of the correspondence see: Allen, Louis, *John Henry Newman and the Abbé Jager: a controversy on Scripture and Tradition (1834-1836)*, Oxford University Press, London, 1975.

Scripture, b) a tradition independent of Scripture (which can be justified by Scripture), c) a tradition regarding discipline, ceremonies.¹¹² Newman accused the Roman Catholic side of adding a fourth aspect where Tradition per se is the sufficient authority for considering a doctrine fundamental.¹¹³ Newman's defence of the Via Media of the Anglican church he outlined in his work *Prophetic Office of the church* (1837), and the background served was his debate with Jager. In their correspondence Newman declared that the only way to prove the truthfulness of a doctrine is if it is already present in antiquity. In order to decide which is the true or false teaching, Newman appeals to the dictum of Vincent of Lerins.¹¹⁴ At this time, Newman considered the Magisterium as a separate source of determining Christian doctrine which could establish new doctrines. In *Arians*, Newman had argued that the doctrine of the Trinity existed as a "moral feeling" until it became explicitly outlined. As Graf writes, it is noteworthy that Newman couldn't use the same line of argumentation concerning the Magisterium. The problem was that Newman – at this point in history – argued that the infallible Magisterium was the sole method used by the Roman Catholic church to determine development.¹¹⁵

Newman's Anglo-Catholic period, as illustrated in his dialogue with the Abbé Jager and further elaborated in *Prophetic Office*, has bearing on his theory of development and revelation. The final result, as Graf points out, is a static view on doctrines and faith. It needs to be asked how a doctrine taught everywhere, always and by all is commensurate with any notion of development. Newman saw the contours of the problem and acknowledged for example that not all of the 39 Articles were taught by the church Fathers. This led Newman to make a distinction which he would hold until 1839 between fundamental and secondary doctrines. The "fundamentals" were the core Christian doctrines as testified to by the symbols of Antiquity. The secondary are doctrines which are not mandatory to believe but recommended.¹¹⁶ Newman argued that the fundamentals are not explicit or indirectly in Scripture but belong to revelation which predates Scripture and have been infallibly defined. This is a striking example of Newman's Via Media position where he principally defends the infallibility of the Church but limits himself in time to encompass only the first four ecumenical councils and thematically limited only to fundamental teachings.¹¹⁷ Newman's objection against the Roman Catholic

¹¹² Biemer, Günter, *Newman on Tradition*, Herder and Herder, New York, 1967 p. 43.

¹¹³ Biemer 1967, p. 44.

¹¹⁴ Graf 2009, p. 87.

¹¹⁵ Graf 2009, p. 94.

¹¹⁶ Graf 2009, p. 95.

¹¹⁷ Graf 2009, p. 96.

church was not that doctrine developed but that the church could decide which doctrines were to be considered fundamentals. Jager responded by asking where in the words of Jesus or the apostles the distinction between fundamentals and secondary doctrines are to be found.¹¹⁸

Chapter 5. Newman's explanation of development and revelation

5.1 *The Oxford University Sermons*

In contrast to the previous works by Newman, the *Oxford University Sermons* represents the beginning of a new phase in his intellectual development. It outlines the basics of his theory of development together with its philosophical groundwork. It was the philosophical foundations of Newman that solved the tension between the static and the dynamic, between the infinite and the contingent, all outlined by development. Since revelation is a revelation to mankind, it is also bound by materiality and history, and is subject to a process of growth and development.¹¹⁹

Graf explains that one of the major differences between Newman's *University Sermons* and *Arians* is that development is not described as an "emergency measure" against danger. The principle of development is a sign of life.¹²⁰ Another contrast to his earlier writings such as *Prophetic Office*, is his abandonment of the usage of the Vincentian canon in favour of the distinction between explicit and implicit reason.¹²¹ Furthermore, Newman abandoned his distinctions between fundamental and secondary doctrines. Whereas Newman earlier only considered the first five centuries as being the expression of faith, he now appeals to no such time limitation.¹²²

As demonstrated in his *University Sermons*, revelation is fulfilled by the eternal Word of God incarnated in Christ. Revelation is not described as an entity existing either in Scripture or

¹¹⁸ Graf 2009, p. 98–99.

¹¹⁹ Graf 2009, p. 121–122.

¹²⁰ Graf 2009, p. 123.

¹²¹ Nichols, Aidan, *From Newman to Congar: the Idea of Doctrinal Development from the Victorians to the Second Vatican Council*, T&T Clark, Edinburgh, 1990 p. 42. In Newman's thirteenth University sermon he writes: "In other words, all men have a reason, but not all men can give a reason. We may denote, then, these two exercises of mind as reasoning and arguing, or as conscious and unconscious reasoning, or as Implicit Reason and Explicit Reason. And to the latter belongs the words, science, method, development, analysis, criticism, proof, system, principles, rules, laws, and others of a like nature." *Fifteen Sermons preached before the university of oxford between AD 1826-1843*, Veritatis Splendor publications, 2012, p. 247.

¹²² Graf 2009, p. 125.

Tradition. Instead, Newman depicts revelation as an implicit understanding of faith given by God. Revelation leaves an impression on the human being who as of yet does not have the ability to put the faith into words. Dogmas, on the other hand, are the “expressions” of the impression made by revelation. In this context it is essential to note that Newman had previously been defending the Anglican doctrine of the sufficiency of Scripture, meaning that all of revelation is contained therein. However, the notion had developed in Newman that revelation was not contained exclusively in the form of teachings or doctrines, but rather existing in its totality. This invalidates Newman’s previous position regarding fundamental teachings of faith which is based on the presupposition that revelation equates to doctrinal teachings.¹²³

As has become evident, Newman was himself subject to a radical process of development in his thought. At the basis of this process is his renewed approach to revelation. Dogmatic formulations were now seen as aspects of the inexhaustible Idea. To illustrate the new conception of revelation, Graf cites Jean Stern (1927-) who makes the point that according to Newman, the depositum is no longer described as a root with its stalk, but rather as a seed that becomes a plant. The metaphor of the root implies a distinguishable separation between the roots and the stalk, whereas the metaphor of the seed emphasizes the idea of development that the seed contains the potentiality of all future developments.¹²⁴

Graf cites Jean Guitton (1901-1999) who describes the transmission from the initial divine impression to an explicit knowledge in a twofold process. The first part is when the divine Idea, which exists independently, enters and fits into human consciousness. The second part deals with the expression of the implicit impression of faith. The implicit impression cannot manifest itself in its entirety, hence it appears in aspects of the impression. As a result, the contents of revelation become integrated by human language. Newman’s primary concern in his *15th University Sermon* is the explication of the implicit. He gives the example of a peasant who can have a true impression of the faith but lack the ability of expression.¹²⁵ Newman writes: “A peasant may have such a true impression yet be unable to give any intelligible account of it, as will easily be understood. But what is remarkable at first sight is this, that there is good reason for saying that the impression made upon the mind need not even be recognized by the parties

¹²³ Graf 2009, p. 128.

¹²⁴ Graf 2009, p. 130.

¹²⁵ Graf 2009, p. 133–134.

possessing it. It is not proof that persons are not possessed, because they are not conscious, of an idea.”¹²⁶

At this point Newman touches upon the themes which he would expand in his *Essay*. The issue of expression is closely related to the idea of sacramentality, in the sense that the transmission of implicit impressions into precise language is a dynamic process of cooperation between the divine idea and the finitude of man.¹²⁷ Newman writes: “Theological dogmas are propositions expressive of the judgements which the mind forms, or the impressions which it receives, of Revealed Truth. Revelation sets before it certain supernatural facts and actions, beings and principles: these make a certain impression or image upon it; and this impression spontaneously, or even necessarily, becomes the subject of reflection on the part of the mind itself, which proceeds to investigate it, and to draw it forth in successive and distinct sentences.”¹²⁸ For this reason, Newman describes dogmas as formulas which the human mind has reached based upon the inner impression of the revealed truth.¹²⁹ At the same time, Newman also accounts for the insufficiency of human language. There will always be a distance between the dogmatic formula and the reality it depicts, nevertheless committed in human language, there necessarily needs to be an analogy between the dogma and the divine reality.¹³⁰

5.2 The Essay on the development of Christian doctrine

Jean Guitton argues the difference between his *15th University Sermon* and the *Essay* is that the sermon outlined a psychology of faith whereas the *Essay* dealt with the sociology of the Idea and a logic of history. Graf attempts to highlight the difference in a syllogism. In the Sermon, Newman showed: (A) that a development, which remains true to the faith is authentic and good. In the *Essay*, by historical analysis, he showed: (B) that this development in the catholic church does remain true to the faith. Therefore, (C) the conclusion of the *Essay* is that the catholic teaching is authentic and good.¹³¹

¹²⁶ Newman 2012, p. 300.

¹²⁷ Graf 2009, p. 134.

¹²⁸ Newman 2012, p. 299.

¹²⁹ Graf 2009, p. 135.

¹³⁰ Graf 2009, p. 136–137.

¹³¹ Graf 2009, p. 142.

The *Essay* is divided into two parts. The first contains an *a priori* argument for the predictability of the development, and the second part an *a posteriori* argument based on his seven criteria for development. Newman's argument is not that of logical deduction, but instead in the form of a convergence of probabilities.¹³² Despite Newman's extensive efforts to justify development, it was intrinsically a problem. Graf concurs with Chadwick when he writes: "The argument is not 'History shows that change has occurred: therefore we must adopt mutability instead of immutability as a general principle. The argument is 'The less mutability has occurred the truer the modern church: but since history shows that some mutability has occurred, even in the least mutable of churches, we need a theory...'"¹³³ Newman explains his intention of writing the *Essay*: "that, from the nature of the human mind, time is necessary for the full comprehension and perfection of great ideas; and that the highest and most wonderful truths, though communicated to the world once for all by inspired teachers, could not be comprehended all at once by the recipients, but, as being received and transmitted by minds not inspired and through media which were human, have required only the longer time and deeper thought for their full elucidation. This may be called the Theory of Development of Doctrine; and before proceeding to treat of it, one remark may be in place. It is undoubtedly an hypothesis to account for a difficulty;"¹³⁴

The central term in Newman's theory of development is *idea*. There is no aspect deep enough that can express the content of the idea. The overall impression of an object only appears in the multiplicity of single recognizable objects. To illustrate his meaning of idea, Newman draws a comparison with perception. Objects which we perceive are similar to the concept of idea in the sense that they appear to us as a unity and individuality. However, on the side of our human impression, the object can be grasped only in the multitude of its single aspects.¹³⁵ The idea of Christianity is developed through history by the process of development of doctrine.¹³⁶

¹³² Graf 2009, p. 142.

¹³³ Chadwick, p. 144.

¹³⁴ Newman, John Henry, *An Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine*, University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana, 2015 p. 29-20.

¹³⁵ Graf 2009, p. 145. Newman writes in his *Essay*: "The idea which represents an object or supposed object is commensurate with the sum total of its possible aspects, however they may vary in the separate consciousness of individuals... And, as views of a material object may be taken from points so remote or so opposed, that they seem at first sight incompatible, and especially as their shadows will be disproportionate, or even monstrous, and yet all these anomalies will disappear and all these contrarieties be adjusted, on ascertaining the point of vision or the surface of projection in each case; so also all the aspects of an idea are capable of coalition, and of a resolution into the object to which it belongs; and the *prima facie* dissimilitude of its aspects becomes, when explained, an argument for its substantiveness and integrity, and their multiplicity for its originality and power." p. 34-35.

¹³⁶ Graf 2009, p. 148.

As Newman writes, the teachings of the church changes in order to remain the same. Thereafter, Newman proposes seven notes which are used to determine whether the developments are in accordance with the original faith. The seven notes which Newman presents can be summarized as the following:

1. *Preservation of type*. This can be exemplified by how despite outward differences an adult keeps the same internal organs throughout his life.
2. *Continuity of principles*. The Church must remain faithful to its original teachings. Therefore, Newman outlines nine principles which needs to be observed.
3. *Power of assimilation*. The way in which the church incorporates and assimilates the surrounding culture when it deems it appropriate.
4. *Logical sequence*. This is a broad term for Newman but in essence it means that certain doctrines also imply further doctrines.
5. *Anticipation of its own future*. Doctrines which gained influence at a late stage in development were foreshadowed previously.
6. *Conservative action on its past*. New doctrines confirm previous teachings.
7. *Chronic vigour*. If the church maintains its vigour throughout the centuries it may be assumed to be authentic.¹³⁷

By proposing the seven notes, Newman by no means intended to conclusively demonstrate the truth of the Roman Catholic Church. Instead, he put forward a negative argument: does the modern Roman Catholic Church validate the criteria? Newman answers that the contemporary church can be said to contain the Christian idea.¹³⁸ The challenge which Newman faced was the identity and continuity of the Christian faith throughout the course of change in history.¹³⁹

5.2.1 Newman and Perrone: a historical context

By the end of Newman's *Essay on development* which he never completed, he had left the Church of England for the Roman Catholic Church. The *Essay* was published shortly after his conversion and he submitted it to official ecclesiastical scrutiny. At this point, Newman offered to revise his work, yet this was not accepted on account of that an unedited edition would prove more persuasive as an argument for the Catholic church. As a result, Newman entered the

¹³⁷ Dulles, Avery, *Newman*, Continuum, London, 2002 p. 75.

¹³⁸ Dulles 2002, p. 75.

¹³⁹ Siebenrock, Roman, *Wahrheit, Gewissen und Geschichte: Eine systematisch-theologische Rekonstruktion des Wirkens John Henry Kardinal Newman*, regio Verlag Glock und Lutz, Sigmaringendorf, 1996, p. 356.

Catholic church based on an argument not formally evaluated. As Gaffney points out, Roman Catholics of Newman's day did not worry about how doctrines developed. The more important question concerned the orthodoxy of their teachings. If perplexities were to arise, they were settled not by an appeal to history, but to the Magisterium.¹⁴⁰ Newman was never to receive any official judgement on this work. In practise, Newman and his work were met with scepticism and a general sense of being misunderstood. Newman hoped to find some way to clarify himself by writing a Latin version of his theory of development entitled *De Catholici dogmatis evolutione*. He aimed at having it read and commented by someone in Rome of theological importance and influence. The person chosen was Giovanni Perrone (1794-1876), professor of dogmatic theology at the Roman college and author of several dogmatic manuals.¹⁴¹

5.2.2 Newman and Perrone: a theological comparison

According to Walter Kasper (1933-) the difference between Perrone and Newman was the difference between two theological eras. Perrone represented the 'classical' view that all truths were already present in the Church, which entails that only accidental development is possible. Newman's starting point was to harmonize history and revelation. In order to do so Newman proposes his analogy between how an idea develops in the individual's faith and the Church's faith. Kasper concurs with Chadwick that this analogy was never accepted by Perrone.¹⁴²

When Newman explicates his theory of development in this text, he starts with the distinction between the objective and subjective word of God. The objective word of God is the deposit of faith considered in itself or in the form of dogma.¹⁴³ The subjective word of God is the faith residing in the minds of individuals or churches at a particular place or time.¹⁴⁴ Kasper notes that the difference between these two might seem unclear. Both the objective word of God in the form of dogma and the subjective word of God are both something human and the result of analysis. The significant difference according to Kasper is that the objective word exists in a closed and fixed form. The objective word of God can only be grasped by the single aspects

¹⁴⁰ Gaffney, James, *Roman Catholic writings on doctrinal development by John Henry Newman* – Edited, with Translation and Commentary by James Gaffney, Sheed and Ward, Kansas City, 1997, p. v-vi.

