

JOHN HENRY CARDINAL NEWMAN'S  
THEORY OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE  
AND ITS APPLICATION TO THE DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

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## OUTLINE

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## Introduction

John Henry Cardinal Newman has been aptly classified a "sage."<sup>1</sup> The sage, says J.H. Walgrave in Newman the Theologian, desires to lead us into a world accessible only at a deeper level of experience: "To communicate his message an appeal to sense-experience, or to reasoning whether inductive or deductive, is of no avail; for he has to deliver a comprehensive view of reality, a way of seeing things other than everyone can find for himself. The processes he uses do not serve really to prove, but to make us see, the thing in question. It is true he analyses facts, generalizes, defines, distinguishes, reasons, argues; but all these are not designed to set up a rational proof, but to direct attention to a deeper experience of things, one buried beneath the surface of common, daily experience."<sup>2</sup>

Persuasion rather than proof, convincing by causing to see, reasoning by unravelling the myriad of aspects held coherent in his comprehensive world-view--such is his method. "The sage's abstractions, his formal and verbal arguments, his logic-chopping, always can and often do lead on to something realer and richer. His aim is to make his readers

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<sup>1</sup> J.H. Walgrave, O.P., Newman the Theologian (London: Geoffrey Chapman, Ltd., 1960), p. 365.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 364.

see life and the world over again, see it with a more searching, or perhaps a more subtle and sensitive gaze. He utilizes what Pater called "that sort of philosophical expression in which...the language is inseparable from or essentially a part of the thought."<sup>1</sup> Newman, in his Essay on the Development of Christian Doctrine, uses this method of argument, accumulating piece upon piece of empirical evidence for his case rather than logically demonstrating it.

The first purpose of this study is to present Newman's theory of the development of Christian doctrine in a clear and accessible form. Its second purpose is to apply Newman's test for genuineness in development of Christian doctrine, to the development of the Trinity from a hierarchical formula to the co-equal conception currently held in the Roman Church.

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<sup>1</sup> J. Holloway, The Victorian Sage, pp. 296-297, as quoted in Ibid., p. 365.

I.A.1. The Process of development in ideas.

Our minds, says Newman, pass judgment on the things which come before us.<sup>1</sup> We never merely observe data, nor are we content just to understand it; we must judge our understandings. We compare and contrast, abstract and generalize, never viewing an item in isolation, but in relation to what else we know.

Newman holds that these judgments become for us aspects of the things judged (57). Some are opinions, appearing and fading with varying degrees of influence. Others, for various reasons, have a stronger hold upon us: he includes here convictions or prejudices, views of the world, judgments relating to principles of conduct or matters of fact. Some of our judgments refer to the same object. These, according to Newman, are at times so close as to imply each other, at times so distant as to be inconsistent with each other, with some thus falsely associated with the object in question.

For Newman, the idea which represents an object includes all of its possible aspects as seen in the minds of various individuals. That variety of aspects is capable of being resolved into its proper object, he believes, just as views of a material object taken from different perspectives may seem anomalous, yet coalesce when properly understood. In fact,

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<sup>1</sup>John Henry Cardinal Newman, An Essay on the Development of Doctrine (Garden City: Doubleday and Company, Inc., Image Books, 1960), p.57. Hereinafter, except where noted, all citations will refer to this volume.

claims Newman, an idea is considered objective, usually only through such a variety; it is all the more powerful for the number of ways in which it presents itself to different minds. "...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" (58).

Newman warns that a real idea cannot be adequately expressed in a single one of its aspects, although we may attempt to encapsulate it in a simple formula, or, if it is very complex, treat its aspects as separate ideas, for the sake of convenience. We cannot, for example, define any particular animal, although we know much about animal life, but can only describe it through a listing of properties. We cannot speak of Protestantism only in terms of its theory of private judgment, or of Lutheranism only in terms of its doctrine of justification, for, while part of the truth, these aspects are not the whole of it. Thus, when one sets out to name the "leading idea" of Christianity, he assumes a difficult task, for he attempts to do for a supernatural work, what is in Newman's view impossible for objects and products of the visible creation. (Newman notes that if one aspect were to be named the "central" aspect of Christianity for convenience, in order to group others around it, he would cite the Incarnation, out of which rise what he calls the three main aspects of the teachings of Christianity: the sacramental, the hierarchical, and the ascetic (58-59).) "But one aspect of Revelation," he

cautions again, "must not be allowed to exclude or to obscure another; and Christianity is dogmatical, devotional, practical all at once; it is esoteric and exoteric; it is indulgent and strict; it is light and dark; it is love, and it is fear" (58-59).

When an idea, real or not, "arrests and possesses the mind," Newman claims that it "lives", at least in the mind which receives it (59-60). Accordingly, mathematical ideas, while real, cannot typically be termed living, while ideas, true or false, about government, religion, or human nature-- ideas passively received, in various forms, but becoming "active principles" within the minds that receive them--these are considered by Newman to have life. Such ideas, he says, lead minds to contemplate them in different lights, apply them in different ways:

Let one such idea get possession of the popular mind, or the mind of any portion of the community, and it is not difficult to understand what will be the result. At first men will not fully realize what it is that moves them, and will express and explain themselves inadequately. There will be a general agitation of thought, and an action of mind upon mind. There will be a time of confusion, when conceptions and misconceptions are in conflict, and it is uncertain whether anything is to come of the idea at all, or which view of it is to get the start of the others. New lights will be brought to bear upon the original statements of the doctrine put forward; judgments and aspects will accumulate. After a while some definite teaching emerges; and as time proceeds, one view will be modified or expanded by another, and then combined with a third; till the idea to which these various aspects belong will be to each mind separately what at first it was only to all together (60).

Such an idea, Newman continues, will also be compared to others, affecting them, being affected by them, withstanding

them, interfering with them (60). "In proportion to [its] native vigour and subtlety," he sees it coming to influence various areas of social life, from public opinion to the very foundations of established order, growing into an ethical code, a system of government, a theology, a ritual, according to its capabilities (61). Most importantly for Newman, perhaps, the body of thought growing out of the original seed is but "the proper representative of one idea, being in substance what the idea meant from the first, its complete image as seen in a combination of diversified aspects, with the suggestions and corrections of many minds, and the illustration of many experiences" (60).

Newman calls this process by which the various aspects of an idea "are brought into consistency and form," the development of the idea, providing the product really belongs to the idea from which the aspects spring (61). (He points out that a republic may follow a pure monarchy, but is not a development from it, while the Greek "tyrant" can legitimately be considered to have been included in the idea of a democracy (61).) The development of an idea occurs for Newman not in the manner of an investigation conducted on paper, with each step neatly following what came before, but is worked out in the busy course of human life. It often progresses by "cutting across" the pattern of its own development, "destroying or modifying and incorporating with itself existing modes of thinking and operating" (61).

An idea develops, says Newman, through the instrumental

use of the minds of communities of men and their leaders. It depends upon them while using them in establishing relations between itself and the existing opinions, principles, and institutions of a particular community (61-62). These relations involve assimilation as well as the effecting of change, for the idea "grows when it incorporates, and its identity is found not in isolation, but in continuity and sovereignty" (62). Newman attributes the turbulent and polemical character of states and of religions to this sort of interchange. He terms it "the warfare of ideas under their various aspects striving for mastery" (62): a clashing of ideas and the parties they inspire or rouse which is perhaps the natural outcome of Newman's process of development in idea, since it necessarily takes place in media<sup>s</sup> res.

The environment in which development occurs, Newman adds, is not only modified by, but itself modifies, the idea, or at least influences it (62). He cites circumstances such as external violence, disputes with domestic foes, counter ideas, foreign principles, or even some original fault within itself, as possible sources of interruption, mutilation, retardation, or distortion of the development of an idea (62).

Newman insists that the risk of corruption from intercourse with the rest of the world "must be encountered," however, "if a great idea is duly to be understood, and much more if it is to be fully exhibited" (62). The further an idea is challenged, the stronger and deeper and clearer it must become to withstand the challenges. "Its beginnings are no

measure of its capabilities, nor of its scope"; these develop, says Newman, as the idea "feels its way," making false starts, meeting points of controversy, winning and losing supporters, engaging in new relations (63). "...Old principles reappear under new forms; [the idea] changes with them in order to remain the same" (63). For, Newman insists, "In a higher world it is otherwise, but here below to live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often" (63).

#### I.A.2. Kinds of development in ideas.

Newman clearly states that it is not his intention to give an accurate analysis or complete enumeration of those processes of thought which come under the notion of development (63). He does give a general categorization of "mental exercises," first cautioning that he uses the word "development" as it is commonly employed, that is, in three senses indiscriminately: for the process of development; for its result; and either generally for a development, whether false or true (to the idea from which it started), or exclusively for a genuine development. Newman prefers to call a false or unfaithful development, a corruption (63).

Newman begins with mathematical developments, which are those that make up the system of truths drawn out from mathematical equations or definitions; because they are conducted on strict demonstration, he argues, they must be genuine. Physical developments include the growth of animal or vegetable

life. Material developments are physical developments effected through human efforts: the use of natural resources in such a way as to increase the yield of the land, for instance, or the adaptation of nature by the human intellect for the purposes of utility and beauty in the creation of art. These three types of development--mathematical, physical, material--are not considered by Newman to be germane to the topic of the development of Christian doctrine (64).