¹⁴¹ Gaffney 1997, s. 3.

¹⁴² Kasper, Walter, *Die Lehre von der Tradition in der Römischen Schule*, Verlag Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 2011 p. 220-221.

¹⁴³ Gaffney 1999, p. 11; Lynch, Thomas, "Textus nunc primo editus: The Newman-Perrone Paper on Development", *Gregorianum*, vol 16, no 3, 1935 p. 406.

¹⁴⁴ Gaffney 1997, p. 11, Lynch 1935, p. 407.

subjectively.¹⁴⁵ In Kasper's interpretation, the difference is to be found in their concept of faith. Faith for Newman is a reflex act of intuition as a response to the word of God. For Perrone on the other hand, faith is a supernatural act of reason by the will leading to an understanding of the doctrines of faith.¹⁴⁶

The difference between Newman and Perrone continue. Newman writes: "Since it is only with the passage of time that the word of God passes into dogmas and becomes objective, and it is subjective in the Church insofar as it is not yet dogmatic, it follows that the word, as subjective to the Catholic mind, has precisely the same condition and history in the Church as it has in particular teachers, schools and churches..."¹⁴⁷ To this Perrone answers: "This does not seem to be stated accurately. The word of God always, or from its conferral, passes into dogma or constitutes the object of our faith."¹⁴⁸ Kasper interprets this difference that for Perrone, revelation is equivalent to dogma, whereas for Newman, revelation has the possibility of becoming dogma through a process of development over time.¹⁴⁹ Newman writes: "Initially the word of God enters the mind of the Catholic world through the ears of faith. It penetrates that mind, recedes inside it, and remains hidden there, become a kind of deep internal sense."¹⁵⁰ This leads Newman to two conclusions which Perrone opposed. Newman writes: "But until the Church has given dogmatic form to some part of its deposit, it may not yet be fully conscious of what it really thinks. In the sense the Church, even though possessing the whole deposit of faith from the very beginning, can be said to have more theological knowledge now than it did in former ages."¹⁵¹ Newman follows through this reasoning by concluding: "Finally, under God's direction and at his silent bidding, after a hard birth, a new dogma comes into being."¹⁵² It was at this point that Perrone wrote: "Hoc dicere non audeam" – "I should not be as bold as to say that".¹⁵³ For Perrone there is no such thing as new dogmas, only new definitions made explicit by the old truth.¹⁵⁴

¹⁴⁵ Kasper 2011, p. 222.

¹⁴⁶ Kasper 2011, p. 223-224.

¹⁴⁷ Gaffney 1997, p. 19, Lynch 1935 p. 413.

¹⁴⁸ Gaffney 1997, p. 21.

¹⁴⁹ Kasper 2011, p. 225.

¹⁵⁰ Gaffney 1997, p. 19; Lynch 1935: "Intrat scilicet principio per aures fidei in mentem orbis Catholici; illam penetrat; in illa se abdit et latet; fit sensus quidam intimus."

¹⁵¹ Gaffney 1997, p. 20; Lynch 1935 p. 414-415: "Donec autem in formam dogmaticam conjecerit Ecclesia hanc vel illam partem depositi sui, fieri potest ut non plene sibi conscia sit quid ea de re sentiat. Quo, in sensu dici potest Ecclesiam, totum licet fidei depositum a principio habentem, plus scire in theologia nunc quam prioribus saeculis."

¹⁵² Gaffney 1997, p. 21; Lynch 1935, p. 417.

¹⁵³ Gaffney 1997, p. 22.

¹⁵⁴ Gaffney 1997, p. 28; Lynch 1935 p. 420.

A further difference between Perrone and Newman is their understanding of the term deposit of faith. Newman writes that the deposit can actually grow out of what is already there,¹⁵⁵ whereas Perrone maintains that the deposit does not expand but remains unchangeable. The conclusion drawn by Kasper is that the difference ultimately is due to different concepts of revelation. For Perrone revelation has a tendency towards a propositional view, for Newman revelation is a concrete Idea which can be expanded from different aspects.¹⁵⁶

Chapter 6. The philosophy of Newman for understanding his theory of development

This chapter will be an examination of the vital components of Newman's philosophical background and its implications for understanding his theory of development.

6.1 Newman's philosophical influences

Newman's philosophical heritage has several traces among them Aristotle (384-322 BC), the Platonism of the Alexandrian Fathers, Joseph Butler (1692-1752), and the empiricism of John Locke (1632-1704) and Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1834). Newman had use of Aristotle explicitly when dealing with epistemological problems, and it was his doctrine of *phronesis* (practical wisdom) which helped Newman develop his idea of an Illative sense.¹⁵⁷

From Joseph Butler, Newman gained two important insights: a) the platonic understanding of the analogy between nature and the supernatural realm, and b) the doctrine that "probability is the guide for life."¹⁵⁸ Butler argued that by studying nature one should reach an adequate understanding of God, which may prepare oneself for the Christian teaching.¹⁵⁹ Newman was strongly influenced by Butler's "principle of analogy" in establishing his view of religious knowledge. Butler distinguishes between "demonstrative" and "probable" evidence.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁵ Gaffney 1997 p.23; Lynch 1935, p. 418.

¹⁵⁶ Kasper 2011, p. 227.

¹⁵⁷ Carr, Thomas K, *Newman & Gadamer – Toward a Hermeneutics of Religious knowledge*, 1996 p. 68.

¹⁵⁸ Carr 1996, p. 69.

¹⁵⁹ Carr 1996, p. 70.

¹⁶⁰ Carr 1996, p. 73.

* *Demonstrative*: abstract thinking such as mathematics and logic

* *Probable*: deals with concrete realities such as events in history or sense impression

According to Butler, it is not possible to have absolute certainty about historical or empirical facts, including the Christian revelation. Newman, however, did not adopt this without modification. He argued that Butler's reasoning destroys absolute certainty about most things in life "resolving truth into an opinion".¹⁶¹ On the contrary, probability cannot be incompatible with certitude which is what Newman attempted to show in his *Grammar of Assent*. As Carr writes, Butler's influence "opened Newman to the question of subjectivity in the determination of epistemic certitude."¹⁶²

A partial explanation for Newman's vocabulary in the *15th University Sermon* is the empiricist tradition and the influence of John Locke. The first philosophical work Newman was deeply engaged in was Locke's *Essay concerning human understanding*. Interestingly, Locke being a representative of liberal rationalism, belonged to the tradition which Newman was arguing against. This includes the entire tradition of British empiricism.¹⁶³ Nevertheless, some overlapping agreement exists. According to Locke, ideas are grounded in experience and represent things, regardless of how imperfect they are. Further influences include David Hume who distinguishes "what we are aware of in perception and what we are aware of in thought, calling the former 'impressions' and the latter 'ideas'".¹⁶⁴ In addition to this, Hume defines "ideas" as "images" which are the product of the imagination that in turn reproduces the "impression".¹⁶⁵

Newman's philosophical influences can also be understood from the Coleridgean tradition. As Merrigan writes, Newman's usage of the term idea can more properly be situated within the Romantic tradition rather than the empiricist. For Coleridge, idea is described as a realizing principle that makes a claim upon us that in turn requires us to "make a fiduciary response as a whole before we can fully understand its implications".¹⁶⁶

¹⁶¹ Carr 1996, p. 73.

¹⁶² Carr 1996, p. 75.

¹⁶³ Carr 1996, p. 78.

¹⁶⁴ Merrigan, Terrence, *Clear Heads and Holy Hearts – the religious and theological ideal of John Henry Newman*, Peeters Press Louvain, 1991 p. 67.

¹⁶⁵ Merrigan 1991, p. 67.

¹⁶⁶ Merrigan 1991, p. 72.

6.2 Idea, Impression and Imagination

In order to describe the relationship between how Newman uses the terminology of idea and *imagination*, a few lengthy passages from the *Oxford University Sermon* needs to be cited. In chapter 20 of Newman's *15th University Sermon* he writes: "and the mind which is habituated to the thought of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, naturally turns, as I have said, with a devout curiosity to the contemplation of the Object of its adoration, and begins to form statements concerning Him before it knows whither, or how far, it will be carried. One proposition necessarily leads to another, and a second to a third; then some limitation is required; and the combination of these opposites occasions some fresh evolutions from the original idea, which indeed can never be said to be entirely exhausted. This process is its development, and results in a series, or rather body of dogmatic statements, till what was at first an impression on the Imagination has become a system or creed in the Reason."¹⁶⁷

Equally important to cite is what Newman writes in chapter 22 of his *15th University Sermon*:

" This may be fitly compared to the impressions made on us through the senses. Material objects are whole, and individual; and the impressions which they make on the mind, by means of the senses, are of a corresponding nature, complex and manifold in their relations and bearings, but considered in themselves integral and one. And in like manner the ideas which we are granted of Divine Objects under the Gospel, from the nature of the case and because they are ideas, answer to the Originals so far as this, that they are whole, indivisible, substantial, and may be called real, as being images of what is real. Objects which are conveyed to us through the senses, stand out in our {331} minds, as I may say, with dimensions and aspects and influences various, and all of these consistent with one another, and many of them beyond our memory or even knowledge, while we contemplate the objects themselves; thus forcing on us a persuasion of their reality from the spontaneous congruity and coincidence of these accompaniments, as if they could not be creations of our minds, but were the images of external and independent beings. This of course will take place in the case of the sacred ideas which are the objects of our faith. Religious men, according to their measure, have an idea or vision of the Blessed Trinity in Unity, of the Son Incarnate and of His Presence, not as a number of qualities,

¹⁶⁷ Newman 2012, p. 307.

attributes, and actions, not as the subject of a number of propositions, but as one, and individual, and independent of words, as an impression conveyed through the senses.”¹⁶⁸

When Newman understands idea he is describing God’s revelation in Christ. Newman argues that an idea can never be considered apart from its visible exhibitions. This is the vital point which leads Newman to argue that revelation resides in the mind of the Roman Catholic church and is the true place of the idea’s expression. The analogy argued by Newman is that in the same way that an object makes a mental impression on the mind and cannot be separated from it, revelation made on impression on the mind of the church and equally cannot be separated from it. With that being said, the idea is not identical to the object which it relates to. This entails that the “object” of Christian faith, revelation, is apprehended by the imagination.¹⁶⁹ When reflecting upon the idea impressed on the mind, grasped as an entity, further analysis of the idea never adds to the original idea, but only clarifies it.¹⁷⁰ Despite the fact that the idea is largely understood to exist implicitly and latently within the human mind, Newman insists on its cognitive character. Newman’s terminology also shows that the images to which he refers that leaves an impression on the imagination can also be non-sensory, as in propositions.¹⁷¹ Of equal importance is to state that imagination according to Newman is not an inventive faculty, but an expression of a cognitive capacity. The imaginative is equated with the real. As Walgrave points out, Newman’s usage of the word imagination is similar to that of German romanticism:” the imagination is not a mode of purely sensible knowledge but is our entire faculty of knowing the concrete.”¹⁷²

Werner Becker (1904-1981) highlights the similarity between Newman and Karl Rahner, citing Rahner in *Mysterium Salutis* that “reflex knowledge is always rooted in an antecedent cognitive seizing of the thing itself”.¹⁷³ Stephen Reno (1943-) describes Newman’s language of mental imagery as: “an attempt to articulate a non-logical but rational factor in the form of belief by locating a mental activity prior to explicit conceptualization.”¹⁷⁴ Well aligned with the aim of

¹⁶⁸ Newman 2012, p. 307-308.

¹⁶⁹ Merrigan 1991, p. 73.

¹⁷⁰ Merrigan 1991, p. 87.

¹⁷¹ Merrigan 1991, p. 48.

¹⁷² Walgrave, Jan Hendrik, *Newman the Theologian – the Nature of Belief and Doctrine as Exemplified in His Life and Works*, Forgotten Books 2012, p. 110.

¹⁷³ Becker, Werner, “Newman’s influence in Germany”, Coulson, John; Allchin, AM (eds), *The Rediscovery of Newman – an Oxford symposium* Sheed & Ward, London, 1967, p. 186.

¹⁷⁴ Merrigan 1991, p. 89.

this thesis, Merrigan correctly writes that any discussion about revelation and pre-verbal experience is highly controversial.¹⁷⁵

6.3 *The epistemology of Newman*

Of importance for understanding the epistemology of Newman is his distinction between inference and assent. Opposed to those who believe that the only way to achieve certitude is through scientific investigation, Newman argued the case of assent. Newman points out that there are a few problems with claiming that inference is the only way to truth. For example, inference does not require an understanding of the terms of proposition, and further, the conclusion of an inference is always dependent of the premises. In contrast, Newman proposes assent. It follows upon apprehension and is unconditional.¹⁷⁶

According to Newman, human knowing can be divided in two reasoning processes.

- a) *Formal inference*: deals with formal, abstract, scientific, logical reasoning.
- b) *Informal inference*: deals with practical and concrete matter.

In essence, Newman's motivation for writing his *Grammar* is to counterargue the rationalist position which says that only formal inference can lead to certitude. Newman, on the other hand argues that certitude can be reached within informal inference, which deals with religious convictions.¹⁷⁷ An important distinction for Newman's thought is the dialectical relationship between apprehension and assent. Each can in turn be understood to be either notional or real. When Newman uses the word real, he does so in its Latin etymological sense derived from the word *res*, meaning thing. Therefore, when Newman speaks of real apprehension or assent, he simply means the mind's attention to a concrete thing.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ Merrigan 1991, p. 90.

¹⁷⁶ Norris, Thomas J, *Newman and his theological method – a guide for the theologian today*, 1977 p. 30.

¹⁷⁷ Egan 2004, p. 53-54.

¹⁷⁸ Merrigan 1991, p. 43.

6.3.1 Apprehension

The differences between real and notional apprehension can according to Newman be summarized as follows below.

(A) Notional apprehension is an intelligent grasp of ideas/propositions external to us. It deals with things as they are related to one another, it does not deal with totalities but aspects of wholes.¹⁷⁹

(B) Real apprehension is an intelligent grasp of a fact making an impression upon our inner world and imagination. It deals with the relation of concrete and individual things to the person.¹⁸⁰

Norris strikingly summarizes Newman's intention with this distinction: "Newman sought to unite, in harmonious equilibrium, the notional clarity of dogma with the intensity of the Christian experience...The notional and the real are distinct but complementary."¹⁸¹

When the act of assent is given, either due to real or notional apprehension, the assent is always unconditional and absolute. If the apprehension is either real or notional, it follows that the assent is always real or notional. Equally, real and notional assent are not view as opposed to each other, but rather as complementary.