Newman cites five additional kinds of development, of which the truths of Christianity, supposing that they do indeed develop, are one kind or another (75). There is first political development, where the ideas involved concern society and its various classes and interests (65). The expansion of an empire, although a material development in a very basic sense, is given unity and force by an idea, argues Newman: fear for its frontiers, necessity of a demonstration of strength, the call of its allies, a balance of power (65). Influenced by any number of variables--the outcome of battles, the character of rulers, the rise and fall of statesmen--political developments, although really the growth of ideas, Newman says, are "often capricious and irregular from the nature of their subject matter" (66).

Difficult to analyze because many types of developments, reforms, and changes occur together in the actual history of states or of philosophical sects, political developments nonetheless exhibit certain common trends. Newman notes that there may be incompatible elements which must be rejected, and usually are by the growth of stronger elements, before

development may take place. Discordant ideas may for a time be connected and concealed by a common cover, such as a political coalition, a religious comprehension, a board or a committee, in attempts, he warns, "to make contraries look the same, and to secure an outward agreement where there is no unity" (66). The intellectual process in a political development may be detached from the practical, for example when events or principles pressure legislators into conclusions which they can defend to others only after a search for arguments; or it may be the real force in a political development, as with the theories that preceded the overthrow of the old regime during the French Revolution; or it may mean nothing at all, as in polities founded on custom (66-67).

Next Newman lists logical development, wherein the intellectual character is prominent. He cites as an example the Anglican doctrine of the Royal Supremacy, created not in a cabinet or on the field but in courts of law, and therefore, he believes, carried out more consistently than any constitution, and realized in greater detail. This is evident, for instance, "...in certain arrangements observed in the Prayer-book, where the universal or abstract church precedes the King but the national or really existing body follows him; in printing his name in large capitals, while the Holiest Names are in ordinary type, and in fixing his arms in churches instead of the Crucifix; moreover, perhaps, in placing 'sedition, privy conspiracy and rebellion,' before 'false doctrine, heresy, and schism' in the Litany" (68).

Historical development is what Newman calls "the gradual

formation of opinion concerning persons, facts, and events" (68). Developments in this area are gradual, since they depend upon the general acceptance and corroboration of judgments by a large group of people. They are brought about through the work of historians, biographers, and courts of law; by Parliamentary proceedings, newspapers, letters and other posthumous documents; and also, Newman adds, through "the lapse of years which dissipates parties and prejudices" (68). "The poet makes Truth the daughter of Time...History cannot be written except in an after-age" (68-69). The creation and general acceptance of historical accounts as authoritative, necessarily occurs post facto. It is by development, according to Newman, that the Canon of the New Testament was formed, and similarly, that the Saints are canonized in the Church (69).

Ethical developments, Newman states, "are not properly matter for argument and controversy, but are natural and personal, substituting what is congruous, desirable, pious, appropriate, generous, for strictly logical inference" (69). That is, developments in this area, since they do concern the ascertainment of what is "congruous, desirable, pious, appropriate, generous," are not of such a nature that they may be arrived at solely through means of logical argument and conclusion. Rather, Newman suggests, similarly as principles imply applications, "certain relations imply correlative duties, and certain objects demand certain acts and feelings" (69). He notes an example in Bishop Butler's Analogy, concerning the Second and Third Persons of the Holy Trinity:

"[Butler] observes that, even though we were not enjoined to pay divine honours to the Second and Third Persons of the Holy Trinity, what is predicated of them in Scripture would be an abundant warrant, an indirect command, nay, a ground in reason for doing so. 'Does not,' he asks, 'the duty of religious regards to both these Divine Persons as immediately arise, to the view of reason, out of the very nature of these offices and relations, as the inward good-will and kind intention which we owe to our fellow creatures arises out of the common relations between us and them?...for, the relations being known, the obligations to such internal worship are obligations of reason, arising out of those relations themselves'" (69-70).

Newman points out that ethical developments converse to the type described by Butler, also occur. "As certain objects excite certain emotions," he holds, "so do sentiments imply objects and duties" (70). Conscience is proof for Newman of "the doctrine of a Moral Governor, which alone gives it [conscience] a meaning and a scope; that is, the doctrine of a Judge and a Judgment to come is a development of the phenomenon of conscience" (70). In a similar manner, Newman continues, Aristotle's account of happiness does not include by definition or logical necessity such external goods as noble birth, hopeful children, or personal appearance; yet by "moral fitness" a certain prosperity is indeed attached to happiness, for, as Aristotle observes, "'it is impossible, or not easy, to practice high virtue without abundant means!" (70), and someone utterly deformed, childless, or whose children are worthless, cannot be quite happy (70-71).

Finally, Newman lists metaphysical development, which he defines as a mere analysis of ideas contemplated, terminating in the exact and complete delineation of those ideas (73). As Aristotle draws the character of the magnanimous man or Shakespeare creates a Hamlet, so in theology, Newman believes, the mind can develop those ideas which heretofore were present without having been thought out or reflected upon to any great extent. He writes in his University Sermons:

The mind which is habituated to the thought of God, of Christ, of the Holy Spirit, naturally turns with a devout curiosity to the contemplation of the object of its adoration, and begins to form statements concerning it, 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 an impression on the Imagination has become a system or creed in the Reason.<sup>1</sup>

These impressions, Newman continues, because they are impressions of objects, are individual and complete above other theological ideas. This is not to say that ideas and their developments are identical, development being the "carrying out" of the idea into its consequences (74). The doctrine of Penance, Newman tells us, while a development of the doctrine of Baptism, is itself a distinct doctrine. Yet there are cases where the original idea is so complete

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<sup>1</sup>Newman, University Sermons xv. 20-23, pp.329-32, ed. 3, cited in Ibid., p.73.

that any development from it will merely be a different way of expressing it, and can only be a portion of it. The developments in the doctrines of the Holy Trinity and the Incarnation, for instance, are "mere portions of the original impression, and modes of representing it" (74). For when we pray to God, it is to our vision of an object; to a single, individual person; to the impression of God which He Himself, who is One, gives to us. Religious men do not harbor ideas or visions of the Trinity in Unity or of the Son Incarnate as a number of qualities or attributes, says Newman, but as "one and individual, and independent of words, like an impression conveyed through the senses. Creeds and dogmas," he continues, "live in the one idea which they are designed to express, and which alone is substantive; and are necessary, because the human mind cannot reflect upon that idea except piecemeal, cannot use it in its oneness and entireness, or without resolving it into a series of aspects and relations" (74).

Newman concludes his analysis of the kinds of development in ideas with the addition that development may in many cases stand simply for exhibition, in the manner that Calvinism and Unitarianism, while having nothing in common as doctrines, are each examples of the principles of private judgment (74).

Christianity, again, if its truths may be said to develop, will exhibit, according to Newman, developments of the last five types. Taking the Incarnation as the central doctrine of Christianity, he sees the Episcopate as taught by St. Ignatius as an instance of political development, where the ideas

involved concern society and its various classes and interests; the Theotokos, of logical development, wherein the intellectual character is most prominent; the determination of the date of Christ's birth, of historical development, which is the gradual formation of opinion concerning persons, facts, and events; the Holy Eucharist, of moral development, where what is congruous, desirable, pious, appropriate, and generous, is of concern; and the Athanasian Creed, of metaphysical development, wherein an idea is analyzed and delineated completely and exactly (74-75).

I.B.1.a. Newman's antecedent argument in behalf of developments in Christian doctrine.

"Whole objects do not create in the intellect whole ideas," says Newman (77). We learn and we teach by approximating through a series of aspects, views, descriptions, and definitions, the things we study, for "it is a characteristic of our minds that they cannot take an object in which is submitted to them simply and integrally" (77). Through an accumulation of various statements "strengthening, interpreting, correcting each other," we are able to arrive at an accurate image of the object of our concern. Two individuals may employ methods and representations which differ, Newman acknowledges, but they will be able to put forth essentially the same argument or convey the same truth, even though neither can speak about the subject except in terms of aspects not identical with it (77).

We do not impart "whole ideas," then, and neither do we incorporate them. When a fact impresses an idea of itself upon our minds we reflect upon it, and, according to Newman, it begins to expand into a network of ideas and aspects of ideas, "connected and harmonious with one another" (77). The more claim an idea has to be considered living, he adds, "the more various will be its aspects; and the more social and political its nature, and more complicated and subtle will be its issues, and the longer and more eventful will be its course...These special ideas,...from their very depth and richness cannot be fully understood at once, but are more and more clearly expressed and taught the longer they last--having aspects many and bearings many, mutually connected and growing one out of another, and all parts of a whole, with a sympathy and correspondence keeping pace with the ever changing necessities of the world, multiform, prolific, and ever resourceful..." (77-78).

Newman believes that no Christian, at least, would deny that Christianity is one of the "great doctrines" which develop in such a manner, on the basis of its initial achievements even before a determination of the fact (78). The possible objection that its inspired documents would limit the possibility of development in Christianity holds little weight for him. He retorts that ideas are not in the inspired text itself, but in the writer and reader of revelation; that the question is whether the reader receives the idea in its fullness at once as conveyed through the text by the writer, or whether it will blossom to perfection in his intellect over a period of time; and that

after a certain period the recipients of revelation ceased to be inspired, so that the revealed truths were then received "at first vaguely and generally, though in spirit and in truth," to be completed later by developments.

To consider Christianity under such an earthly form, adds Newman, is not "to level it in some sort to sects and doctrines of the world," nor to accuse it of the imperfections attributable to human works, for "Christianity differs from other religions and philosophies, in what is super-added to earth from heaven; not in kind, but in origin; not in its nature, but in its personal characteristics; being informed and quickened by what is more than intellect, by a divine spirit" (79).

Barring some special exception, then, Newman is convinced that Christianity, both as a doctrine and as a form of worship, will develop in the minds of its recipients in the same manner as do other "special ideas" or "great doctrines," although "the powers which it wields, and the words which proceed out of its mouth attest its miraculous nativity" (79). He is equally certain that Christianity "conforms in other respects, in its external propagation or its political framework, to the general methods by which the course of things is carried forward" (79).

In an argument "parallel to that by which we infer intelligence in the physical world" (84), Newman proposes that "In whatever sense the need and its supply are a proof of design in the visible creation, in the same do the gaps, if the word may be used, which occur in the structure of the

original creed of the Church, make it probable that those developments, which grow out of the truths which lie around it, were intended to fill them up" (84). This "antecedent argument" for "formal, legitimate, and true developments" (93) in Christian doctrine, developments preordained by God (93), is one of accumulation of probability rather than logical demonstration. Looking at Scripture and at the history of doctrine and of religious sects, Newman finds substantial evidence for his thesis that developments in doctrine are natural and necessary, that they do occur, that they are meant to occur, and that all Christians aid in the process of development.

If Christianity is a universal religion "suited not simply to one locality or period but to all times and places," Newman begins, it cannot avoid the changes which will undoubtedly occur in its relations and dealings with the world (79). It is forced to develop as it is applied variously in order that it influence different people in new situations. Hence all bodies of Christians develop the doctrines of Scripture: Luther's view of justification, for example, had not been stated in words before his time, and the doctrine of justification defined at Trent was in some respects new. All bodies of Christians appeal to Scripture, that is, argue from it. "But argument implies deduction, that is, development," Newman affirms. "Here there is no difference between early times and late, between a Pope ex cathedra and an individual Protestant, except that their authority is not on a par. On either side the claim of authority is the same, and the

process of development" (79-80).

Both the content and the method of revelation in Scripture suggest to Newman that developments in doctrine are necessary and inevitable. He cites cases where important doctrines, "if they are to be more than mere words, and to convey a definite idea to the recipient" (79-80), simply cannot remain self-contained in the body of Scripture: the declaration, "the Word became flesh," for example, deepened as an idea and took on the external form of a doctrine only after the meanings of "the Word," "became," and "flesh" were investigated and developed (79-80). In some instances major questions arise in the subject matter of Scripture which Scripture itself does not solve. These real and practical problems, such as the Canon of Scripture and its inspiration, the effects of baptism or the need and means of a second remission of sins, are not sufficiently addressed in Scripture, which accordingly requires completion. Such shortcomings or imperfections in doctrines suggest to Newman an "antecedent probability" in favor of a development in them (81).

The method of revelation in Scripture also anticipates development of doctrines; indeed, Newman argues that "the whole Bible...is written on the principle of development" (86). There was not an accumulation over time of separate predictions and truths, Newman points out, but instead a number of earlier prophecies which he terms "types," "pregnant texts out of which the succeeding announcements grow," large portions of truth told in miniature and later expanded and finished (85). He sees as parallel in structure to

prophetic announcements, "predictions as well as injunctions of doctrine" (86), such "doctrinal, political, ritual, and ethical sentences" as "This is My Body," "Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church," "The meek shall inherit the earth," "Suffer the little children to come unto Me," and "The pure in heart shall see God" (86). If prophetic announcements did indeed develop, by succeeding revelation and by event, then the development of these statements, he concludes, is probable antecedently (86).

The very style and structure of the Bible--"unsystematic" and "various," "figurative" and "indirect"--prevent us from mastering every doctrine or discovering every truth contained in Scripture. We are allowed the possibility of new insights, and afforded the challenge of further study and elucidation of those contents (90-91).

Newman finally uses the parable in which the "Kingdom of Heaven" is compared to "a grain of mustard-seed," which becomes a great tree, to suggest that Scripture itself "distinctly anticipates the development of Christianity, both as a polity and as a doctrine":

Here an internal element of life, whether principle or doctrine, is spoken of rather than any mere external manifestation; and it is observable that the spontaneous, as well as the gradual, character of the growth is intimated. This description of the process corresponds to what has been above observed respecting development, viz., that it is not an effort of wishing and resolving, or of forced enthusiasm, or of any mechanism of reasoning, or of any mere subtlety of intellect; but comes of its own innate power of expansion within the mind in its season, though with the use of reflection and argument and original thought, more or less as it may happen, with a dependence on the ethical growth of the mind itself, and with a reflex influence upon it (93).

After establishing the probability that developments in Christian doctrine are natural and to be expected, and that being natural and true they are legitimate, preordained results of God's design and may be called absolutely "the developments of Christianity," Newman addresses the question of how developments may be recognized. He is doubtful that Christians, who live perforce immersed in the very situations and under the doctrines which must be reviewed, inevitably prejudiced according to birth, education, place or party, would be able to recognize true developments (95). The means, if they are given, for performing the necessary task of ascertaining the legitimate and true developments of Revelation, must therefore be external to the developments themselves (97).

If there are true and important developments in Christianity, as Newman has argued, that for him is "a strong antecedent argument in favour of a provision in the Dispensation for putting a seal of authority upon those developments" (97). Newman does not contend that every revelation that occurs gives evidence that it is a revelation. He notes that human sciences "are a divine gift, yet are reached by our ordinary powers and have no claim on our faith" (98). Christianity, however, is different. It is a revelation which "comes to us as a revelation, as a whole, objectively, and with a profession of infallibility" (98). If this objective revelation has been given, Newman argues, "surely...it has been provided with means for impressing its objectiveness on the world"; "the absolute need for a spiritual supremacy is at present," he believes, "the strongest of arguments in favour of the fact

of its supply" (106).

The origin and nature of Christianity--its status as a revealed religion--call for a certain type of authority. The very idea of revelation "implies a present informant and guide, and that an infallible one; not a mere abstract declaration of truths unknown before to man, or a record of history...but a message and a lesson speaking to this man and that" (105). Revelation consists, according to Newman, "in the manifestation of the Invisible Divine Power, or in the substitution of the voice of a Lawgiver for the voice of conscience" (103). While the supremacy of conscience may be the essence of "natural" religion, the essence of revealed religion is the supremacy of Apostle, or Pope, or Church (103-104). Christianity began with the infallible authority of the Apostles (99), and Newman does not find it likely that the need for such an authority would disappear, or that it would cease to be provided.

Revelation, then, "has introduced a new law of divine governance over and above those laws which appear in the natural course of the world" (103), and the infallible authority mandated by the fact of revelation is for Newman the Roman Church, the sole Church "that dares claim [infallibility]" (105). He points out that Scripture expressly calls the Church "'the pillar and the ground of the truth,' and promises her as by covenant that 'the spirit of the Lord that is upon her, and His words which He has put in her mouth shall not depart out of her mouth, nor out of the mouth of her seed, nor out of the mouth of her seed's seed, from henceforth and for

ever'" (106).

Newman, for the sake of argument, calls the doctrine of Infallibility a hypothesis--"a mere position, supported by no direct evidence, but required by the facts of the case, and reconciling them with each other" (108). He does not, however, think it improper to rely on the infallibility of the Church because there are only probable grounds for its infallibility:

...if we have but probable grounds for the Church's infallibility, we have but the like for the impossibility of certain things, the necessity of others, the truth, the certainty of others; and therefore the words infallibility, necessity, truth, and certainty ought all of them to be banished from the language. But why is it more inconsistent to speak of an uncertain infallibility than of a doubtful truth or a contingent necessity, phrases which present ideas clear and undeniable? In sooth we are playing with words when we use arguments of this sort. When we say that a person is infallible, we mean no more than that what he says is always true, always to be believed, always to be done. The term is resolvable into these phrases as its equivalents; either then the phrases are inadmissible, or the idea of infallibility must be allowed. A probable infallibility is a probable gift of never erring; a reception of the doctrine of a probable infallibility is faith and obedience towards a person founded on the probability of his never erring in his declarations or commands. What is inconsistent in this idea? Whatever then be the particular means of determining infallibility, the abstract objection may be put aside (99-100).

Christianity could not help but grow or develop, given its intellectual character and the investigations and applications of its doctrines performed by generations of men; if it must develop, then God, who initially gave it, must also have secured it from corruption, and the instrument of development--"the intellectual action through successive generations"--must, insofar as "it can claim to have been put in charge of the Revelation," be infallible in its determinations (109). Newman concludes his antecedent argument in behalf

of development in Christian doctrine, with a third point: that in the history of Christianity the anticipation of such development is actually fulfilled, "and that they are found just where they might be expected, in the authoritative seats and homes of old tradition, the Latin and Greek Churches" (109).

First, says Newman, the consistency, harmony, and preciseness of the teachings of Christianity, the manner in which its doctrines are "suggestive, or correlative, or confirmatory, or illustrative" of one another and in which each lends its own probability to the next, imply a unity which must either be totally accepted, or totally rejected (110-111).