6.3.2 Assent and the Illative sense

In a similar way, Newman explains the difference between real and notional assent as the following.

(A) Notional assent is an absolute acceptance of something abstract, proposition or fact as true.

(B) Real assent is an absolute acceptance as true of a concrete proposition or thing that has made an impression on the imagination.¹⁸²

To illustrate the difference between real and notional apprehension and assent, Walgrave gives the example: "Rome is a beautiful city". It is real apprehension and assent to someone who has

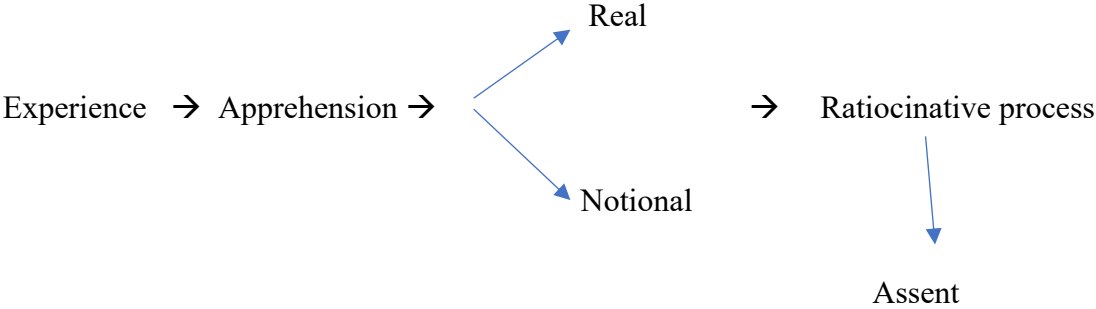
¹⁷⁹ Norris 1977, p. 30.

¹⁸⁰ Norris 1977, p. 30.

¹⁸¹ Norris 1977, p. 33.

¹⁸² Egan 2004, p. 55.

been there, but notional apprehension and assent to those who haven't been there but only read about it. Real and notional apprehension and assent are two complementary modes of human knowing. However, in order to reach assent, apprehension alone does not suffice. What is required is a process of thinking or ratiocination, which takes apprehension to the level of assent and certitude. It can be represented by the following steps¹⁸³:



As Norris writes, this equation directly has its problems. Newman has outlined that any conclusion of a ratiocinative process is relative, conditional and probable. This is the opposite to assent which Newman defines as absolute, unconditional and certain. So how does Newman go about solving this problem? Norris answers by writing: “In terms of a phenomenological investigation of his own experience, he lays bare the common feeling and practice of mankind who achieve, possess, and live by certitudes in many things and situations which concern them personally and vitally.”¹⁸⁴ In order to reach certitude, logic is not possible in concrete practical matters. Instead, this is done through a complex process of implicit reasoning through the illative sense. Illative is derived from the Latin *infero/illatum*, meaning to infer. It can be described as a way of reaching truth by the cumulation of converging evidences and probabilities. The end result which Newman sets out towards is the ability to give assent in matters of religious faith.¹⁸⁵ “Judgement then in all concrete matter is the architectonic faculty; and what may be called the Illative Sense, or right judgement in ratiocination, is one branch of it”¹⁸⁶ Newman further adds: “It determines what science cannot determine, the limit of

¹⁸³ Norris 1997, p. 36.

¹⁸⁴ Norris 1997, p. 36.

¹⁸⁵ Egan 2004, p. 56-57.

¹⁸⁶ Newman 2016, p. 267. Newman compares the Illative sense to what Aristotle called phronesis. Newman writes in the Grammar: “He calls the faculty which guides the mind in matters of conduct, by the name phronesis, or judgement. This is the directing, controlling, and determining principle in such matters, personal and social. What it is to be virtuous, how we are to approximate in practice to our own standard, what is right or wrong in a particular case, for the answers in fulness and accuracy to these and similar questions, the philosopher refers to no code of laws, to no moral treatise, because no science of life, applicable to the case on an individual, has been or can be written. Such is Aristotle’s doctrine, and it is undoubtedly true.” p. 275

converging probabilities, and the reasons sufficient for a proof.”¹⁸⁷ The same methodology is used by Newman in the *Essay on Development* and can correspondingly be illustrated in the following way.¹⁸⁸

Problem and its data → Hypothesis + Verification → Certitude

The problem at hand, which Newman deals within the *Essay* is the apparent variations in teaching through history. His hypothesis is the fact of development is parallel to the process of apprehension. Newman defines apprehension as the mind’s “imposition of a sense upon terms.” In order to test his hypothesis in the *Essay*, Newman has the seven notes which he refers to. This method of reasoning through a process of cumulation of converging probabilities is the Illative sense. Ultimately for Newman this leads to certitude.¹⁸⁹

Chapter 7. Newman and the criticism of a continuing revelation

Having outlined the major components of Newman’s view on revelation and development of doctrine, the focal point of this thesis has been reached. This consists in an investigation and evaluation of the critique directed towards Newman claiming that his theology teaches “new revelation”, and that revelation cannot, according to Newman’s writings – be considered complete. With a solid basis in the previous chapters of what revelation is, what we mean with a complete/closed revelation, and an outline of Newman’s own thoughts, we are now apt to review the critique. In order to accomplish this undertaking, the critique will be thematically divided into two main arguments. The criticism against Newman consists of selected writings from Owen Chadwick¹⁹⁰, Nicholas Lash¹⁹¹, Paul Misner¹⁹², Anthony Stephenson¹⁹³ and Philip Egan. The first argument deals with the possibility of both the church and the individual to be unconsciously aware of future doctrines in a pre-verbal manner; the second argument deals with

¹⁸⁷ Newman 2016, p. 280.

¹⁸⁸ Norris 1977, p. 76.

¹⁸⁹ Norris 1977, s. 77.

¹⁹⁰ Chadwick, Owen, *From Bossuet to Newman – the idea of doctrinal development*, Cambridge University press, 1957.

¹⁹¹ Lash, Nicholas, *Newman on development – the search for an explanation in history*, Sheed and Ward, London, 1975.

¹⁹² Misner, Paul, “Newman’s concept of revelation and the development of doctrine”, *The Heythrop journal* volume 11 issue 1 1970.

¹⁹³ Stephenson, Anthony A, “Cardinal Newman and the development of doctrine”, *Journal of Ecumenical studies* 3, 1966.

Newman's comparison between developed doctrines and prophetic fulfilment. The authors deal with these two arguments in varying degrees. The conclusion nevertheless becomes the same, that Newman cannot be said to be consistent in his writings, leading to a notion of a continuing revelation through the church.

7.1 Argument No.1a: Pre-verbal revelation

The final question closing Chadwick's book are the following words: "Nearly all theologians appear to be agreed that, in accordance with the decree of the Holy Office *Lamentabili* in 1907, it is necessary to maintain that revelation ended with the death of the last apostle. This doctrine of revelation excludes Suarez and Lugo: it probably excludes some parts of the *Essay on development*. The question then for those who think Newman's theology is catholic, is this: these new doctrines, of which the Church had a feeling inkling but of which she was not conscious – in what meaningful sense may it be asserted that these new doctrines are not 'new revelation'?"¹⁹⁴.

Chadwick's conclusion is that Newman's argument fails to convince of anything but a continuing revelation. In Chadwick's view, Newman's account has several inconsistencies, whereof the first is his usage of the word *idea*. As Chadwick formulates it, the Christian revelation is an identity which impresses itself on the mind of the Church.¹⁹⁵ He illustrates this with an example of his own. For example, an individual could be influenced by several ideas throughout his life, such as "socialism is the best policy for the country". This vague and general description will impact your choices and behaviour. However, the exact implications of this idea only become evident at a later stage when concrete implementations are done. The once vague idea becomes seen in a new light and its fullness only grasped at a later stage. This provides the individual with both new knowledge and a new awareness.¹⁹⁶ This leads Chadwick to assert: "But, in the same way, its various aspects can only be understood in particular, concrete, historical situations and relationships. The Christian meets the Platonist or the Aristotelian...and in meeting, apprehends some aspect of the original revelation of which he was not hitherto aware with the top of his mind, but (if aware at all) only as a deep semi-conscious 'feeling' which he had not explained in communicable language."¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Chadwick 1957, p. 195.

¹⁹⁵ Chadwick 1957, p. 149.

¹⁹⁶ Chadwick 1957, p. 152.

¹⁹⁷ Chadwick 1957, p. 150.

The continuation of his argument is that the church first received an impression, and then later formed a theology. But how does this process work? Chadwick writes that Newman did not hesitate to use the word ‘feelings’ and quotes Newman in a letter from 1843: “Are not the doctrine of purgatory, saint-worship etc, but the realizations, or vivid representations, of the feelings and ideas which the primitive principles involve?”.¹⁹⁸ Similarly Chadwick refers to Newman that doctrines such as the Trinity or the Real Presence could be appropriated independently of words. Chadwick writes that “sometimes, in his careless or luxuriant use of analogies, he sounded as though he thought all was wordless, that religion was (ultimately) feeling or religious or moral experience, that revelation contained no propositions – he neither believed nor intended to teach that. The sacred impression which can be described as prior to propositions is in part a proposition-bearing impression.”¹⁹⁹ In order to explain how “new” doctrines were not really new, Newman needed to balance four components according to Chadwick:

- A) So-called ‘additions’ to the faith are to be accepted in the same way as the original explicit deposit.
- B) That the Apostles knew without words all truths which throughout the centuries were to come.²⁰⁰
- C) That heresy is always new.
- D) That ‘additions’ preserve the original idea.²⁰¹

The bottom-line of Newman’s argument was that at one point the Church was unaware (*quoad nos*) of doctrines, but at a later stage could properly define them. As Chadwick interprets the process: “The mind is not inferring anything; it is not even aware of what is happening to it. But from time to time circumstances force it to state its view of the idea and so elicit formal statements about it...”²⁰² The intention of Newman is without a doubt to avoid a notion of a continuing revelation. Chadwick writes: “The original revelation is unique: it was given partly in explicit doctrines, partly in feelings which were left to be subsequently drawn out in to doctrines, these later doctrines being like the thoughts of a man who suddenly perceives the truth of a new proposition, exclaiming ‘Yes, I believed that all the time but I did not know how

¹⁹⁸ Chadwick 1957, p. 152.

¹⁹⁹ Chadwick 1957, p. 153.

²⁰⁰ To this component Chadwick adds: “against every sane historical inquiry”, p. 154.

²⁰¹ Chadwick 1957, p. 154.

²⁰² Chadwick 1957, p. 156.

to put it like that”²⁰³ In light of such reasoning, Chadwick raises the question how “an originally wordless appropriation of such a doctrine as the double procession of the Holy Spirit” was possible.²⁰⁴ In his sermon Newman writes: “The doctrine of the Double Procession was no Catholic dogma in the first ages, though it was more or less clearly stated by individual Fathers; yet if it is now to be received, as surely it must be, as part of the Creed, it was really held everywhere from the beginning, and therefore, in a measure, held as a mere religious impression, perhaps an unconscious one.”²⁰⁵ Chadwick writes that this is one of those frustrating passages in Newman where the tension between the historian and the theologian becomes clear. Chadwick reasons in the following way: as a historian Newman has to concede that the doctrine was not at first a dogma. Simultaneously – as a theologian, Newman needs to maintain that,

- A) The doctrine is now a part of the Creed in the west
- B) The western church is inerrant, and
- C) Since doctrine is immutable, the church must somehow account for how the doctrine has ‘existed’ – but not as doctrine.

The result is the notion of an impression which the church was not aware of. Chadwick adds: “The theologian must also (in spite of the historian) contend that the doctrine was ‘really held everywhere’ – and if so the unconsciousness becomes necessary presupposition and not a mere perhaps.”²⁰⁶ Having set the premises for how the argument goes, Chadwick addresses the question about the language in which the new doctrines are expressed. Chadwick makes three remarks about the new language in which the ‘new’ doctrines are expressed in:²⁰⁷

- A) As language it is not part of the original revelation.
- B) Nor is it a restatement of part of the revelation already expressed in propositions.
- C) Nor is it logically deducible from the original revelation, since you cannot ‘infer’ propositions from a wordless experience or feeling or (in Newman’s sense) ‘idea’.

Here it is important to bear in mind the case, which Chadwick has built in the previous pages. He is clear on the point that Newman’s theory represents something entirely different than the

²⁰³ Chadwick 1957, p. 157.

²⁰⁴ Chadwick 1957, p. 160.

²⁰⁵ Chadwick 1957, p. 235.

²⁰⁶ Chadwick 1957, p. 235.

²⁰⁷ Chadwick 1957, p. 160.

scholastic theory of logical explication.²⁰⁸ “If Newman’s theory could be fitted into the idea of logical explication, there would be nothing new, or startling, about the theory of unconsciousness.”²⁰⁹ Newman’s theory on the other hand, Chadwick summarizes as: “The Church grows into a truth without any conscious or logical inference: and only after she has grown into it does she look back and perceive the logical implication.”²¹⁰ It is with this background of the distinction between the logical and Newman’s theory, that Chadwick poses a challenge regarding a new revelation. Having drawn up the premises, here divided into A, B and C, the result which Chadwick reaches, aware of its contradicting nature is,

D) The doctrine then is a statement of part of the revelation not itself a doctrine.

The only explanation which Chadwick finds reasonable is that the definition of the church is to be equated with ‘new revelation’. In Chadwick’s view, how else could new doctrines reasonably be explained? In summary, Chadwick writes: “Newman’s theory, like that of Suarez, is dependent on the contention that definition by the Church is ‘equivalent’ to revelation. If it were established (for example) in Catholic theology that ‘revelation ended at the death of the last apostle’, Newman’s theory could hardly survive without a restatement so drastic as to leave it almost unrecognizable.”²¹¹

7.1.1 Argument No. 1b: Concept of revelation

Between the authors Lash, Misner and Egan, a general consensus exists that Newman’s concept of revelation needs further elaboration and is the cause for the critique of a continuing revelation. Misner is more subtle in his criticism and does not pass judgement on whether Newman in fact does permit the interpretation of a continuing revelation. He is satisfied with remarking that the necessary concept of revelation was not available at the time of Newman.²¹² The majority of the criticism from Lash will be presented in section 7.2, yet he makes the summarizing claim regarding Newman and revelation that: “It is not difficult to point out the weaknesses and inconsistencies in his argument, and to show that, as a result of his failure to

²⁰⁸ “For logic afforded the precise analogy which was needed – to explain how there could be addition without change.” Chadwick 1957, p. 25.

²⁰⁹ Chadwick 1957, p. 155.

²¹⁰ Chadwick 1957, p. 156.

²¹¹ Chadwick 1957, p. 160.