Second, there are no other developments, at least of enough prominence and permanence to warrant the term, outside of Christianity. There have been short-lived heresies, and there are criticisms and protests, but "little of positive teaching anywhere" (111). This circumstance, and the consistency and permanence of the developments commonly called Catholic, along with their claim of infallible sanction deemed antecedently probable by Newman, contribute to "the very strong presumption which exists, that, if there must be and are in fact developments in Christianity, the doctrines propounded by successive Popes and Councils, are they" (112).

Third, the general opinion of the world about Catholic developments is further evidence in their behalf: it views them all as a family under a single title, connects them with one theological system, protests, when it protests, not against individual doctrines but against one and all (112).

"It is scarcely necessary," Newman suggests, "to set about proving what is urged by...opponents [of these doctrines] even more strenuously than by their champions" (112).

This general testimony to the oneness of Catholicism, Newman says in conclusion, "extends to its past teaching relatively to its present, as well as to portions of its present teaching with one another" (113). Except by a very few, notes Newman, the Roman Catholic Church of the present day is acknowledged as the successor and representative of the medieval Church, and the medieval Church as the legitimate heir of the Nicene (113). There may be a question concerning the Nicene and the pre-Nicene Church, but all parties will agree, he believes, that "the present communion of Rome is the nearest approximation in fact to the Church of the Fathers" (113). And surely, he adds, all would agree that the Church Fathers, with whatever protests or opinions they might have, would find themselves more at home with St. Bernard or St. Ignatius of Loyola, or with a congregation at Mass, than with the teachers or members of any other creed (113-114).

I.B.1.b. Newman's historical argument in behalf of existing developments in Christian doctrine.

Given the antecedent picture of themselves which Catholic doctrines present--a single body, of which no element can be accepted or rejected independently of the whole; a theological system total and complete, unique in its provision of the type of authority seemingly demanded by Revelation; the existing

doctrines "universally considered, without any question, in each age to be the echo of the doctrines of the times immediately preceding them, and thus...continually thrown back to a date indefinitely early, even though their ultimate junction with the Apostolic Creed be out of sight and unascertainable" (115)--given this picture, the very least we should do, Newman argues, is to treat them as we treat other alleged facts and truths and their evidence which present strong cases in their own behalf (116). We do not suspect or doubt such everyday statements as Newton's theory of gravitation; we do not approach them determined to test and prove for ourselves their veracity. We take them on trust, proving them by using or applying them. If they fail, we re-apply them in proportion with the antecedent probability in their favor, or we reject them, but only when they fail to perform as we initially took for granted that they would (116-117).

We approach the prophetic texts of Scripture, for instance, in this manner. "The event which is the development is also the interpretation of the prediction," says Newman; "it provides a fulfillment by imposing a meaning. And we accept certain events as the fulfillment of prophecy from the broad correspondence of the one with the other, in spite of many incidental difficulties" (118). Such Old Testament prophecies as "a virgin shall conceive," or "let all the Angels of God worship Him," he believes, might not be considered by the reader to refer to Jesus if he did not accept the "intimate connection between Judaism and Christianity, and the inspiration of the New Testament"; but assuming those, he does

not hesitate to believe the fulfillment of the prophecies in Christ (118-119).

Newman suggests that in a parallel exercise of reasoning, the previous history of a doctrine may be interpreted by a later development, which may be considered to have been contained both in history and in God's plan (121). "...Where a doctrine comes recommended to us by a strong presumption of its truth, we are bound to receive it unsuspectingly, and use it as a key to the evidences to which it appeals, or the facts which it professes to systematize, whatever may be our eventual judgment about it" (124). The method he proposes is one of empirical rather than strictly logical reasoning. Yet in such sciences as history, ethics, or religion, it must be so, Newman insists. Where strict investigation is possible and physical facts are present, as in the science of physics, we can deduce, form inductions, abstract, and theorize from facts, without initial surmise and conjecture, or reliance on past tradition (125). We cannot rely on facts in history or ethics, however, because we do not have them. Instead, says Newman, "We must do our best with what is given us, and look about for aid from any quarter; and in such circumstances the opinions of others, the traditions of ages, the prescriptions of authority, antecedent auguries, analogies, parallel cases, these and the like, not indeed taken at random, but, like the evidence from the senses, sifted and scrutinized, obviously become of great importance" (126).

Assuming that God has given us means of ascertaining the

truth in different areas, the question for Newman is not whether they will lead to the truth--they obviously will--but is simply to find out what the proper means are for determining truth in a particular discipline (126). "He may bless antecedent probabilities in ethical inquiries, who blesses experience and induction in the art of medicine" (126). The correctness of the method relying on antecedent probability is further borne out, according to Newman, in its general adoption in secular as well as religious matters: a strong religious tradition may be sufficiently "proved" with a single line of Scripture; an individual may be free from suspicion although circumstances point against him, simply because his reputation is unimpeachable (128-129).

Newman sums up his historical argument: "...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; till at length that advance became so pronounced as to justify their definition and to bring it about, and to place them in the position of rightful interpretations and keys of the remains and the records in history of the teaching which had so terminated" (135). The evidence in such a method of proof, he finds, will be imperfect at first, growing and converging; there will accordingly be a delayed inference and judgment, with reasons produced at last to account for the delay (136).

Newman proceeds to inquire how much evidence is actually producible for present doctrines which did not originally

appear in Christianity but possess certain "antecedent considerations" which add a good deal of power to the evidence which does exist (135). He concludes his historical argument in behalf of existing developments with a list of instances, including the Canon of the New Testament, original sin, infant baptism, the Incarnation, and papal supremacy, finding in each case a convergence of evidence in favor of the development and its origin in the earliest age of Christianity (136-172).

I.B.2. Seven notes of genuine development.

Newman has argued that the present system of doctrines called Catholic, and acknowledged to a great extent in both Eastern and Western Christianity, is both logically and historically the true representative of the Church of the nineteenth century, the eighteenth, the fifth, and so on, to the very Apostolic origin of the faith. The form in which Christianity was given, and the environment in which it was placed, made it natural and necessary from the very start that the idea expand and develop. Its revealed nature called for an external authority to ratify these developments, and it, too, developed, in the form of the doctrine of infallibility of the Church. The developments which have occurred, when viewed in light of the antecedent probability in favor of their appropriateness and examined according to the empirical historical method which Newman considers most applicable to the case due to the lack of available facts, display considerable

evidence that they are indeed the developments we would expect in Christianity, and may be regarded as rightful interpretations of the history of the teaching which preceded them.

Yet one could argue that "an intellectual development may be in one sense natural, and yet untrue to its original ...that the causes which stimulate the growth of ideas may also disturb and deform them; and that Christianity might indeed have been intended by its Divine Author for a wide expansion of the ideas proper to it, and yet this great benefit hindered by the evil birth of cognate errors which acted as its counterfeit..." (175-176). Newman recognizes that the process of development could well result in a corruption or perversion of truth. He describes an analogous corruption occurring in material substances:

Now it is plain, first of all, that a corruption is a word attaching to organized matters only; a stone may be crushed to powder, but it cannot be corrupted. Corruption, on the contrary, is the breaking up of life preparatory to its termination. This resolution of a body into its component parts is the stage before its dissolution; it begins when life has reached its perfection, and it is the sequel, or rather the continuation, of that process towards perfection, being at the same time the reversal and undoing of what went before. Till this point of regression is reached, the body has a function of its own, and a direction and aim in its action, and a nature with laws; these it is now losing, and the traits and tokens of former years; and with them its vigour and powers of nutrition, of assimilation, and of self-reparation (176).

Accordingly, Newman sets out seven "notes" or characteristics of genuine and faithful developments, which only they will possess, and which may serve to discriminate between healthy developments on the one hand and corruptions on the

other. These seven, "of varying cogency, independence, and applicability" (177), provide what Gustave Weigel, S.J., in his introduction to Newman's Essay, calls "certain patterns for change within an identical flow" (12). They are: first, preservation of type, or substantial form, of an idea, throughout all changes; second, continuity of its principles; third, the power to assimilate new elements; fourth, a logical sequence, or recognition according to its own principles of new conclusions formed in the process of growth; fifth, an anticipation in its early stages of later developments; sixth a conservative action upon its past, newer developments emerging from older principles placed in different contexts; seventh, a chronic vigor throughout the life of the idea (177).

Preservation of type, Newman's first note of a genuine development, is readily suggested, he points out, by the analogy of physical growth, "which is such that the parts and proportions of the developed form, however altered, correspond to those which belong to its rudiments" (177). Similarly, each calling or office has its own type. A judge may be called "corrupt" if he does not maintain the character of his profession in meting out justice, but makes decisions on the basis of personality or profit. This unity of type, however, does not preclude variation; the butterfly, Newman points out, is the development of the caterpillar but certainly not the image of it, while a politician may court several parties, contradict himself, or undo his own deeds, yet still adhere to certain principles and fulfill several objectives which give a unity and directness to his career (178-179). This preservation

of type is no less important in religious developments.

The life of a doctrine consists in the law or principle it embodies. Newman argues in his second note of a genuine development, and these principles will not vary, even while the doctrine itself expands variously according to the mind, individual or social, into which it is received. Newman distinguishes between principles and doctrines in the following manner: "Principles are abstract and general, doctrines relate to facts; doctrines develop, and principles at first sight do not; doctrines grow and are enlarged, principles are permanent; doctrines are intellectual, and principles are more immediately ethical and practical. Systems live in principles and represent doctrines. Personal responsibility is a principle, the Being of God is a doctrine; from that doctrine all theology has come in due course, whereas that principle is not clearer under the Gospel than in paradise, and depends, not on belief in an Almighty Governor, but on conscience" (183). Such differences, he adds, at times merely exist in our mode of viewing them, so that a doctrine in one philosophy is a principle in another. Personal responsibility, for instance, may be used as a doctrine and developed into Pelagianism (183). Doctrines are developed by the operation of principles (184), and both doctrine and principle must be retained if a development is to be faithful (185). Doctrine without principle remains barren, holds Newman, as when one hollowly declares a devotion to an established Church and its creed on merely conservative or temporal motives (185). Principle without doctrine can be equally unfortunate, "as the

state of religious minds in the heathen world, viewed relatively to Revelation; that is, of the 'children of God who are scattered abroad'" (185). Such pagans may have the same principles as Catholics, but not so with heretics, Newman adds: "Principle is a better test of heresy than doctrine. Heretics are true to their principles, but change to and fro, backwards and forwards, in opinion; for very opposite doctrines may be exemplifications of the same principle...The doctrines of heresy are accidents and soon run to an end; its principles are everlasting" (185-186).

Newman finds an exemplification of his third note of a genuine development, the power of assimilation, again in the physical world. There, life is characterized by growth; growth never accompanies the cessation of life. A thing grows by incorporating or assimilating external materials into its own substance, so that appropriation results in unity. Two things become one only when one exercises a power of assimilation (188).

Newman's discussion of the process of development in ideas, previously described, similarly characterizes the growth of those non-abstract, non-mathematical ideas placed in our midst, as assimilative. Development is necessarily a process of incorporation, so that "a living idea becomes many, yet remains one" (190). A power of development is a proof of life, says Newman; "the attempt at development," moreover, "shows the presence of a principle, and its success, the presence of an idea. Principles stimulate thought,

and an idea concentrates it" (190).

An idea must be able to incorporate from external sources in order to thrive. Further, Newman adds, the stronger and more living it is, the more powerful will be its grasp on the minds of men, and the more resistant will it be against the dangers of corruption. "As strong frames exult in their agility, and healthy constitutions throw off ailments, so parties or schools that live can afford to be rash, and will sometimes be betrayed into extravagances, yet are brought right by their inherent vigour" (192).

In his fourth note, that of the logical sequence of a genuine development, Newman states that logic, the organization of thought, "is a security for the faithfulness of intellectual developments" (192-193). Development occurs as an idea, under one of its aspects, is contemplated in the mind, viewed in its relations, leading to other aspects; a body of thought thus forms without realization on the part of the individual that such a process is taking place. "And all this while," Newman continues, "or at least from time to time, external circumstances elicit into formal statement the thoughts which are coming into being in the depths of his mind; and soon he has to begin to defend them; and then again a further process must take place, of analyzing his statements and ascertaining their dependence one on another. And thus he is led to regard as consequences, and to trace to principles, what hitherto he has discerned by a moral perception, and adopted on sympathy; and logic is brought in to arrange and inculcate

what no science was employed in gaining" (193). Thus the process of development occurs step by step, often without a looking back or taking stock of either progress or goal; but a logical character will permeate the whole, and act as a test, from its evident naturalness, that the product is a genuine development (193).

Another sort of evidence of the genuineness of a development is its anticipation in earlier "intimations of tendencies" of later, more systematic statements, Newman says in his fifth note. A living idea, influential and effective, is sure to develop according to its own nature. Under favorable circumstances, it may develop its characteristic tendencies early as well as late, and, logic being the same in all ages, Newman continues, occasional instances of a development which is to come may appear from the very first. It is often a matter of accident, he suggests, that the natural consequences of an idea occur in a particular order, so that it should not appear strange when an advanced teaching appears very early, but should strengthen the case for the genuineness of the later development (197-198). Such striking anticipations, Newman offers as an example, occurred in the second-century controversies with the Gnostics, where the works of their Catholic opponents contained elements of the formal dogmatic teaching developed in the Church in the fifth-century Nestorian and Monophysite controversies.

A true development, furthermore, is conservative of the course of antecedent developments, according to Newman's

sixth note. In addition, it serves to illustrate and corroborate, rather than obscure or correct, the previous course of thought, whereas a corruption contradicts and reverses it (201). Such is the theory of the Church Fathers regarding doctrines fixed by Councils, says Newman, and such has been the action of the Church throughout history, for while there have been disputes among bishops, Popes, and Councils, never has the Church contradicted her own enunciations (134).

Newman's seventh and final note marking a genuine development, is duration or chronic vigor. Ideas living in men's minds are constantly developing, so that corruption, which is a transition state leading to a crisis, and naturally tends towards dissolution, proceeds rapidly and with brief duration (204). Heresies, for instance, are always short-lived, either disappearing or resolving into new courses of error. Decay, a form of corruption, is distinguished from it by a lack of violent or vigorous action, which accounts for its slowness when compared to other forms (205). In general, however, corruptions are transitory, while genuine developments are marked by their tenacity.

These are Newman's seven notes, then, marking the genuineness of development in an idea. "The point to be ascertained," he reiterates, "is the unity and identity of the idea with itself through all stages of its development from first to last, and these are seven tokens that it may rightly be accounted one and the same all along. To guarantee its own substantial unity, it must be seen to be one in type,

one in its system of principles, one in its unitive power towards externals, one in its logical consecutiveness, one in the witness of its early phases to its later, one in the protection which its later extend to its earlier, and one in its union of vigour with continuance, that is, in its tenacity" (206-207).

II.A. The historical development of the doctrine of the Trinity.

An appropriate and accurate application of a set of principles demands a prior understanding of the basis from which those principles are drawn. In applying Newman's "notes" to the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity, we will assume, as Newman would, the infallibility of Scripture; we will take into account the antecedent probability in favor of the genuineness of the doctrine, and approach it with the same "empirical" historical method used by Newman.

Scripture alone did not answer many of the questions which began to be raised as early as the close of the first century A.D. concerning God and His interaction with the world, and the role of the Son and the Spirit in His self-revelation. Indeed, an authoritative collection of New Testament books was not settled upon in the West before 200, and not definitively completed until 400.<sup>1</sup> Much in the manner described by Newman, a process which may be called

<sup>1</sup>  
 Williston Walker, A History of the Christian Church (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1929), pp. 61-61.

"development" began to occur in the "idea" of Christianity, and particularly in the aspect of God's self-revelation, as men attempted to fill in Scriptural "gaps." We, like Newman, will acknowledge the probability that this process was pre-ordained by God, in light of the need for such developments, as well as the probability that the developments ratified by the infallible Church were those intended by God. Given this in its favor, we will use the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity to "read back" into its own history; that is, we will not attempt to deduce the doctrine as the logical outcome of prior events, but, assuming its probable genuineness, look for confirmation of it in history through the application of Newman's notes.

It should be noted that the purpose of the present study is not to add to the scholarship on the history of the doctrine of the Trinity, but to use it, for the purpose of the application of Newman's notes. Accordingly, the following presentation will be based on highly regarded secondary sources, rather than original sources and documents.

We will not attempt, due to our limitation of time, to trace the whole of primitive Trinitarian speculation from its roots among such sources as Paul and John. We will begin instead with the type of view of the divine Triad held in the second century by such men as Irenaeus, and move on to discuss the major stages of its development in the West into the co-equal picture of the Trinity which emerged before the end of the sixth century. It is the Western conception, it may be added, in which Newman would of course be most interested,

and to which it is most suitable that his notes be applied.

Christian thought until the end of the second century was concerned primarily with the issue of the unity of God. Its triadic formula held God the Father as the Godhead in all of its attributes: eternal, immutable, unbegotten, one and all, being-itself, incomprehensible, the ultimate mystery.<sup>1</sup> The Father contains in Himself from all eternity His Word and His Wisdom, which are made manifest as forms of His self-revelation: the Son as God in His relationship with the world--as creator, redeemer, sanctifier, and the Spirit as God in the hearts and minds of men--as sanctifier, inspirer, and enlightener.<sup>2</sup> While both Son and Spirit were considered divine and essential, the Spirit was clearly held subordinate to the Son, and the Son to the Father. The Spirit sanctified only when dispensed by the Son; the Son revealed the Father only at the Father's pleasure.<sup>3</sup>

The conception of the Word during this period attributed to it the role of Creator on the basis of such Scriptural passages as John 1 and Hebrews 1.<sup>4</sup> The Spirit was also believed to have been present at the Creation, but only insofar as it is part of the Logos, or caused by it. The Genesis passage, "...and God's spirit hovered over the water,"<sup>5</sup> was symbolically interpreted to mean that the Spirit was present

<sup>1</sup> P. Linwood Urban, lecture to Religion 15, Formation of Christian Doctrine, Swarthmore College, February 13, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> J.N.D. Kelly, Early Christian Doctrines (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> Urban, February 13, 1978.