²¹² Misner 1970, p. 47.

rigorously to maintain his own insistence on the unity of revelation, much of the argument in the Essay is difficult to reconcile with any coherent defence (other than a thorough-going fideism such as he never contemplated) of the claim that ‘revelation closed with the death of the last apostle’.”²¹³ In relation to the question of a continuing revelation, the close identification between revelation, doctrine and the concept of ‘idea’, does in fact prove a point of difficulty. Misner writes: “Newman held fast to the perpetual validity of dogmas and did not admit, as the present writer thinks should be admitted, that a dogmatic formulation which was inadequate, as all acknowledge, even in the culture in which it took shape may have to be thoroughly rethought and reformulated in a subsequent culture. This too is a sign of a certain unsurmounted ‘extrinsicism’ in Newman’s thought in regard to revelation.”²¹⁴ This means that with a different concept of revelation, which did not so closely identify revelation with doctrine, would acquit Newman from suspicions of a continuing revelation.

Philip Egan likewise finds the root of the problem of a ‘new revelation’ with Newman’s concept of revelation. As Egan writes, Newman did point out that revelation was a divine reality, mystery and invitation, yet much emphasis came to rest on revelation’s dogmatic foundations.²¹⁵ When interpreting Newman’s concept of revelation, Egan refers to letters by Newman from 1868, later published as *Unpublished paper on the development of doctrine*.²¹⁶ Here Newman makes the analogy between the Apostles having full knowledge of revelation and someone schooled in Aristotelian philosophy. Newman writes: “What is meant by knowing the Aristotelic philosophy? Does it mean that he has before his mind always every doctrinal statement, every sentiment, opinion, intellectual and moral tendency of Aristotle? This is impossible. Not Aristotle himself, no human mind, can have a host of thoughts present to it at once...A learned Aristotelian is one who can answer any whatever philosophical questions in the way that Aristotle would have answered them.”²¹⁷ Thereafter Newman writes: “What then is meant by the Depositum? Is it a list of articles than can be numbered? No, it is a large philosophy; all parts of which are connected together, and in a certain sense correlative together, so that he who really knows one part, may be said to know all, as *ex pede Herculem*. Thus, the Apostles had the fullness of revealed knowledge, a fullness which they could as little realize to

²¹³ Lash 1975, p. 100.

²¹⁴ Misner 1970, p. 47.

²¹⁵ Egan 2004, p. 86.

²¹⁶ Achaval, H.M. de, “An Unpublished Paper by cardinal Newman on the development of doctrine”, *Gregorianum* vol 39, no 3, 1958.

²¹⁷ Achaval 1958, p. 593.

themselves...”²¹⁸ Again Newman: “I wish to hold that there is nothing which the Church has defined or shall define but what an Apostle, if asked, would have been fully able to answer and would have answered, as the Church has answered...”²¹⁹. The point which Newman was aiming at, was that his reasoning supports that doctrine may be said to be historically new, but have in fact existed in the depositum all along.²²⁰ Yet this only supports the argument that revelation for Newman, according to Misner, “had recourse to a conception of it which was still basically too bound up with propositions and dogmatic forms of words.”²²¹ The conclusion reached by Egan is that Newman describes revelation sometimes as historical and personal, and other times as propositional truth. “The result is that his notion of revelation as an ‘idea’ becomes elusive.”, writes Egan.²²² He concludes by writing that: “Newman is arguably left with the problem of explaining how the Church’s ‘newer’ and later doctrines are not verily new revelations rather than explications or re-presentations of what is already there. In other words, because doctrine is not only an expression of Divine Revelation in propositional form – ‘expressions in human language of truths to which the human mind is unequal’ - but is actually in some manner Divine Revelation itself, then later developments must in some way be genuinely new revelations and not simply further aspects of it. Newman, of course, would have vigorously eschewed this position.”²²³

7.2 Argument No.2: Prophetic fulfilment

As part of Newman’s fundamental assignment was to explain how later doctrines were somehow contained within the earliest, that the ‘whole idea’ was present from the beginning ‘*per modum unius*’. In the *Essay*, Newman writes: “My argument then is...that, from the first age of Christianity, its teaching looked towards those ecclesiastical dogmas, afterwards recognized and defined, with (as time went on) more or less determinate advance in the direction of them.” Lash asks the question what it actually means when earlier doctrines

²¹⁸ Achaval 1958, p. 594.

²¹⁹ Achaval 1958, p. 595. Newman makes the same point in the *Essay* p.191: “Thus the holy Apostles would without words know all the truths concerning the high doctrines of theology, which controversialists after them have piously and charitably reduced to formulae, and developed through argument. Thus, St Justin or St Irenaeus might be without any digested ideas of Purgatory or Original Sin, yet have an intense feeling, which they had not defined or located, both of the fault of our first nature and the responsibilities of our nature regenerate.”

²²⁰ Egan 2004, p. 86.

²²¹ Misner 1970, p. 47.

²²² Egan 2004, p. 250.

²²³ Egan 2004, p. 251.

supposedly “looked towards” later ones.²²⁴ Newman presents a case described as prophetic fulfilment, which leads to an understanding of new revelation according to Lash.

The problems begin when Newman attempts to find the roots for future doctrines. Despite the fact that the original traces for a doctrine may be weak and ambiguous, it can still give directions of the intentions of earlier writings. Newman explains in the *Essay*: “when we have reason to think, that a writer or an age would have witnessed so and so, but for this or that, and that this or that were mere accidents of his position, then he or it may be said to tend towards such testimony. In this way the first centuries tend towards the fifth.”²²⁵ Be it as it may that the form of argument is somewhat unsatisfactory writes Lash, yet it provides an insight into Newman’s thinking. Newman describes the process as that the writer “has something before him which he aims at, and, while he cannot help including much in his meaning which he does not aim at, he does aim at one thing, not another.”²²⁶

In addition, Newman introduces the analogy between the fulfilment of prophecy and the development of doctrine.²²⁷ Newman writes: “But the prophetic Revelation is, in matter of fact, not of this nature, but a process of development: the earlier prophecies are pregnant texts out of which the succeeding announcements grow; they are types. It is not that first one truth is told, then another; but the whole truth or large portions of it are told at once, yet only in their rudiments, or in miniature, and they are expanded and finished in their parts, as the course of revelation proceeds.”²²⁸ Lash agrees with Chadwick that on the point of the analogy between development of doctrine and prophecy, that it is certainly not compatible with the decree of *Lamentabili*. The argument put forth by Newman, according to Lash, is that the later stages of the history of prophecy is included in the earlier prophecies – at the same time as it is the later stages of revelation.²²⁹ Keeping in mind that Newman argues that the whole of the Bible is written on the principle of development, he further writes that: “the *effata*²³⁰ of our Lord and his Apostles are of a typical structure, parallel to the prophetic announcements...it is probable antecedently that those doctrinal, political, ritual and ethical sentences, which have the same

²²⁴ Lash 1975, p. 103.

²²⁵ Newman 2015, p. 126.

²²⁶ Lash 1975, p. 104.

²²⁷ Newman 2015, p. 65 writes: “But the whole Bible, not only its prophetic portions only, is written on the principle of development. As the Revelation proceeds, it is ever new, yet ever old. St John, who completes it...” Note that here Newman explicitly writes that he does believe in a closed revelation.

²²⁸ Newman 2015, p. 64.

²²⁹ Lash 1975, p. 111.

²³⁰ Latin meaning of *effata*: prophecy/prediction/pronouncement. Referenced from Ahlberg, Lundqvist, Sörbom, *Norstedts Latinsk-Svenska Ordbok*, Second edition, 2004, p. 287.

structure, should admit the same expansion.”²³¹ To this Newman adds: “Moreover, while it is certain that developments of revelation proceeded all through the Old Dispensation down to the very end of our Lord’s ministry, on the other hand, if we turn our attention to the beginnings of Apostolical teaching after His ascension, we shall find ourselves unable to fix an historical point at which the growth of doctrine ceased, and the rule of faith was once for all settled...not on the day of Pentecost...not on the death of the last Apostle, for St. Ignatius had to establish the doctrine of Episcopacy...”²³² To this Lash asks the question – “On what principle can one deny to the ‘developments’, in word or event, of these effata the status of further revelation?”²³³ In closing, Lash finds Newman’s argumentation surprising since he once accused the ‘Romanists’ of believing in a ‘standing organ of Revelation’.²³⁴

The conclusion which Lash reaches touches upon the discussion in section 7.1.1 concerning Newman’s concept of revelation. It is possible to speak of revelation as a continuing process, yet this always assumes the normativity and finality of Christ. It is therefore not persuasive, according to Lash, to draw an analogy between the prophetic period and the post-apostolical church without allowing for new revelation.²³⁵ It is this type of reasoning which led Newman to describe the papacy as having existed as an unfulfilled prophecy.²³⁶

7.2.1 Method and model of revelation

Stephenson argues along the same lines as Lash that Newman’s analogy between prophetic developments from the Old Testament to the New, stands in the same relation as the New Testament does to post-apostolic development. Stephenson calls this “the most surprising part of the Essay.”²³⁷, in the sense that Newman proposes a model for how development takes place. Newman writes that it is antecedently probable that post-apostolic development “should admit the same expansion” as the development taken place in the Old Testament to the New.²³⁸ Two passages from Newman, according to Stephenson prove the point of continuing revelation. Newman writes: “Great questions exist in the subject-matter of which Scripture treats, which Scripture does not solve; questions too so real, so practical, that they must be answered; and,

²³¹ Newman 2015, p. 66.

²³² Newman 2015, p. 67-68.

²³³ Lash 1975, p. 110.

²³⁴ Lash 1975, p. 111.

²³⁵ Lash 1975 p. 111.

²³⁶ Lash 1975, p. 112.

²³⁷ Stephenson 1966, p. 472.

²³⁸ Stephenson 1966, p. 473.

unless we suppose a new revelation answered by means of the revelation we which we have, that is, by development.²³⁹ Stephenson acknowledges that a distinction is upheld between development and a new revelation, nevertheless, the real point is that development gives the same information as a new revelation would.²⁴⁰ To this Newman adds: “Supposing the order of nature once broken by a revelation, the continuance of that revelation is but a question of degree.”²⁴¹ Stephenson emphasizes the passage where Newman writes that there is no line drawn at the end of the apostolical age. The argument then becomes that since there is no “line”, together with the analogy of how prophecy developed, it seems reasonable to suggest that post-apostolic developments are new revelation.

Stephenson addresses another important issue, namely the method at work. The *Essay* describes the unfolding of a latent idea which the Church has always in its entirety been subconsciously aware of. Yet this poses problems when Newman compares the Messianic prophecies with doctrinal development. Newman writes: “It is not that first one truth is told, then another; but the whole truth or large portions of it are told at once, yet only in their rudiments, or in miniature..”²⁴² The next sentence by Newman, Stephenson quotes twice on the same passage, where Newman writes: “The Gospel is the development of the Law; yet what difference seems wider than that which separates the unbending rule of Moses from the ‘grace and truths’ which ‘came by Jesus Christ’”.²⁴³ For Stephenson his interpretation of Newman can only be that “There is nothing in the latest books of the New Testament that was not latent, and discoverable by the perceptive eye, in the earliest books of the Old. The relation between the Fourth Gospel and Genesis, the *Essay* suggests, is one of ‘substantial identity’”.²⁴⁴ Again, if the Gospel is a development from the Law, and all truths has existed in its unity and are being unfolded, the origins of the Old Testament contain all subsequent New Testament teachings. In addition to this, this process is analogous to how doctrinal has taken place, which is an expansion of the New Testament.

²³⁹ Newman 2015, p. 60.

²⁴⁰ Stephenson 1966, p. 471.

²⁴¹ Newman 2015, p. 85.

²⁴² Newman 2015, p. 64.

²⁴³ Newman 2015, p. 177.

²⁴⁴ Stephenson 1966, p. 475.

Chapter 8. A defence for Newman

The following chapter will discuss those authors who on one or several points engage with the criticism directed towards Newman and offer an explanation of why the criticism is not accurate. In order to provide an overview of the criticism and its defence, this section will be thematically structured according to each line of argument presented against Newman. In broad terms, the arguments put forward against Newman can be divided in two separate arguments. The first deals with how a doctrine can have existed in a wordless form and appear later in history, and if it is possible to suggest the existence of an idea which exists pre-verbally. This argument also investigates the definitions of terms like idea, revelation and doctrine. The second argument rests on an analogy made between the development of prophecy and the development of doctrine. The conclusion from both these arguments is that the definitions of the Church are to be equated with new revelation. This chapter will present the contrary argument.

8.1 Argument No. 1: Defence

Ian Ker²⁴⁵ deals explicitly with the premises which Chadwick argues needs to be simultaneously maintained in Newman's line of thought. Chadwick, after expressing overall doubt in the possibility of a wordless experience of doctrine is possible, writes that a further problem is the language which these "new" doctrines are expressed in. From Chadwick's position, Newman must maintain that:

- the language of the new doctrine is not part of the original revelation
- the language is not a restatement of something already propositionally expressed
- the doctrines are not logically deducible from the original revelation

Upon Ker's treatment of Chadwick's argument, Ker in turn finds subtle premises in his reasoning. Initially, Ker notes that Chadwick's representation of Newman's notion of revelation is inaccurate.²⁴⁶ Ker quotes Chadwick explaining that according to Newman revelation was

²⁴⁵ Ker, Ian T, "Newman's Theory: Development or continuing revelation?", *Newman and Gladstone Centennial Essays*, ed. James D Bastable, Veritas Publications Dublin, 1978.

²⁴⁶ Ker 1978, p. 146. See also: Davis, Francis H, "Is Newman's theory of development catholic", *Blackfriars*, vol 39, No.406-1, 1958, p.313. Francis disapproves of Chadwick's criticism and concludes that: "Newman's theory will never be understood, however, unless one bears in mind that he is not considering dogmas piecemeal, and

given “partly in explicit doctrines, partly in feelings which were left to be subsequently drawn out into doctrines...”²⁴⁷. Chadwick makes the same argument when he writes that: “It was given partly in the form of propositions. And partly, Christian thinkers have needed to draw out and formulate, not only the intellectual consequences of the given propositions, but the rational expression of what at first they experienced wordlessly and which could only be formulated as their feelings and experiences encountered opposition, error, pagan philosophy, or evangelistic success.”²⁴⁸ Ker argues that this is to misunderstand Newman entirely. To support his case, Ker cites the 1958 *Unpublished paper on development*²⁴⁹ by Newman, which is supposed to invalidate Chadwick’s position. Newman usage of the word “feelings” or “wordless experience” is not, as Ker puts it, heartfelt sentiment, but rather “intuitive knowledge”.²⁵⁰

Newman writes: “the apostles had the fullness of revealed knowledge, a fullness which they could as little realise to themselves, as the human mind, as such, can have all its thoughts present before it at once. They are elicited according to the occasion. A man of genius cannot go about with his genius in his hand.”²⁵¹ As Ker interprets Newman, in some sense the doctrines are “new”, but at the same time, it must be maintained they are part of the original deposit. Nevertheless, the interpretation which Chadwick represents does not do justice to Newman in Ker’s view, which is rather Newman’s “impression on the imagination”. Ker writes: “Newman is concerned with intuitive knowledge, knowledge which may be viewed variously as more or less cognitive or imaginative or akin to ‘seeing’. But it is quite distinct from any notion of feeling.”²⁵² Therefore, the conclusion, which Chadwick reaches is incorrect, based on the fact that it is a false assumption that just because something is “wordless” it must by consequence also be within the realm of “feelings.” The same response as Ker was also brought forward by Herbert Hammans (1932-), who writes that whenever Newman writes that the Church was not aware of something at one point, he is referring to implicit and intuitive knowledge, not explicit.

showing how an earlier expression can develop into a later one. He is concerned with the development of the Church’s understanding of a great original unified ‘idea’...”