<sup>5</sup> Genesis 1:2 (Jerusalem Bible).

in the being of the Word, Who created at the will of the Father, but not that the Spirit had a role in the Creation.<sup>1</sup> Again on the basis of such passages as John 1 and Hebrews 1, the Word was believed to have become incarnate in Jesus Christ, as yet another form of the Father's self-revelation.<sup>2</sup>

Irenaeus, whom J.N.D. Kelly in his book, Early Christian Doctrines, refers to as "the theologian who summed up the thought of the second century,"<sup>3</sup> gave a typical example of catechetical instruction at that time:

This, then, is the order of the rule of our faith...God the Father, not made, not material, invisible; one God, the creator of all things: this is the first point of our faith. The second point is this: the Word of God, Son of God, Christ Jesus our Lord, Who was manifested to the prophets according to the form of their prophesying and according to the method of the Father's dispensation; through Whom (i.e. the Word) all things were made; Who also, at the end of the age, to complete and gather up all things, was made man among men, visible and tangible, in order to abolish death and show forth life and produce perfect reconciliation between God and man. And the third point is this: the Holy Spirit, through Whom the prophets prophesied, and the fathers learned the things of God, and the righteous were led into the way of righteousness; Who at the end of the age was poured out in a new way upon mankind in all of the earth, renewing man to God.<sup>4</sup>

Such was the second-century view of the Godhead, strongly based on the Gospel of John: an "economic" Trinity, fundamentally monotheistic, maintaining distinctions within the single personage of the Father which were revealed only in "the ordered process of His self-disclosure":<sup>5</sup> Creation,

<sup>1</sup> Urban, February 13, 1978.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, p. 107.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

<sup>4</sup> Irenaeus, Dem. 6, as quoted in Ibid., p. 89; underscore mine.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 104.

Incarnation, and other modes of revelation. Wisdom and Word were believed to be eternally contained within the Father. Son and Spirit, begotten of the Father, were considered divine. Yet obscurity cloaked their status prior to their manifestation through the Father's self-disclosure: were they eternally "Persons" (in the sense of later theological development), or "Persons" only since the moment in which the Father extrapolated them from His being in His first act (i.e., Creation, with regard to the Logos) of self-revelation?

Early third-century thinkers such as Hippolytus and Tertullian, partly in response to those "monarchian" teachings (such as adoptionism, modalism, and Sabellianism) whose attempts to protect the unity of the Godhead later earned them condemnation as Christological heresies, gave a deeper recognition to Son and often Spirit as "persons" in a numerically distinct sense.<sup>1</sup> That distinction, however, could be applied only after the Father's self-manifestation had taken place; it did not apply to the Word and Spirit immanent in the being of the Father.

The issue of the status of the Son and His relation to the Godhead was forced to the front at the beginning of the fourth century, opening the second major phase of doctrinal development.<sup>2</sup> The heated Christological controversy sparked by the teaching of Arius, a presbyter in Alexandria, was to

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid., pp. 113-114.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 223.

bring about a formal statement of Trinitarian doctrine a decade later. Kelly sums up Arius's teaching in four points.<sup>1</sup> At the heart of it was the question of the generation of the Son. Given Arius's initial premise, an affirmation of the absoluteness and uniqueness of God the Father Who alone is ingenerate and therefore indivisible, the Son first of all must be a creature, called into existence out of nothing by the Father. To claim that God imparted His substance to another would deny His immutability and result in a duality of divine beings. The Son, therefore, does not emanate from the Father. He is a perfect creature, but a creature nonetheless, "begotten"--that is, "made," according to Arius--like all the rest.

Second, the Son, like all creatures, must have had a beginning. He was born outside time, since He is after all the creator even of time itself; yet before His generation He did not exist, argued Arius. The suggestion that the Son is co-eternal with the Father, he believed, smacked of ditheism.

Third, Arius claimed that the Son can have neither communion with, nor direct knowledge of, the Father. He is the Father's Word and Wisdom only in the sense that he participates in them; He does not resemble or belong to the Father's essence, and cannot comprehend it. Fourthly, the Son must be liable to change and even to sin.

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<sup>1</sup> Ibid, pp. 227-230. The following discussion closely follows Kelly's.

Arius's teaching--that the Son is a perfect creature, and certainly no more than a demi-god--was condemned in 325 at the first ecumenical council, held in Nicaea. There the fathers affirmed the full divinity of the Son and His co-eternity with the Father. In addition, most scholars agree, the Nicene term "substance" indicated espousal of the doctrine that the Son shares the nature and essence of the Father, although the fathers were by no means unanimously agreed on the point, and the term itself remained ambiguous long after the approval of the creed.<sup>1</sup> The Creed of Nicaea read as follows:

We believe in one God the Father all-sovereign, maker of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of the substance of the Father, God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, things in heaven and things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, and became man, suffered, and rose on the third day, ascended into the heavens, is coming to judge the living and the dead.

And in the Holy Spirit.

And those that say 'There was when he was not,'  
and, 'Before he was begotten he was not,'  
and that, 'He came into being from what is not,'  
or those that allege, that the Son of God is  
'of another substance or essence'  
or 'created,'  
or 'changeable'  
or 'alterable,'

these the Catholic and Apostolic Church anathematizes.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>  
Jaroslav Pelikan, The Christian Tradition, vol. 1, The Emergence of the Catholic Tradition (100-600) (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1971), pp. 202-204; and Kelly, p. 236.

<sup>2</sup>  
Henry Bettenson, ed., Documents of the Christian Church (New York: Oxford University Press, 1947), p. 36; underscore mine.

The affirmation of the divinity of the Son and of His co-eternity with the Father opened up several new issues, or perhaps, better put, brought to the fore issues which hitherto had remained in the background, but now demanded attention. First, if the Son exists co-eternally with the Father and receives His divine nature, His "godness," from the Father, does the Son then share the Father's substance? Second, given the close relationship between Son and Spirit, and Scripture's attestation to the latter's place in the divine Triad, what then of the Spirit's relationship to the Father--is it not as well, one of consubstantiality? The post-Nicene theological discussion and resolution of these issues, as we shall see, pushed the course of Trinitarian development firmly in the direction of a co-equality of "Persons."

Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria from 328-373 and a champion of Nicene theology, played an instrumental role in winning large numbers of anti-Nicenes to the Nicene camp following the first council. A mutually satisfactory Trinitarian formula of "one ousia, three hypostaseis," or "one substance, three separate subsistences,"<sup>1</sup> eventually was reached.

Athanasius also campaigned, on both a methodological and a Scriptural basis,<sup>2</sup> for the consubstantiality of the Spirit, an issue later addressed by the Cappadocian fathers and given its definitive statement by Gregory of Nyssa. Gregory countered the Arian thrust that the consubstantiality of the Spi-

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly, p. 257; and Pelikan, p. 213.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, p. 262; and Pelikan, p. 223.

rit seemed to imply the existence of two Sons, by distinguishing the generation of Son and Spirit: the Son is directly produced by the Father (and is thus Only-begotten), while the Spirit proceeds from the Father through the intermediary of the Son.<sup>1</sup> The Spirit's relation to the Father is not prejudiced by the Son's action as agent, but the Son remains subordinate to the Father.<sup>2</sup>

The consubstantiality of the Spirit as well as the Son received formal endorsement at the council of Constantinople of 381,<sup>3</sup> where the theology of Athanasius and the Cappadocians prevailed, especially the doctrine of one Godhead, one essence, existing simultaneously in three modes of being.<sup>4</sup> Later approved at the council of Chalcedon in 451, the creed revised at Constantinople read as follows:

We believe in one God the Father All-sovereign, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible;

And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all the ages, Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from the heavens, and was made flesh of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man, and was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried, and rose again on the third day according to the Scriptures, and ascended into the heavens, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father, and cometh again with glory to judge the living and

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly, p. 262; and Pelikan, p. 223.

<sup>2</sup> Kelly, p. 263.

<sup>3</sup> Walker, p. 127.

<sup>4</sup> Kelly, pp. 263-264.

dead, of whose kingdom there shall be no end:

And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the Life-giver, that proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and Son is worshiped together and glorified together, who spake through the prophets:

In one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church:

We acknowledge one baptism unto remission of sins. We look for a resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come.<sup>1</sup>

The addition of the Filioque, or doctrine of the procession of the Spirit from Son as well as Father, was approved in the West at the Third Council of Toledo in 589.<sup>2</sup>

We note the addition in the Creed: "the Holy Spirit, the Lord and the life-giver." It indicates that the Fathers had switched after Nicaea to a literal interpretation of such passages as Genesis 1:2, "...and God's spirit hovered over the water." The Irenaean view of the Trinity held that the Spirit was present insofar as it was part of the Logos, or Creator; now the Spirit, too, was assigned an active part in the Creation.<sup>3</sup> This is an example of the doctrine of coinherence or perichoresis, that when one member of the Trinity acts, all three act, which was suggested by the Cappadocians as a corollary of their doctrine of one Godhead existing simultaneously in three modes of being. It had strengthened the argument for the consubstantiality of the Spirit; it also took another step towards a co-equal view of the Trinity.

<sup>1</sup> Bettenson, p. 37; underscore mine.

<sup>2</sup> Walker, p. 180.

<sup>3</sup> Urban, February 13, 1978.