²⁴⁷ Chadwick 1957, p. 157.

²⁴⁸ Chadwick 1957, p. 153.

²⁴⁹ Achával, H.M. de, “An Unpublished Paper by Cardinal Newman on the Development of Doctrine”, *Gregorianum*, Vol.39, No.3, 1958.

²⁵⁰ Ker 1978, p. 146-147. That Newman is referring to ‘intuitive knowledge’ is shared by Peterbus in his dissertation, p. 62. Peterbus writes that Chadwick is mistaken in characterizing Newman’s position as ‘mere feelings’.

²⁵¹ Achval 1958, p. 594.

²⁵² Ker 1978, p. 147.

Hammans also cites the *Unpublished paper* in support of his position that Newman definitely presupposed in all his writing a closed revelation.²⁵³

A more elaborate defence of Newman has been presented by Jan Hendrik Walgrave. In his book *Unfolding Revelation*, Walgrave deals with the criticism of Chadwick. As Walgrave points out, Chadwick's error consists in stating that revelation was given partly in explicit doctrines and partly in feelings which were to be drawn out into doctrines. Walgrave writes: "there is no question of indistinct feelings added to doctrines but of a real apprehension of the same, point to that whole... Nevertheless, although entirely contained in the primitive Creed, the content of revelation is not explicitly unfolded in it."²⁵⁴

This line of thought which Walgrave presents is cited and agreed upon by Roman Siebenrock in his book on Newman.²⁵⁵ Siebenrock agrees with the words of Walgrave that it is inaccurate to characterize Newman as promoting a position on revelation based purely on feelings. As Walgrave explains, development "is in the first place an expansion in the believing mind of a real comprehensive view of its divine object. But that development does not take place except through the mediation of dogma, which in its original form was a message articulated in a primitive Creed."²⁵⁶ This means that revelation is initially reached man through words, i.e. the Creed, regardless of how vague or inarticulate the original message reaches a person. Walgrave continues his analysis: "Development, therefore, is not only the expansion in the mind of a wordless 'idea-impression' but at the same time and in the same measure the explication of the content of the original message. That idea-impression is the living medium through which reflection unfolds the content of the message in a way that is faithful to its concrete fullness. It may be said, then, that the same process of development considered as a whole is as well a clarification of the presence of that whole to realizing apprehension as it is an elaboration of what is contained in the primitive message."²⁵⁷ Siebenrock adds that this convincing defence of Newman, not only invalidates Chadwick's criticism, but also that of Lash's critique regarding the problems of Newman's doctrine of revelation. Siebenrock notes that the essential note for reaching this conclusion is a deeper understanding of Newman's *Grammar of Assent*.²⁵⁸

²⁵³ Hammans 1965, p. 57-58.

²⁵⁴ Walgrave, Jan Hendrik, *Unfolding Revelation – the nature of doctrinal development*, the Westminster press, 1972, p. 306.

²⁵⁵ Siebenrock 1996, p. 370-371.

²⁵⁶ Walgrave 1972, p. 306.

²⁵⁷ Walgrave 1972, p. 307.

²⁵⁸ Siebenrock 1996, p. 371.

8.1.1 The ambiguity of idea

One of the criticisms closely related to the characterization of Newman as a proponent of revelation as a wordless experience, is his concept of idea. As the argument goes, if revelation is identical to idea and understood propositionally, in the cases when Newman writes that the idea develops over time, it follows with difficulty to maintain both that all of revelation was given in the deposit and at the same time that the developments which occur are not in fact new revelation. Ker deals with Stephenson's critique of Newman's concept of idea, and the idea is not one and the same. His critique is that additions appear and revelation in fact changes. Ker's response is that Newman's concept of idea may cause problems, but only because his foundation is a dynamic view of idea, not a static one.²⁵⁹ Siebenrock notes that distinction between revelation and idea has not always been clear which in turn has given rise to misinterpretations of Newman's position.²⁶⁰ As Siebenrock explains the difference, revelation is the "*extra nos*", what meets us from outside, 'idea' represents the human religious aspect. So, while revelation is closed, the idea can develop throughout history.

8.2 Argument No.2: Defence

One of Nicholas Lash's criticisms against Newman is that the new developments can be compared to the development of prophecy. Regarding the existence of the papacy, Lash writes: "the only sense in which the Papacy can be said to have existed in the world in the early centuries was as an unfulfilled prophecy, why should we not simply say that then it had no existence except in prophecy." Ker answers that it is a simplification to say that Newman only saw the papacy as an unfulfilled prophecy. Newman's argument is based on a passage where he gives the example of a "quarrel and a lawsuit...bring out the state of the law". Similarly: "St Peter's prerogative would remain a mere letter, till the complication of ecclesiastical matters became the cause of ascertaining it."²⁶¹ Therefore, as Ker notes, Newman's explanation of unfulfilled prophecy needs to be seen within this context. Ker remarks instead by citing the passage where Newman writes that we are "unable to fix a historical point at which the growth of doctrine ceased, and the rule of faith was once and for all settled." This does not only apply

²⁵⁹ Ker 1978, p. 150. See also Hummel, Thomas C, "John Henry Newman: A search for development with continuity", *Saint Luke's Journal of Theology*, Volume XX, Number 4, 1977, p. 278. Hummel writes that the new doctrine, which Newman refers to is only new *quoad nos*, and it represents a new understanding but is never new *in se*.

²⁶⁰ Siebenrock 1996, p. 415. "Es ist nicht immer herausgestellt worden, dass Offenbarung nicht unmittelbar mit der Idee des Christentums gleichgesetzt werden kann."

²⁶¹ Newman 2015, p. 150.

to the papacy but also of baptism, the episcopacy etc. Ker writes: “All these things were revealed in essence to the apostles, the “faith” was given to them finally and completely, but yet the ‘rule of faith’ was not settled. Revelation was consummated at the ‘end of our Lord’s ministry’, and yet the implications, the details, the possibilities of that revelation had still to be worked out in doctrine and practice.”²⁶² Therefore it is important to understand that while the idea of Christianity is complete, there still continues a process of understanding the works of Christ, to this way, humanly speaking, the process of development is never complete. Concerning this particular argument, Ker writes that it overlooks the entire point of Newman’s argument to single out the papacy. Ker finds further fault in Lash’s argument. Lash finds it supporting a doctrine of new revelation when Newman writes of the parallels between the prophetic structures of the Old Testament with the expansion and structure of the New Testament. Nevertheless, just because parallels exist, Ker writes, this cannot automatically be assumed to mean that it is equally part of the course of revelation.

The same argument, regarding Newman and unfulfilled prophecy is also mentioned by Stephenson. Graf deals with the critique and writes that his point in Newman’s thought has received plenty of misunderstanding. It is in fact a prerequisite of the entire argument that revelation is closed. It would have been possible, argues Graf, for Newman to prevent any criticism on this point if during the explication of the analogy he would have emphasized the finality of revelation. Reading Newman in his entirety, proves the fact that Newman took the closure of revelation for granted. Furthermore, it is in fact an analogy which Newman makes. He is not making any claims of identity.²⁶³

²⁶² Ker 1978, p. 155.

²⁶³ Graf, p. 150–151. See also: Artz, Johannes, “Entstehung und Auswirkung von Newmans Theorie der Dogmenentwicklung”, *Tübinger Theologische Quartalschrift*, 1968, p. 96. Artz writes that Newman is making an analogy not any claims of identity. According to Artz, Newman presupposes in all his argumentation a complete revelation.

Chapter 9. Evaluating the critique

Following the structure of the previous chapter, the critique against Newman has been divided in two arguments, both with the same conclusion that Newman's work is open for an interpretation of a continuing revelation. This chapter sets out to answer the research question of this investigation, namely, to evaluate the legitimacy of such argumentation. As has become clear from previous chapters, the core point of the criticism is aimed at Newman's position that doctrines can in some sense be held and apprehended pre-verbally. Criticism on this point is essentially a criticism directed at the heart of Newman's thinking. For this reason, this particular aspect will be discussed more in-depth than the analogy between the development of doctrine and prophecy.

9.1 Argument No. 1: Pre-verbal revelation

This section will demonstrate that an in-depth understanding of the philosophical aspects of Newman's entire theological enterprise will acquit him of criticism regarding a new revelation. Thereby putting the criticism raised in a new light. A failure to do so will only result in a misguided reading of Newman.

9.1.1 Newman on experience

The word experience has a broad range of meanings. A striking distinction is seen in the German differentiation between *Erfahrung* and *Erlebnis*, which casts light on Newman's usage of the word experience. Whereas *Erfahrung* denotes a cognitive content and objectivity, it is contrasted by the more subjective notion of *Erlebnis*. It is possible for *Erlebnis* to develop into *Erfahrung*, but only when it is sorted into a context of an entire worldview in one's own life.²⁶⁴ An essential aspect of Newman's thought on experience is that on an epistemological level, he does not differentiate between sense experience of the world and the experience of conscience.²⁶⁵ The consequence of such reasoning is that Newman has a unified understanding of experience, which includes religious experience. He deals with these questions on the same level as sense experience, which he does not reduce to subjectivity.²⁶⁶ Newman argues that the voice of conscience and its experience is grounded in rationality. As a result, the experience

²⁶⁴ Hofmann, Stefan, *Religiöse Erfahrung – Glaubenserfahrung - Theologie: eine studie zu einigen zentralen Aspekten im Denken John Henry Newmans*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2011 p. 150.

²⁶⁵ Hofmann 2011, p. 153.

²⁶⁶ Hofmann 2011, p. 154.

gained as a result of one's conscience, ultimately has according to Newman, the character of answer to God's calling towards each individual.²⁶⁷

The question which Chadwick's criticism addresses is whether the Christian faith can be grasped on a pre-verbal level, if doctrines can be held unconsciously with an explicit articulation. Here the role of experience becomes central for understanding Newman's position accurately. Newman did not himself explicitly use the terminology of experience frequently, yet Hofmann makes the distinction in the writings of Newman, between religious experience (*Religiöse Erfahrung*) and an experience of faith (*Glaubenserfahrung*). A person can legitimately experience a religious atmosphere or sentiment, yet this must be contrasted with what is meant by *Glaubenserfahrung*, which deals with the Christian faith in itself. As Hofmann writes, Newman did not understand the experience of faith as something independent of a reasonable assent to its content.²⁶⁸ Those traits such as a sense of religious atmosphere falls under the category of what Newman would call natural religion, man's natural religious inclination. In Newman's understanding, the Christian faith completes the natural religion. Hofmann raises the question of whether aside to religious experience, it is also possible to have an experience of the Christian revelation. Once again, the distinctions are essential in clarifying what "an experience of the Christian revelation" actually entails. As Hofmann writes, for Newman it is unthinkable to understanding "experience of revelation" as something apart from or independent of the content of faith. Newman rejects "an experience of revelation" if it means an experience with the exclusion of Scripture and church dogmatics.²⁶⁹

9.1.2 Experience and Revelation

Hofmann points out that when Newman addresses natural religion, he speaks of the antecedent probability of an expected revelation. In the *Grammar of Assent*, Newman writes of "the strong antecedent probability that, in His mercy, He will thus supernaturally present Himself to our apprehension."²⁷⁰ This is also illustrative of Newman's concept of revelation. Hofmann writes that Newman is beyond a pure instruction-theoretical model of revelation. In the same way that through natural religion, man by his conscience can come into contact with a personal God, so

²⁶⁷ Hofmann 2011, p. 248-249.

²⁶⁸ Hofmann 2011, p. 254.

²⁶⁹ Hofmann 2011, p. 255-256.

²⁷⁰ Newman 2016, p. 333.

in turn, through revelation, God reveals himself personally to each individual. This means that Newman clearly considers revelation not a collection of revealed truths, but as the self-disclosure of God to man.²⁷¹

This investigation has an aim to further the understanding of the concept of a closed revelation. One of the misunderstandings regarding this concept is that God no longer speaks to man but has done so once in Christ and nothing further. Therefore, it is worthwhile to note Hofmann's understanding of the matter. In order to understand Newman's concept of revelation, one of the key components is that the revelation of God cannot be separated from mankind today. Newman expresses that "God presents himself to our apprehension", this is done not by the transmission of revealed doctrines, but the by the reality which is God's self-revelation.²⁷² This encounter of the reality of revelation occurs through the Church, a decisive place where God reveals himself.²⁷³

The question, which poses a challenge towards Newman according to the outlined criticism, is his attempt to explain how the church and a believer can be aware of future doctrines. Newman specifically deals with this question in the *Grammar*:

"It stands to reason that all of us, learned and unlearned, are bound to believe the whole revealed doctrine in all its parts and in all that it implies, according as a portion after portion is brought home to our consciousness as belonging to it; and it also stands to reason, that a doctrine, so deep and so various, as the revealed depositum of faith, cannot be brought home to us and made our own all at once... Thus, as regards the Catholic Creed, if we really believe that our Lord is God, we believe all that is meant by such a belief... In the act of believing it at all, we forthwith commit ourselves by anticipation to believe truths which we at present do not believe, because they have never come before us; we limit henceforth the range of our private judgement in prospect by the conditions, whatever they are, of that dogma... And so in like manner, of the whole depositum of faith... He who believes in the depositum of Revelation, believes in all the doctrines of the depositum; and since he cannot know them all at once, he knows some doctrines, and does not know others; he may know only the Creed, nay, perhaps only the chief portions of the Creed; but, whether he knows little or much, he has the intention of believing all that there is to believe, whenever and as soon as it is brought home to him, if he believes in

²⁷¹ Hofmann 2011, p. 260.

²⁷² Hofmann 2011, p. 261.

²⁷³ Hofmann 2011, p. 262.

Revelation at all. All that he knows as revealed, and all that she shall know, and all that there is to know, he embraces it all in his intention by one act of faith;²⁷⁴

What this passage from the *Grammar* illustrates is Newman's ambition to maintain a balance between the finality in Christ, the apostle's fullness of knowledge, at the same time as future doctrines are not new revelation but can in fact be traced back to the original depositum.²⁷⁵ At several points in this quoted passage, Newman speaks of the intention of the believer and how he supposes faith to work. If one believes in deposit of revelation or that Christ is God, these beliefs themselves entail other propositional content which the believer might not be aware of at the time. Newman uses the expression *to commit oneself by anticipation* to future beliefs. This is not a problem for Newman since the believer, as expressed in the text, always has the intention of believing all of the faith in its entirety. Therefore, by an antecedent act of faith, the believer can grasp all doctrines of the deposit even though they might not be aware of it at the time.