De Trinitate, written by Augustine between 399 and 419, "gave the Western tradition," according to Kelly, "its mature and final expression."<sup>1</sup> The shift from a hierarchical to a co-equal conception of the Trinity, and the adoption of the doctrine of co-inherence, which had been suggested by the Cappadocians, were advocated by Augustine. He affirmed first of all the immutable nature of the Godhead, an essence or substance shared equally by all three members. The three also act completely in unity. They maintain their distinctions through their mutual relations within the Godhead: "the Father is distinguished as Father because He begets the Son, and the Son is distinguished as Son because He is begotten. The Spirit, similarly, is distinguished from Father and Son inasmuch as He is 'bestowed' by Them; He is Their 'common gift'...., being a kind of communion of Father and Son, or else the love which they together pour into our hearts."<sup>2</sup> Thus there are three "Persons"--Augustine, unhappy with this term, did not suggest another--distinct, yet equal: "'not only is the Father not greater than the Son in respect of divinity, but Father and Son together are not greater than the Holy Spirit, and no single Person of the Three is less than the Trinity Itself.'"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly, p. 271.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 274.

<sup>3</sup> Augustine, De Trinitate 8.I, quoted in Ibid., p. 272.

One might inquire at this point whether the co-equal view of the Trinity presented by Augustine was not an over-reaction to Arianism--that perhaps it would have sufficed merely to affirm the full divinity and co-eternity of the Son, and likewise of the Spirit, following Nicaea. Yet to declare that the Son has existed side-by-side with the Father from eternity, deriving His very nature, Godhood, from the Father--in short, to say that He is perfectly identical to the Father in His Godhood--without holding in addition that they are of the same substance, would pose two problems. First, how can perfect likeness, when speaking of Godhood, not mean identity of essence or substance? We are not speaking of a physical resemblance, but of identical Godhood. Second, how can the divine unity--immutable, indivisible--be preserved, if Father and Son, Who are perfectly alike in Godhood, are not of the same (immutable, indivisible) substance? (We might equally add here, Spirit.) Thus consubstantiality was not affirmed in an over-reaction to Arianism; it was a necessary follow-up to Nicaea.

What, then, of co-equality? It is difficult for this writer to conceive of how any one of the Three could be identical in Godhood to the other Two, and yet "less" God than they. As for the doctrine of coinherence, it seems to have been necessary in order to uphold the consubstantiality of the Spirit (recall Genesis 1:2), an equally vital link in the chain of post-Nicene theology, as previously discussed.

The Athanasian Creed, formulated in the sixth century and generally accepted in the West, gives us "a convenient

and authoritative compendium of the Catholic consensus in the West," according to Jaroslav Pelikan.<sup>1</sup> It gave creedal form to Augustine's argument, affirming the co-eternity and co-equality of Father, Son and Spirit, one God in Trinity, and Trinity in Unity; the Father unbegotten and uncreated, made of none, the Son uncreated but begotten, the Spirit unbegotten and uncreated, proceeding from Father and Son.<sup>2</sup>

II.B. An application of Newman's notes of genuine development, to the development of the doctrine of the Trinity.

Thus the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity evolved from a primitive triadic formula based on Scriptural passages and fundamentally committed to the unity of God. Let us now apply Newman's seven notes, looking back on the process of development as outlined in its major stages, in an attempt to determine whether or not that process maintained "the unity and identity of the idea with itself"<sup>3</sup> and so whether or not the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity is a genuine development.

First, let us take "preservation of type." The fundamental commitment of the earliest Christians, we have noted, was that of monotheism. In looking again at the course of events in the West leading to the co-equal Trinitarian formula, we see that the divine unity was carefully guarded. It occupied a central position in Christian thought until the end of the second century, so much so that primitive triadic for-

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<sup>1</sup> Pelikan, p. 351.

<sup>2</sup> Athanasian Creed, quoted by Urban, February 13, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> Newman, p. 206.

mulae emphatically held both Son and Spirit in direct subordination to the Father, Who alone was the Godhead in all of its attributes.

Later efforts to preserve the unity of the Godhead, such as adoptionism, modalism, Sabellianism, and Arianism, were condemned as heresies because they tended to blur if not to deny the distinctions in the Godhead which had begun to be further explored and explicated by the Church. Did the Church forsake the divine unity in anathematizing such views and pursuing the development of the distinctions within it? Let us look again at part of the creed adopted at Nicaea in 325: "We believe in one God the Father all-sovereign, maker of all things visible and invisible; And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is, of one substance of the Father,... begotten not made, of one substance with the Father...."<sup>1</sup> The term "substance" poses a problem: does a sharing of it imply that there exists one simple, absolute being? The answer was not definitively given at the first council.

The solution finally accepted regarding the meaning of a sharing of substance by Father, Son, and--as of the council at Constantinople in 381--Spirit as well, was that proffered by Augustine in his doctrine of the co-equal Trinity. Harry A. Wolfson, in the first volume of his Philosophy of the Church Fathers, describes the Aristotelian analysis of the types of relative unity which the Fathers probably employed in

<sup>1</sup> Bettenson, p. 14; underscore mine.

their search for an analogy for the relative unity in the Trinity. Of the five types proposed by Aristotle--unity of accident, of continuity, of substratum, of genus, and of species--the Fathers most likely discarded the first two, and investigated the other three.<sup>1</sup> Augustine rejected all but one of the explanations.<sup>2</sup> He proposed that the three persons of the Godhead share a common substratum, or essence, which is godhood or "god-ness." The Father does not cause the godhood of the Son and the Spirit. They derive their own godhood through equal participation in an essence which is not a fourth godhood or person in any sense, but the common substratum shared by all three.<sup>3</sup> "The Godhood itself is ineffably and inseparably a Trinity," argued Augustine, eternally differentiated into three persons.<sup>4</sup> The three form an absolute unity; the Father is not even distinct from the Son and the Spirit as the cause of their godhood, but only as the cause of their existence. It is thus the divine unity which Augustine "set[s] squarely in the foreground."<sup>5</sup> Whatever is affirmed of God--whatever characteristics are assigned to Him, whatever actions are ascribed to Him--must be affirmed of all three Persons.<sup>6</sup>

The overall "type" of the divine unity was indeed preserved, then, throughout the development of the doctrine of

<sup>1</sup> Harry A. Wolfson, The Philosophy of the Church Fathers, vol. 1, Faith, Trinity, Incarnation (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1956), pp. 312-317, contains a full discussion.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., pp. 351-352.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid., pp. 352-353.

<sup>4</sup> Augustine, Epistolae.120,2,7, quoted in Ibid., p. 353.

<sup>5</sup> Kelly, p. 272.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

the co-equal Trinity, albeit with a change of framework. We have seen a dramatic shift from the schematization of Irenaeus to that of Augustine, and a shift, too, in their respective use of the authority of Scripture to justify their systems. Irenaeus's symbolic interpretation of such passages as "God's spirit hovered over the water" and "In the beginning was the Word: the Word was with God....," allowed him to maintain a divine unity by keeping Word and Wisdom immanent in the being of the Father until He chose to extrapolate them, as Son and Spirit, in an act of self-revelation. Augustine interpreted the same passages much more literally in predicating a divine unity of three Persons distinguished only in their relations to one another, not in duration, nor in being, nor in essence, nor in substance, nor in will, nor in action, nor in "greatness."

Two further observations may be made here. First, in condemning those monarchian arguments which stressed the unity of God in the face of growing concern with distinctions within the Godhead, the Church cleared the way for further developments resulting in a doctrine which equally maintained that unity, yet also presented a fuller picture of the triad which undoubtedly, according to Scripture, is built into it. The new conception of the Trinity was able to withstand the attacks and answer the problematic charges levelled against older conceptions. Second, the later doctrine, as presented by Augustine, would seem to hold the Godhead in a much tighter unity than the hierarchical view, where the Father caused the the godhood of the Son and the Spirit, as well as their existence.

Let us look now at whether a continuity of principles exists in the development of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity. Newman specifies a number of Christian principles, singling out four which we will take up: Faith, Theology, Scripture, Dogma.<sup>1</sup>

Newman describes the principle of faith as follows: "That belief in Christianity is in itself better than unbelief; that faith, though an intellectual action, is ethical in its origin; that it is safer to believe; that we must begin with believing; that as for the reasons of believing, they are for the most part implicit, and need be but slightly recognized by the mind that is under their influence; that they consist moreover rather of presumptions and ventures after the truth than of accurate and complete proofs; and that probable arguments, under the scrutiny and sanction of a prudent judgment, are sufficient for conclusions which we even embrace as most certain, and turn to the most important uses."<sup>2</sup>

The Church Fathers followed such a pattern throughout the course of the development of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity: they professed a belief in the authority of Scripture, attempted to "flesh out" certain portions of it, assessed their conclusions, and put forth creeds and formulae of belief which all of the faithful were to profess, even while various individuals and parties might not be intellectually certain of the accuracy of their proof, all on a basis of trust in Scripture and in the truth of Christianity. Though subservient to faith,

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<sup>1</sup>  
Newman, p. 312.

<sup>2</sup>  
Ibid., pp. 312-313.

reason also played a major role in the development of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity, as seen in the constant stream of examination, explanation, and argument among numerous outstanding thinkers; thus the principle of theology was likewise exemplified.