As Hofmann writes, it is possible to misunderstand Newman's concept of revelation in several ways by extracting passages from their context and thereby attempting to make overreaching claims regarding Newman's thought. It is indeed possible to misunderstand Newman concerning revelation as in that revelation is only an experience, or historical event, as a system of dogmas or even that revelation is identical to Scripture. As Hofmann writes, Newman often used the word revelation in a wide perspective. It is not possible to clearly and without hesitation place Newman within the modern categories of models of revelation. Nevertheless, what can be said is that the central point in Newman's understanding of revelation is the self-communication of God.²⁷⁶ Hofmann agrees with Ian Kerr who writes: "Newman anticipates modern theologians who emphasize that God reveals his own self rather than truths about himself."²⁷⁷ As previously written, with an author such as Newman who is difficult to systematize due to his extensive and personal style of writing, it is possible to single out passages which suggest a leniency towards an instruction-theoretical model. Despite this, the tendency, which Newman strives towards is of God's self-revelation.²⁷⁸

²⁷⁴ Newman 2016, p. 122-123.

²⁷⁵ Hofmann 2011, p. 291.

²⁷⁶ Hofmann 2011, p. 291-292.

²⁷⁷ Hofmann 2011, p. 292.

²⁷⁸ Hofmann 2011, p. 292.

9.1.3 Revelation and impression

The description of revelation as an impression is the clearest example according to Hoffmann of Newman's view on revelation. In his *15th University Sermon*, Newman writes: "As God is one, so the impression which He gives us of Himself is one; it is not a thing of parts, it is not a system, nor is it any thing imperfect, and needing a counterpart. It is the vision of an object. When we pray, we pray, not to an assemblage of notions, or to a creed, but to One Individual Being, and when we speak of Him we speak of a Person, not of a Law or Manifestation."²⁷⁹ What God gives in the impression is not truths or concepts, but rather a vision of himself through an image. It is not the result of human thought but undivided impression of God. Newman writes: "Surely, if Almighty God is ever one and the same, and is revealed to us as one and the same, the true inward impression of Him, made on the recipient of the revelation, must be one and the same..."²⁸⁰ It is within this context that Newman introduces the term idea. Considering Dulles' interpretation, Hofmann is not quite in agreement when Dulles writes that Newman understands revelation as idea. Conceptually, in Hofmann's view, Dulles goes beyond Newman, yet regarding the content they are in agreement.²⁸¹ The issue concerns that there is no clear distinction between idea and impression. In Hofmann's interpretation, Idea stands for the objective reality in faith, whereas impression represents the image through which the reality is grasped. The important aspect, which Hofmann writes is that in relation to both idea and impression, revelation can afterwards be translated into dogma. In this way, revelation transmits the impression. This impression has the same content as the Triune God. Even though Newman is not explicitly referring to the self-communication of God, it is clear that the personalist understanding of revelation has priority to dogmatic formulations.²⁸² This in turn means that the function of both the creed and the dogmas consist in transmitting the impressions of the self-revelation of God. It equally means that according to Newman there is no new revelation. Hofmann writes that Newman must not be interpreted to understand that revelation is "closed" in the sense of remaining in the past.²⁸³

²⁷⁹ Newman 2012, p. 307.

²⁸⁰ Newman 2012, p. 306.

²⁸¹ See further: Dulles, Avery, "From images to truth: Newman on Revelation and Faith", *Theological studies* (51), 1990, p. 259. Dulles clearly reaches the same conclusion as several other authors of this chapter that Newman presupposed a closed revelation.

²⁸² Hofmann 2011, p. 294-295.

²⁸³ Hofmann 2011, p. 297; Newman 2012, p. 285:"and though since Christ came no new revelation has been given, yet much even in the latter days has been added in the way of explaining and applying what was given once for all. As the world around varies, so varies also, not the principles of the doctrine of Christ, but the outward shape and the colour they assume."

With this perspective in mind Hofmann underscores the necessity to emphasize that the initiative for the impression of God, even from the perspective of the individual believer, always lies on the side of God. Bearing in mind the criticism directed towards Newman, Hofmann writes that it is never a question of the believers themselves creating or inventing an impression.²⁸⁴

9.1.4 An experience of the content of faith

Regarding the question of the individual's natural ability to recognize the divine, Newman refers to the conscience as the source whereto it is possible to hear the personal voice of God. Likewise, the fact of the existence of the natural world and its objects, also point, according to Newman to its Creator. The question which certainly is of controversy is whether the triune God of revelation and the content of faith can be subject to real - in Newman's terminology – imaginative experience.²⁸⁵ Recalling section 8.1, as Walgrave points out, the imaginative and real are equivalent terms Newman used to understand and grasp concrete reality. Therefore, the criteria used to enable a real apprehension of the content of faith is its imaginability. Hofmann writes that on the one hand Newman's results were negative, that dogma cannot be understood in images. Nevertheless, on the other hand, certain dogmas would allow for an imaginative understanding. The terms Father, Son and Spirit are not abstract but rather concrete human experiences and images. It is therefore possible for an individual, through own experience, to create new images and further one's own understanding. Newman writes in the *Grammar*:

“But the question is whether a real assent to the mystery, as such, is possible; and I say it is not possible, because, while we can image the separate propositions, we cannot image them all together. We cannot, because the mystery transcends all our experience...but what is in some degree a matter of experience, what is presented for the imagination, the affections, the devotion, the spiritual life of the Christian to repose upon with real assent, what stands for things, not for notions only, is each of those propositions taken one by one, and that, not in the case of intellectual and thoughtful minds only, but of all religious minds whatever, in the case of a child or a peasant, as well as of a philosopher.”²⁸⁶

²⁸⁴ Hofmann 2011, p. 298.

²⁸⁵ Hofmann 2011, p. 320.

²⁸⁶ Newman 2016, p. 106-107.

In other words, the possibility of dogma being grasped by experience, depends on the natural experiences which the individual observer has. Newman refers to this as a possibility “in some degree”.²⁸⁷ These articles of faith, which have been grasped by a real apprehension is developed into the form of a real assent. Newman writes that most of the articles of faith in the creed are short and concise which facilitate an assent:

“The difficulty is removed by the dogma of the Church’s infallibility, and the consequent duty of ‘implicit faith’ in her word. The ‘One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church’ is an article of the Creed, and an article, which, inclusive of her infallibility, all men, high and low, can easily master and accept with a real and operative assent. It stands in the place of all abstruse propositions in a Catholic’s mind, for to believe in her word is virtually to believe in them all. Even what he cannot understand, at least he can believe to be true; and he believes it to be true because he believes in the Church.”²⁸⁸

In the creed, the article of “a holy, catholic and apostolic church”, Newman argues that this is an article which when believed, includes a belief in the infallibility of the Church. Furthermore, to believe in the word of the Church, consequently, entails to believe in the entire deposit of faith.²⁸⁹ The role which Newman subscribes to the individual, is nevertheless a role within a context of the Church’s faith. Articles of faith are not experienced or produced independently and singlehandedly but are instead a result from within the community of faith.²⁹⁰ As a way to express these thoughts, Newman uses the term imagination. But as has been shown, the ability to relate and experience the Christian faith is a practise conducted within the church. The imagination is principally a receptive function of the individual. The imagination is where concrete matter leaves an impression on the individual, where reality is captured. Newman writes: “The heart is commonly reached, not through reason, but through the imagination, by means of direct impressions, by the testimony of facts and events, by history, by description.”²⁹¹ Newman understands impressions to work in the same way, namely that ultimately it is God who leaves an impression. The impression left is a single impression and not a theological system. When the individual believer reflects on the impressions within the context of the church, dogmas are formed.²⁹² Again, it is never a question of the human imagination actively

²⁸⁷ Hofmann 2011, p. 322–323.

²⁸⁸ Newman 2016, p. 122.

²⁸⁹ Hofmann 2011, p. 324.

²⁹⁰ Hofmann 2011, p. 325.

²⁹¹ Newman 2016, p. 79.

²⁹² Hofmann 2011, p. 328.

creating impressions, but rather passively reacting and responding to the image bestowed by God, transmitted in the context of the church.²⁹³ In order to clarify the thought of Newman, Hofmann refers to the phenomenologist Dietrich von Hildebrand (1889-1977). He uses the distinction between intentional and non-intentional experiences (*Erlebnis*). The term intentional is used to express the subjects conscious and meaningful relationship to a real object. By contrast, a person's emotional self-awareness is not intentional since they are not directed towards an object. A further difference is that intentional experiences presuppose some form of knowledge of the object, in contrast to purely emotional or self-aware experiences. Hofmann writes that when Newman criticises religiosity simply based on emotions (*Religion des Gefuhls*), it is in accordance with what Hildebrand describes as non-intentional experiences.²⁹⁴

9.1.5 Conclusion Argument No.1

This argument has dealt with Newman's position on what has been called pre-verbal revelation and his concept of revelation. As has been shown by the theologians representing the position that Newman's theology does lead a notion of continuing revelation, a case can be made for this perspective. However, there are two broad flaws in this line of argument. The first point, which makes the argument wrong is that Newman needs to be understood according to a model of revelation where God is communicating doctrinal truths rather than Himself. Persuasive as it may sound when Chadwick structures this argument, it assumes the fact that revelation is identical to doctrine. If the starting point always is a propositional view of revelation, one is bound to encounter problems such as those that Chadwick mentions. Chadwick's argumentation weighs heavily on a logical method limiting revelation to doctrine. To then simultaneously try to imagine that doctrine develops can only lead to doctrine of a continuing revelation. A propositional view of revelation, which at the same time wants to stay close to the history of Christianity will certainly find it difficult to explain development. What can be said is that Chadwick is correct in the sense that Newman's theory is something different than the scholastic model of logical explanation. Yet again – this model is heavily indebted to a propositional view of revelation. The grand project of Newman is a reconciliation of revelation

²⁹³ Hofmann 2011, p. 331.

²⁹⁴ Hofmann 2011, p. 353.

with history. This can never be a static relationship but must insist on the dynamic nature of revelation at the same time as the concrete reality of history is maintained.

In order to accomplish this project, Newman balances the terms revelation and idea. It is a correct evaluation that this is an unclear part of Newman's entire endeavour. To Newman's defence this could be attributed to his particular style of writing. Newman did not write any theological manual with sharp distinctions but was rather a personal writer always addressing a particular situation. Nevertheless, Newman's writings would have gained tremendously in clarity if definitions were kept short and precise, and always used consistently. As has been mentioned earlier, Newman used the word idea differently according to circumstances which makes a systematic account difficult.

The question of the usage of the word idea has bearing on the concept of revelation. In his study of Newman, Siebenrock makes the accurate observation that with Newman's concept of revelation, the opposition between Scripture and Tradition is overcome.²⁹⁵ This observation is strikingly correct. If we consider the example of the dogma of the *Assumptio*. The Scripture and Tradition debate regarding this or any other dogma, is usually focused on where one can find evidence and proof of the existence of this dogma. The presupposition being that revelation is equivalent to dogma. Following the debate, if the dogma cannot be found in Scripture, then a constitutive Tradition becomes the solution, as an independent source of revelation. But again, this presupposes a propositional view of revelation, and if the shift is made to view where it is about God's self-communication, then the problem has been put in new light.

What both the studies of Siebenrock and Hoffmann illustrate is that in Newman's theology, revelation and idea cannot be identical, and this is one of those parts where a modern reader could have hoped for more clarity on the side of Newman. In particular for the question of this investigation, revelation is closed with the death of the last apostle, meaning the normativity of Christ is fully recognized. This can be contrasted with Newman's concept of idea, the human side of grasping revelation which can change, grow and expand throughout history. Biemer writes: "To avoid misunderstandings, it must be noted that it is not the revelation itself that thus becomes more perfect, that is to say, its content, but the understanding and presentation of it."²⁹⁶ This is the intention and aim of Newman's writing.

²⁹⁵ Siebenrock 1996, p. 360.

²⁹⁶ Biemer 1967, p. 130.

The second of the two broad flaws in this section of the critique is the limited attention given to the *Grammar of Assent*. This is particularly true of Chadwick and Lash. If these two theologian's criticisms towards Newman is read through the perspective presented by Hofmann, they diminish in persuasion. Probably, this is due to the fact that both Chadwick and Lash read Newman in light of a propositional view of revelation. Egan on the contrary in his dissertation does spend time on Newman's *Grammar*. Yet because he identifies the difficulties to rest within Newman's propositional concept of revelation, the end result will be a doctrine of a continuing revelation through the Church. The merit of the works of both Siebenrock and Hofmann is that they are thorough investigations into the entire philosophy of Newman. Only with this perspective in mind can a reasonable interpretation of Newman be established. In addition, the question of 'pre-verbal' revelation needs to be placed within an understanding of revelation not limited to propositions, but rather on God's self-communication.

9.2 Conclusion argument no.2

In contrast to the previous argument, this one regarding the issue of unfulfilled prophecy deals with specific texts of Newman. Argument no.1 is a wide argument which deals with the fundamentals of Newman's theology and philosophy, whereas Argument no.2 is a particular analogy appropriated by Newman. What has become evident in the investigation is the necessity of understanding Newman within a broader spectrum of his entire thinking rather than particular passages. Argument no.2 has to a certain extent dealt with a single analogy of Newman to be found in the *Essay* and the extent of its appropriation. Graf makes the important observation that an analogy is not the same thing as suggesting there is an identical relationship. An analogy is always limited, and Newman could certainly have been clearer about the closure of revelation at this point. Following the line of reasoning from Stephenson on this argument, he certainly makes a convincing case based on the extracts of the *Essay*, which he presents. But before we conclusively pass judgement on the fairness of the critique, we must again ask ourselves which model of revelation is being expressed in Stephenson's case. His argument is that Newman does not draw a line between the development, which took place from the Old Testament to New and thereafter in relation to post-apostolic development. But again, this analogy only becomes problematic if one understands revelation as propositions. A fair interpretation of Newman's intention is rather to say that it is the same God who reveals himself

both in the Old Testament, the New and the church. Ker also fairly points out that what Newman in fact writes, is that you cannot draw a line when “the rule of faith” was once settled for all. As Ker interprets this, it is not the same as saying “the faith” since this would imply revelation. The rule of faith on the contrary was still left to be work out. While Newman certainly would have gained in clarity if the finality of revelation would have been emphasised, it nevertheless is an unfair characterization to argue that Newman’s text leads to a doctrine of a continuing revelation.

PART III

A MODERN UNDERSTANDING OF THE END OF REVELATION

Chapter 10. The meaning of the concept of the end of revelation

The previous section concluded that depending on what view of revelation is presupposed, it will impact the explanation of the development of doctrine. The example of Newman as outlined in Part II of this thesis shows that such is indeed the case. As a theologian you are bound to encounter difficulties with a propositional view of revelation while at the same time trying to show that doctrine has developed. The terminology which addresses revelation as doctrine, equally speaks of an ‘end of revelation with the death of the last apostle’. In other words, all truths and doctrines were committed to Christ and his apostles, and everything thereafter is never really ‘new’, since everything has already been communicated once and for all. Again, this proves difficult to credibly reconcile with a notion of a development of doctrine. So, the question which needs to be asked is what constitutes a modern understanding of the significance of the terminology “end of revelation with the death of the last apostle’. Therefore, the starting point for such an investigation will be the Second Vatican Council and the constitution on revelation *Dei Verbum*. With this initial context and understanding in place, we can thereafter investigate more specifically the contribution of modern theologians to this question.

10.1 The Second Vatican Council

The Second Vatican council dealt with the question of revelation in the document *Dei Verbum*. It was a clear contrast to the neo-scholastic intellectualist view of revelation, where revelation was mainly seen as doctrines of divine truth. In contrast the council described revelation as God’s self-communication to man, as the totality of God’s words and deeds with its consummation in Christ. The council did not however expressly use the traditional terminology of a closed revelation. *Dei verbum* expresses that: “The Christian dispensation, therefore, as the

new and definite covenant, will never pass away and we now await no further public revelation before the glorious manifestation of our Lord Jesus Christ.”²⁹⁷ . Instead of using the phrase of a closed revelation, it depicts Jesus Christ as he who “completes the work of salvation” (*opus salutare consumat*), “perfected revelation by fulfilling it” (*revelationem complendo perficit*). As Schumacher writes these three verbs, *consumare, complere and perficere*, highlight the thought of revelation being completed, fulfilled, brought to its summit, rather than as being closed.²⁹⁸ The terminology of a closed revelation was directly rejected by the council fathers as the commentary to one of the conciliar drafts leading up to *Dei verbum* show. One of the arguments for choosing the formulation of “no further public revelation”, was to stress the eschatological aspect of Christ and that the phrase of a closed revelation was not selected since it was a disputed term.²⁹⁹ In a later draft also to *Dei Verbum* the terminology was again not accepted. They write that the intended meaning already exists in the formulation that Christ completes revelation, and that the phrase of a closed revelation is not lacking in difficulties.³⁰⁰ Important to note is that the conciliar Fathers carefully chose to use the terminology of complete revelation, and not to use the phrasing that it is closed (*clausa*). Further understanding of this confusion can also be seen in the translations, where *completa* in Latin is translated as complete in English, but *abgeschlossen* in German.

Despite the differences in language, Georg Söll points out the unity which still exists with the previous ways in which the Church formulates its teachings. As Söll writes, if the teaching of a “closed” revelation were to be abandoned, it would compromise two fundamental theological teachings which never can be put into question, namely: 1) the legitimacy and unity of the developments taken place so far, and 2) the culmination of revelation in Christ. For these reasons, as Söll argues, the teaching of “closed” revelation was also included in the Dogmatic Constitution of the Church, *Lumen Gentium*.³⁰¹ In *Lumen Gentium* §25 it is written that “when either the Roman Pontiff or the Body of Bishops together with him defines a judgement, they

²⁹⁷ Denzinger § 4202. “Oeconomia ergo christiana, utpote foedus novum et definitivum, numquam praeterbit, et nulla iam nova revelatio publica expectanda est ante gloriosam manifestationem Domini nostri Iesu Christi.”

²⁹⁸ Schumacher 1979, p. 137.

²⁹⁹ “Non dicitur tamen revelatio esse ‘clausa’ morte Apostolorum...quia haec ulterior explicitatio disputationi subiacet..” Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, *Schema Constitutionis De Divina Revelatione, vol III, Pars III*, Vatican City; Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1971, p. 77.

³⁰⁰ “Aliae autem propositiones non acceptae sunt, scilicet: Quod expresse dicatur, revelationem clausam esse cum morte apostolorum. Nam res intenta iam habentur, quando dicitur quod Christus revelationem complet; formula autem non caret difficultatibus...” Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II, *Schema Constitutionis De Divina Revelatione, vol IV, Pars I*, Vatican City; Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1971, p. 345.

³⁰¹ Söll, Georg, “Dogmenfortschritt durch neue Offenbarung”, in *Freiburger Zeitschrift für Philosophie und Theologie*, Band 18, 1971, p. 85-86.

pronounce it in accordance with Revelation itself...;but a new public revelation they do not accept as pertaining to the divine deposit of faith.”³⁰² Söll writes that this shows that the Church certainly continues to teach a doctrine of a “closed” revelation since it can never be separated from the words, deeds and events related to Christ, which are essential components for the Church, which cannot be added to.³⁰³

10.2 The contribution of modern theologians

In this section, the contribution of three theologians will be outlined to the question regarding a closed revelation and the meaning of this terminology.

10.2.1 Karl Rahner

When approaching the question of the meaning of the term a closed revelation, Karl Rahner (1904-1984) writes that properly understood, the term closed, end or even completion of revelation should be reserved as an eschatological term reserved for the finality of all history. To in advance conceive a formula, which decides the process of development is intrinsically at fault. The history of the development of doctrine is a continued deeper understanding of the mystery of salvation.³⁰⁴ Broadly expressed, such is the initial argumentation of Rahner regarding this question.

When understanding the question of development of doctrine and in turn what it means with a revelation that has ‘ended’, a more nuanced understanding of dogma must take form. Rahner writes that all human sentences, even those which express the faith of the divine truth, are finite sentences. In other words, they can never exhaust the divine reality to which they attest.³⁰⁵ The fact that our language is finite, further means that one theological sentence can be replaced with another, assuming the same content is expressed. Not only that, but a ‘newer’ sentence can also

³⁰² Lumen Gentium §25 quoted from:

http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html. Latin translation: “Cum autem sive Romanus Pontifex sive Corpus Episcoporum cum eo sententiam definiunt, eam proferunt secundum ipsam Revelationem...; novam vero revelationem publicam tamquam ad divinum fidei depositum pertinentem non accipiunt.”

³⁰³ Söll 1971, p. 87.

³⁰⁴ Rahner, Karl, ”Zur Frage der Dogmenentwicklung”, *Schriften zur Theologie*, Benzinger Verlag Einsiedeln band 1, 1956 p. 51.

³⁰⁵ Rahner 1956, p. 54.

express the same thing more nuanced and with further perspective than what previously has been possible.³⁰⁶ As Rahner argues, when man looks towards the Absolute, it is always done from a finite and historical point. The divine reality itself never changes, only the perspective from which the receiver stands. In this sense, new sentences can be arrived at which previously were not expressed. The decisive point regarding this ‘change’ is not that it is a progress in the form of a quantitative addition in knowledge, but rather a new perspective on the same reality and truth.³⁰⁷

In Rahner’s investigation of the question at hand, the misconception he argues consists in conceiving a catechism of doctrines already defined at the end of revelation. This question has great bearing on the nature of revelation, which is not a fixed sum of articles, but a historical dialogue between God and man, which reached its summit in Christ.³⁰⁸ With the Christ-event, Rahner writes, there is no new time or saving plan to be expected, only a deeper understanding and development of what is already given. The final reality is already here, so in this sense, revelation can be considered closed. As Rahner writes: “Closed since it is open to the veiled present fullness of God in Christ”.³⁰⁹ Revelation being closed ultimately means being completely open towards the fullness of God. The teaching of a closed revelation should according to Rahner be understood as a positive teaching, not in the negative; an ending which includes all of the divine and nothing is excluded of the already fulfilled present.³¹⁰

A question that remains when the meaning of a closed revelation has been clarified, is the relationship between the newer and earlier doctrines. Excluding any notion of new revelation, a common way of explaining development is as an explication of implicit knowledge.³¹¹ This explanation is done through logic. The problem, which Rahner sees with this method is that the presupposition is that dogmatic explication is always an explication of dogmatic formulas. Rahner gives the example of a different form a knowing, apart from that which can be put into formulas, namely love. The experience of love has presuppositions, which the individual is

³⁰⁶ Rahner 1956, p. 54.

³⁰⁷ Rahner 1956, p. 56.

³⁰⁸ Rahner 1956, p. 59.

³⁰⁹ Rahner 1956, p. 60. “Abgeschlossen, weil aufgeschlossen auf die verhüllt gegenwärtige Fülle Gottes in Christus”.

³¹⁰ Rahner, p. 60. “Das Abgeschlossensein der Offenbarung ist eine positive Aussage, keine negative, ein reines Ja, ein Abschluß, der alles einschließt und nichts von der göttlichen Fülle ausschließt, Abschluß als umfassende Fülle, die schon erfüllte Gegenwart ist.” Hans Urs von Balthasar (1905-1988) writes similarly to Rahner that the word ‘end’ of revelation is better to be avoided. Much rather it ought to be understood as a beginning. *Verbum Caro – Skizzen zur Theologie I*, Johannes Verlag Einsiedeln, 1990, p. 27.

³¹¹ Rahner 1956, p. 68.

unaware of at first. These original experiences can only slightly be put into words. But with time an advanced terminology can be gained which allows for the original experience to be more fully explained and developed of what was already known in a reflexive manner. Rahner writes that it is a question of new sentences being gained from an experience of knowledge already had.³¹² This analogy can serve as a model of the development of doctrine. Rahner writes that reflex knowledge always has its root in a preconceived grasp of the object.³¹³ With this analogy it is possible to depict how the fullness of faith existed with Christ and his apostles without falling into anachronistic reasoning.³¹⁴

The axiom of a closed revelation is also difficult to reconcile with a modern historical awareness. Understanding history as salvation history it is difficult when revelation is viewed as something closed in the past. For this reason, it is important to distinguish between God's communication to man which never ceases and the historical unsurpassable summit in Christ.³¹⁵ From this perspective it becomes clear to say that after Christ nothing new can be said.³¹⁶ Putting this question in its proper context, it needs to be reflected upon what the unsurpassable event in Christ means. To this Rahner answers the theology of the cross. This is something which cannot be reduced to dogmatic sentences but is the eschatological self-communication of God. Furthermore, because of the closed, or rather complete and unsurpassable event, it is fully open through a dynamic unfolding of doctrine.³¹⁷

10.2.2 Joseph Ratzinger

Joseph Ratzinger (1927-) notes that the problem with the axiom of a closed revelation is the reduction of revelation to doctrine. Such an understanding is poorly coherent with a historical understanding of revelation and development. The biblical perspective is that revelation is certainly not a system, but an event, which still has effects today in the new relationship between God and man.³¹⁸ Understanding the axiom of a closed revelation also entails a deeper

³¹² Rahner 1956, p. 75-76.

³¹³ Rahner 1956, p. 77. "Das reflexe Wissen hat immer seine Wurzeln in einer vorausliegenden, wissenden Inbesitznahme der Sache selbst."

³¹⁴ Rahner 1956 p. 79.

³¹⁵ Rahner, Karl, "Tod Jesu und Abgeschlossenheit der Offenbarung", *Schriften zur Theologie – Band 13*, Benzinger Verlag Einsiedeln, 1978 p. 161.

³¹⁶ Rahner 1978, p. 162.

³¹⁷ Rahner, Karl, "Überlegungen zur Dogmenentwicklung", *Schriften zur Theologie – Band 4*, Benzinger Verlag Einsiedeln, 1960, p. 19.

³¹⁸ Ratzinger, Joseph, *Das Problem der Dogmengeschichte in der Sicht der katholischen Theologie*, Westdeutscher Verlag Köln und Oplanden, 1966 p. 18-19.

understanding of dogma, as Rahner highlighted. Ratzinger writes that in every dogma there is an incongruity between the language and words used to express the content, and in turn the actual reality towards which it is directed but can never capture. Every dogmatic statement holds a double insufficiency in what it expresses: on the one hand there is a distance between it and the reality it expresses, and on the other hand, the rootedness in the historically conditioned world of which it is a part. The conclusion reached by Ratzinger is that the finality of the dogmatic formulas cannot be considered absolute or fixed. This can be maintained without relativizing what it aims to express.³¹⁹

In the constitution of divine revelation, *Dei Verbum*, the terminology of a closed revelation was omitted in favor of the expression that no new public revelation is awaited. Ratzinger explains in his commentary to *Dei Verbum* that the revelation in Christ marks a final and definite period in history which is not to be superseded in the future by any event in time. What this phrase in *Dei Verbum* expresses is both the finality of Christ together with the eschatological dimension of faith. This means that when understanding the phrasing “no new public revelation”, both the Christological and eschatological dimensions are present. At the same time as man is a finite creature, he also contains an infinite openness in his response towards Christ who has already come and is still to be expected.³²⁰

10.2.3 Gerald O’Collins

Gerald O’Collins (1931-) presents helpful terminology for dealing with the question about a closed revelation. When addressing the past revelation completed with Christ and his Holy Spirit, O’Collins suggests the usage of the term *foundational revelation*. The advantage of this is its biblical appropriation with the imagery of Christ as the foundation and cornerstone of all saving revelation. Christ is the basis upon which all revelation is built. In this sense, the word *foundational* is accurately expressing its intent.³²¹ Yet as this investigation has shown, there must also be a terminology, which accounts for how God’s revelation continues today to reveal himself to people. Here O’Collins distinguishes *foundational revelation* from *dependent*: “ In one sense revelation is past (as foundational), in another sense it is present (as dependent), and

³¹⁹ Ratzinger 1966 p. 25.

³²⁰ Ratzinger, Joseph, “Constitutio Dogmatica De Divina Revelatione/ Dogmatische Konstitution über die Göttliche Offenbarung”, in Vorgrimler, Herbert (ed) *Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche: Das Zweite Vatikanische Konzil – Dokumente und kommentare Teil II*, 2nd Edition, Herder, Freiburg im Breisgau, 1967, p. 512.

³²¹ O’Collins Gerald, *Revelation – Towards a Christian interpretation of God’s self-revelation in Jesus Christ*, Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 108.

in a further sense it is a reality to come (as ‘future’, ‘final’, or ‘eschatological’).³²² The dependent revelation is that, which is experienced by later believers.³²³ It cannot be excluded the notion of God’s active power in the present. Failure to do so is a reduction of the workings of a living God to revealed truths. O’Collins writes that if the persistent will to maintain the identification of revelation with truths, the easier it becomes to place revelation in the past. As a consequence, the individual believer is deprived of the opportunity to actually experience revelation. Yet this faith and experience of revelation is always dependent on the normative *foundational revelation*. O’Collins clarifies that the *dependent revelation* does not add anything quantitatively new to the content.³²⁴

Chapter 11. A closed revelation – at what point?

At this stage of the thesis, the question left unanswered has been when revelation is considered closed. Attention has been given to the meaning of the term a closed revelation, but how are we to understand the last part of the traditional axiom that revelation ended *with the death of the last apostle*. Based on the work of theologian Niels Christian Hvidt (1969-)³²⁵, three interpretations of this axiom are possible and will be discussed in the following chapter.

11.1. *The End of revelation with Christ’s physical presence on Earth*

The question of the historical end of revelation is addressed by theologian Johannes Feiner (1909-1985). He writes that disregarding the actual time for the end, every attempt to use the formula of a closed revelation is open to plenty of misunderstanding. Revelation is according to the traditional formula said to be closed with the death of the last apostle. Feiner then asks whether the process of revelation can be said to continue after the Ascension of Christ, and in the sense not be considered complete with the physical presence of Christ. Feiner argues that

³²² O’Collins 2016, p. 103.

³²³ O’Collins 2016, p. 113.

³²⁴ O’Collins 2016, p, 113-115.

³²⁵ Hvidt, Niels Christian, *Christian Prophecy – the post-biblical tradition*, Oxford University Press, 2007

this is not possible.³²⁶ According to Feiner this is not to devalue the workings of the Holy Spirit, but rather saying that this is to be understood as proclamation, not revelation. The workings of the Holy Spirit provide further reflection and development of understanding of the Christ-event.³²⁷ Rahner shares the conclusion of Feiner, in writing that the most accurate description of the term closed revelation is with the death and resurrection of Christ. As mentioned in the previous chapter, this coincides with Rahner's theology of the cross where beyond the saving death of Christ of the cross and his resurrection, no further public revelation is to be expected.³²⁸

Hvidt notes that such a line of reasoning does entail new problems. The problem as Hvidt sees it is that regarding the workings of the holy Spirit, and that there does not seem to be any difference between pre- and post-apostolic times. Feiner would argue that there is a gradual difference, leaving no room for an apostolic end.³²⁹ What Feiner is proposing is that "there is no substantial difference between the activity of the Holy Spirit that helped to illuminate the apostles on the true reality of the Christ-event and the activity of the Holy Spirit that helps all the faithful who follow the apostles."³³⁰ The conclusion reached by Feiner is that if the apostles in fact are included in the process of revelation, it will make the revelation in Christ appear relative or needing completion. It also agrees with the New Testament narrative that the apostles are only proclaiming what they have received, not new revelation.³³¹

³²⁶ Feiner, Johannes, "Die Vergegenwärtigung der Offenbarung durch die Kirche", *Mysterium Salutis*, 1965 s. 526.

³²⁷ Feiner 1965, p. 526. This conclusion is also shared by Söll 1971, p. 87.

³²⁸ Rahner 1978, p. 169. "Das Kreuz Jesu markiert in dem richtig zu verstehenden Sinn das Ende der öffentlichen Offenbarung. Wenn die Schultheologie zu sagen pflegt, mit dem Tod des letzten Apostels sei die öffentliche Offenbarung abgeschlossen, dann würde sie besser und genauer zu sagen haben, daß mit dem geglückten Tod Jesu, des Gekreuzigten and Auferstandenen, die Offenbarung abgeschlossen sei..."

³²⁹ Hvidt 2007, p. 210.

³³⁰ Hvidt 2007, p. 210.

³³¹ Feiner 2007, p. 526. "Dies dürfte sowohl dem Auftrag Christi besser entsprechen, demgemäß die Apostel nichts anderer zu verkünden haben als das, was Christus selbst sie gelehrt hat (Mt28.19), als auch seiner Verheißung des Parakleten, der nicht von weiterer und neuer Offenbarung durch den Geist spricht, sondern vom 'Erinnern' an die von Christus selbst mitgeteilte Wahrheit und vom 'Einführen' in die Wahrheit, die die Apostel vorläufig noch nicht voll zu erfassen vermögen, die sie aber in einem unentfalteten Glaubensverständnis bereits aufnehmen."

11.2 Revelation ended with the death of the last apostle

In the previous section, Feiner's interest was to show the difference between the time of Christ and all other periods in history. In contrast, Heinrich Fries (1911-1988) aims to show the difference between the time of the apostles and all subsequent time.³³² Fries argues that the apostles are included within the process of revelation. They are simultaneously both carriers and witnesses to revelation which constitute the beginning of Tradition. For this reason, it is arguable to say that revelation ended with the death of the last apostle.³³³ The apostles are not only specially authorized witnesses, but they also contribute to the beginning of the deposit of faith. The term is relevant in order to make a distinction between revelation and Tradition. As Hvidt writes, the major difference between Fries and Feiner, is that Feiner sees Christ as revelation's source whereas Fries includes the apostles.³³⁴

O'Collins similarly with his terminology asks the question when *foundational revelation* ends and *dependent revelation* begins. O'Collins remarks that the traditional answer is at the end of the apostolic age. He interprets this to mean that foundational revelation includes the full reception of the revelational process. This includes the interpretation of experiences of the first apostles. "Understood this way, the period of foundational revelation covered not merely the climactic events (the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, together with the outpouring of the Spirit) but also the decades when the apostles and their associates assimilated these events, fully founded the Church for all peoples, and wrote the inspired books of the New Testament."³³⁵ This does not in any sense mean that the apostles received new revelation which Christ had omitted for any reason. Rather the function of the apostles, who were directly chosen by Christ, have the task of undertaking a normative interpretation of that which they themselves had witnessed. The end of *foundational revelation* can accordingly be set to the first century. O'Collins also criticises Rahner's view since it does not do justice to the Holy Spirit in guiding through the apostolic age, nor does he do justice to the apostle's own interpretation of their experiences of the Christ-event, which lasted throughout their lives.³³⁶

³³² Hvidt 2007, p. 211.

³³³ Fries, Heinrich, "Die Offenbarung", *Mysterium Salutis*, 1965 p. 228.

³³⁴ Hvidt 2007, p. 211.

³³⁵ O'Collins 2016, p. 116.

³³⁶ O'Collins 2016, p. 116.

11.3 *The end of revelation with the closure of Scripture*

Up until the Second Vatican Council, most catholic exegetes maintained that the writings of the New Testament were written either by an apostle or a close helper. Schumacher regards Scripture as a constitutive part of the Church and therefore also of revelation (even if it is not materially equivalent). Therefore, Schumacher accounts for revelation up until approximately the time of the ancient church in the 2nd century.³³⁷ As Hvidt points out, this view causes the largely disputed question of when exactly the completion of the canon is, where modern exegetes consider the completion of Scripture from the 2-4th century. Nevertheless, Schumacher's point is that revelation ends with the books of the canon.³³⁸

11.4 *Interpreting the end of revelation*

Among the theologians Ratzinger, Rahner, von Balthasar, O'Collins and to some extent Schumacher, there exists a unanimous agreement in the dismal or at least problematization of the term 'end' of revelation. It is a concept which easily lends itself to a propositional view of revelation and distorts the intended meaning. Both Hvidt and Schumacher propose the helpful distinction between revelation *in actu primo* and *in actu secundo*. Both are part of the entire concept of revelation. Understanding revelation *in actu primo* is the once and for all historically given revelation in Christ, whereas revelation *in actu secundo* is the constant devotion to and actualization of revelation that continues.³³⁹ Hvidt ultimately argues that concerning revelations material fulfilment in Christ, it is misrepresenting to use the terminology of an 'end'. There is not a time or place where God is not active or present. Christ is not a past historical figure but the historical fulfilment of revelation. When it comes to the usage of the word 'end' regarding the apostles reception of revelation, Hvidt clarifies by calling it: "the normative and constitutive relationship between Christ's revelation of God and the apostles' inspired reception thereof."³⁴⁰ Certainly it is accurate saying that nobody after the apostles had the same experience of God's revelation in the constitutive phase. Hvidt describes revelation as materially complete in Christ, which has a resembling function of O'Collins usage of the term *foundational revelation*. Additionally, when Hvidt writes that revelation is formally expressed in the faith of the apostles it too has a resembling function to how O'Collins uses the terminology *dependent revelation*.

³³⁷ Schumacher 1979, p. 324.

³³⁸ Hvidt 2007, p. 212.

³³⁹ Hvidt 2007, p. 213; Schumacher 1979, p. 147.

³⁴⁰ Hvidt 2007, p. 214.

PART IV

THESIS CONCLUSION

The basis for this investigation has been divided into a primary and a secondary aim. In this final section it will be demonstrated that both aims of this thesis have been fulfilled and the conclusions that have been reached.

(A) The primary aim is to evaluate the criticism directed towards Newman and to be able to conclude whether this criticism is justified or not.

In order to fulfil this aim, it was necessary to answer the research questions 1 and 2:

(1) What are the key components to Newman's theology and philosophy for understanding his view of revelation and development of doctrine?

(2) What are the arguments for and against Newman representing an idea of a continuing revelation? Is the criticism justified?

Before an investigation into Newman could be started, the terminology of revelation, development of doctrine and a closed revelation had to be given a thorough introduction. This was done in Part I of this thesis where the vital distinction between an instruction-theoretical and communicative-participative model of revelation is mapped out. Its history and how it relates to the development of doctrine is a necessary foundation for placing Newman in his theological context and understanding his writings. Part I provides the tools for a closer analysis of the works of John Henry Newman and his critics.

Research questions (1) and (2) have been answered in Part II of this thesis. Newman is a difficult theologian to read and interpret largely due to his essayist style of writing. A consequence thereof is that he is not always consistent in his terminology. To provide a synthesis of Newman's thought for the questions set out in this thesis it is easier to start with his *Grammar of Assent* and *15th University Sermon*. Newman wants to explain how an individual can be

unknowingly aware of something proposition-bearing. He provides an intricate explanation of how an idea can form an impression on the human mind received by its imagination. This in turn can be processed over time, grasped by our apprehension, until eventually it can be articulated into propositions. Not only is this true of everyday examples but essential for Newman also in the religious sphere. The same mechanisms at work in the individual believer can be seen in how the Church received revelation and eventually developed its doctrine. This is what Newman shows in his *Essay on development*. According to Newman all of revelation was given at once to the Church and what in fact develops over time is different aspects/impressions of the one unified revelation.

The critics of Newman in this thesis, Chadwick, Lash, Stephenson and Egan all have varying ways for reaching the same conclusion regarding Newman. Namely that what Newman calls development is not compatible with the concept of a closed revelation. Two arguments are essentially aimed towards Newman. The first is regarding what can be called ‘pre-verbal revelation’, which basically says that it is not possible for the Church to not be aware of doctrine but still be able to develop them. As Chadwick argues, isn’t it more accurate to say that it in fact is new revelation produced by the Church. The second argument against Newman concerns the analogy of prophecy, where Newman writes that doctrine develops in the same way that the Old Testament development into the New Testament, the same expansion is what happens in post-apostolic development. The conclusion reached in this thesis as outlined in the end of Part II is that neither of these arguments hold up to scrutiny. The fundamental principle, which causes misrepresentations of Newman is which view of revelation is being presupposed. Here the background provided in Part I is helpful for evaluating the critique. Depending on which model of revelation you interpret Newman to be representing, and furthermore, which model the critic themselves represent, it will have a significant impact on how Newman is in fact understood. The conclusion that the criticism is not justified, has been supported in this thesis by Ker, Walgrave, Graf, Siebenrock and Hoffmann, among others. What unites these authors is that thorough attention is given to Newman’s philosophical writings and that he is interpreted as representing a model of revelation, which entails God’s self-communication. Ultimately this is the prevailing interpretation of Newman, which does most justice to Newman with respect to his entire authorship.

The contribution of this part of the thesis has been to provide a contemporary evaluation of the arguments of the critics which takes into account recent German scholarship. By studying the

philosophical and theological presuppositions of Newman and his critics, a deeper understanding of his concept of revelation is gained. A recent and comprehensive study of this question in its entirety has to this authors knowledge not been conducted that links together past and contemporary research, thereby providing a synthesis of the understanding of Newman's concept of a closed revelation from the perspective of his critics and defenders. Of utmost importance has been the work Hofmann for highlighting the philosophical aspects of Newman's thinking for understanding his concept of revelation and development.

(B) The secondary aim is that the investigation into Newman, which this thesis provides can serve as a case study for what constitutes a modern understanding of the terminology of a closed revelation.

In order to fulfil this aim of the thesis research question 3 was investigated.

(3) What constitutes a modern understanding of the term closed revelation?

At the beginning of this thesis, it was stated that the investigation into Newman can serve as a case-study for a modern understanding of the term 'closed' revelation. A reflection can be made which essentially bridges the previous section onto the next, namely how 'pre-verbal' revelation is possible, or phrased differently, how doctrines can be held unknowingly by the individual believer. What is interesting to note is that Newman answers by resorting to ecclesiology, i.e., the theological understanding of the church. Newman writes that the believer intends to believe all of the faith and not just parts of it. All of this reasoning presupposes an understanding of a complete revelation which is entrusted to the church. The argument as Newman puts forth ultimately leads to a question of ecclesiology. When one doctrine is believed, what is implicitly always being affirmed according to Newman is a faith in the church's power of safe-keeping and preserving the deposit. So even if a believer is unaware of a doctrine, the sheer fact that the belief is grounded in the church, which in turn is founded on the complete revelation of Christ and his apostles, is solid enough argument for Newman to reason that somebody might implicitly hold doctrines not yet aware of. Entrusting that the deposit of faith is bestowed to and transmitted through the roman catholic church, Newman maintains that when the individual believer who perhaps knows only some or a few of the church teachings, puts his faith into the doctrines he knows, he is implicitly aiming towards believing all that there is to believe – made possible through the complete revelation safeguarded by the church.

The beginning of an answer to research question 3 is that it represents a way of phrasing the question which is no longer done. Looking at the language of the commentary to the drafts to *Dei Verbum* from the Second Vatican council reveals disagreement of the interpretation of a ‘closed revelation’. There it is stated that revelation was not be described as *clausa*, meaning closed since this would give a misleading interpretation. Nevertheless, they maintained that despite *Lamentabili* used the phrased *completa*, meaning complete, the associated meaning with this phrased was by some *clausa*, a closed revelation. For this reason, the language was changed so to avoid misunderstandings.

The term ‘closed revelation’ is heavily indebted to an *instruction-theoretical* view of revelation, which means that revelation is reduced to truths and doctrines. What is at the core of this terminology as both Rahner and Ratzinger write is the unique and unsurpassable historical event in Christ. It entails the absolute normativity of Christ. It does not entail, and this is where the misunderstanding can be, that God has ceased to communicate to man. Here Gerald O’Collins terminology is helpful when he differentiates between *foundational* and *dependent* revelation. Regardless which new terminology is expressed, there is a consensus that the term closed revelation gives upheaval to more misunderstandings than it clarifies and requires explanation before it is used. The question, which is not settled in this thesis is when foundational revelation ends, and dependent revelation begins. Hvidt gives three possible examples, which are theologically viable positions: with the death of Christ on the cross, with the death of the last apostle, and with the closure of Scripture. Nevertheless, full agreement consists in that Christ is the summit and fullness of God’s revelation in history.

As has been expressed in this thesis, Newman tried to reconcile revelation with history, continuity with discontinuity. During the lifetime of Newman, he did not have access to the full theological terminology, which a century of debate and research has established. The contribution of this part of the thesis has been to utilise the findings of Part II of the thesis for a contemporary understanding of the term closed revelation. The philosophy and theology of Newman pertaining to his thoughts on revelation have been used as groundwork for furthering the specific understanding of revelation and what in fact a closed revelation entail. Part II of this thesis has been instrumental in creating a case study for this purpose. The significance of both the second and third part of this thesis, understood in unity, work together in enhancing the others relevance creating a synthesis from the different parts of the thesis.

By conducting this study of Newman, reviewing the texts through the eyes of his critics, Newman has indeed become a case study for a deeper reflection into the question of revelation and development of doctrine. The impact, which Newman had on subsequent theologians is well known and his thought continues to impact and renew our thinking.

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