Scripture was the authority appealed to at every stage of Trinitarian development. Certain passages, tantalizingly ambiguous, became the basis of very different arguments: "God's spirit hovered over the water," we previously noted (see above p.46), was first interpreted as "God's Spirit was present at the Creation" as part of the Logos, in the hierarchical scheme. The same passage was later interpreted to give the quasi-independent Spirit an actual role in Creation, thus helping to substantiate the argument for the co-equal doctrine of the Trinity.

Newman himself, in demonstrating that the "mystical" or non-literal interpretation of Scripture is included in the third principle, cites several passages--"'The Lord made' or 'possessed Me in the beginning of His ways';...'In Thy Light shall we see Light'; 'Who shall declare His generation?'"<sup>1</sup>-- which "do not obviously refer to that doctrine [of the Western Trinity], yet are put forward [by Antenicene and Nicene writers] as palmary proofs of it."<sup>2</sup>

Likewise, the principle of Dogma runs throughout Trinitarian development. Those arguments were condemned which appeared to contradict mainline Church tradition, and the Fathers

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<sup>1</sup> Newman, p. 327.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

strongly insisted that all who professed Christianity also adhere to the official formulae of the tradition: "...This is the Catholic faith: which except a man believe faithfully (truly and firmly), he cannot be saved."<sup>1</sup>

There is, then, a continuity of principles, including those of dogma, faith, theology, and Scripture, in the development of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity. We will proceed to examine whether it also exhibits a power of assimilation.

The challenges to orthodox Christianity posed by such heresies as Arianism directly called into question those tenets as yet not fully developed by the Fathers. Yet they successfully staved off those attacks, and in doing so more fully developed the issues in question. Arian's doctrine, for instance, consisted of four major thrusts, as we have seen: the creatureliness of the Son, His generation in time, His "non-consubstantiality" with the Father, and His liability to change and to sin. Not only was his teaching anathematized, but at least three of its primary features were addressed by the Fathers and refuted with arguments that furthered the actual development of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity: the full divinity of the Son, His eternal generation, His (equal) participation in godhood. The monarchian heresies served a similar function in that the Fathers, in rejecting them, committed themselves more fully to working out a Trinitarian doctrine which adequately distinguished the Three, yet satisfactorily maintained the divine unity.

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<sup>1</sup> Athanasian Creed, quoted by Urban, February 13, 1978.

Corruptions of the doctrine were resisted, suggestions for lines of further development taken from them. Those sound proposals of the Fathers, as we look back, were likewise assimilated: Tertullian's delineation of the Three-in-One, the consubstantiality of the Spirit advocated by Athanasius, the Cappadocian theory of the generation of Son and Spirit, Augustine's doctrine of perichoresis. Certainly, then, the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity exhibits a power of assimilation.

We will now look back on the process of the doctrine's development to discover whether we can pick out a logical sequence and a coherent whole within it. Recall that by this term Newman means not a series of logical deductions from one step to another during the course of a development, but a coherent schematization or view of the whole which can be seen as one looks back upon it. We were able to see this (above, p. 52), in briefly sketching the Trinitarian schematizations of Irenaeus and Augustine and comparing them. Let us look back once more, in some greater detail, to see whether the course of the development displays, as Newman puts it, "one doctrine leading to another; so that, if the former be admitted, the latter can hardly be denied, and the latter can hardly be called a corruption without taking exception to the former."<sup>1</sup>

Christianity's initial, most fundamental commitment, we have noted several times, was to the divine unity. Scripture

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<sup>1</sup>  
Newman, p. 361.

suggested a divine triad, which several Christian thinkers began to investigate. The question of the status of the Word and its relation to the Godhead emerged as a result. The Council of Nicaea affirmed the divinity of the Son. The nature of His divinity, that is, His "unity of substance" with the Father, and a growing concern with the status of the Spirit, were addressed at Constantinople, where both Son and Spirit were deemed consubstantial with the Father. Augustine answered the natural question of the relations of Father, Son and Spirit, now considered consubstantial, by settling the issue of the generation of the Son and the Spirit and formulating the co-equal doctrine of the Trinity.

Thus, roughly, we can trace the development of the doctrine as follows: divine unity--three-in-one-ness--divinity of Son--consubstantiality of Father, Son, Spirit--equality of Three, distinct yet One. Given the infallible revelation in Scripture, can there be a divine unity which is not Three in One? No; there is too much evidence to deny it. If the Son is one of the Three Who form the divine unity, can He be less than fully divine? No; Scripture again upholds the divinity and immutability of the Word, and to suggest that the Son is less than fully divine would deny the eternity of the divine Triad and weaken its unity. If the Son is fully divine, can He or the third member of the divine Triad not share the same substance as the Father? No; perfect likeness, the attribution of divine qualities and operations, really amounts to union of substance or admission of deity. Can Three share the

very same divine substance, remain distinct yet remain in unity, without being equal to each other? No; if each is identical with the others in substance, whatever is affirmed of God must be affirmed of each; one is not greater than the others, merely distinct in terms of its relation to them. It is possible, then, to impose a logical sequence, in the manner which Newman suggests, on the events leading from the hierarchical to the co-equal views of the Trinity, as we look back upon them. In no way does it seem an unnatural development.

It is extremely difficult to determine whether the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity was "anticipated" in any concrete manner, as Newman's fifth note would suggest, in preceding doctrines. Early writers such as Irenaeus, in designating the Son fully divine and fully God,<sup>1</sup> and Tertullian, in remarking that "'God is the name for the substance, that is, the divinity,'"<sup>2</sup> sound as if they are foreshadowing developments to come; but how much coincidence and how much actual "anticipation" is involved in such occasions one cannot say. There are at least those "coincidences," however. Newman, it should be added, does not stress this note as heavily as the others as a test of the genuineness of a development in doctrine.

We will now ask whether the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity acts conservatively upon its past, in accord with Newman's sixth note; that is, whether it conserves antecedent developments and also illustrates and corroborates them. It

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<sup>1</sup> Kelly, p. 107.

<sup>2</sup> Tertullian, Adv. Hermogenes.3., quoted in Ibid., p. 114.

is evident in such official Church statements as the Creeds, which were added to but never contradicted, that the process of Trinitarian development was fairly straightforward. Terms and clauses such as "begotten of the Father before all ages," of "one" substance "with" the Father, or proceeding from the Father "and the Son," were added to clarify obscure issues or represent new doctrines, but not to nullify any prior position, or at least any infallibly proclaimed position.

Finally, we must inquire about the "chronic vigour" of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity. Since it is still the accepted version in the Roman Catholic Church, we must assuredly recognize its duration. Those Trinitarian and Christological theories condemned as heresies by the Church, we may add, were for the most part short-lived.

## Conclusion

Newman's seven notes, as we have applied them, certainly attest to the genuineness of the development of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity. The doctrine, when we look at its history, preserves a particular "type" under various external forms, and likewise holds continually to certain internal principles. It exhibits a power of assimilation in its ability to incorporate new elements of truth which preserve and clarify the unity of the whole even as they serve to expand it. Viewing that process of assimilation from another perspective, the progress of the doctrine's development seems but a natural unfolding of various aspects of the idea, and the conclusions they imply; that is, we may assign a logical sequence to the stages of development. Some early suggestions seem to hint at its later conclusions. The doctrine's primitive elements remain uncompromised during the course of development as they are strengthened, illuminated, and even, in a sense, completed by additions. The resilient continuance of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity speaks for itself.

Such evidence argues for the logical probability of the genuineness of the doctrine so long as we approach it from the standpoint of trust on the basis of faith which Newman presumes. One who did not accept the preliminary presupposition that God placed a deposit of faith in our midst which contained a kernel of Trinitarian truth, expected it to grow to fullness, and pro-

vided for its growth and our recognition of it, or who, unconvinced of the weight of such antecedent probabilities, met the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity suspiciously, demanding a logical demonstration of its genuineness as a development, would most likely remain unsatisfied after an application of Newman's notes such as the one herein performed.

Newman himself recognized that those not predisposed in behalf of Christianity would encounter difficulty in finding enough evidence to convince them of his case, or difficulty in finding a certain type of evidence. He did not set out to satisfy them, however:

I may seem in these remarks to be preparing the way for a broad admission of the absence of any sanction in primitive Christianity in behalf of its medieval form, but I do not make them with this intention. Not from misgivings of this kind, but from the claims of a sound logic, I think it right to insist, that, whatever early testimonies I may bring in support of later developments of doctrine, are in great measure brought ex abundante, a matter of grace, not of compulsion. The onus probandi is with those who assail a teaching which is, and has long been, in possession. As for positive evidence in our behalf, they must take what they can get, if they cannot get as much as they might wish, inasmuch as antecedent probabilities, as I have said, go very far towards dispensing with it.<sup>1</sup>

Newman intended his notes not as a logically compelling series of proofs for the unbeliever, but as a set of tests meant to satisfy the faithful of the reasonableness of the assumption that the doctrines of the Catholic Church are genuine developments of the depositum.

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<sup>1</sup>

Newman, p. 133.

How well does Newman's method perform what he intends as its purpose? Granting, again, certain antecedent probabilities in favor of developments in Christian doctrine, it performs very well. Certain of his notes are perhaps better applied to the organic whole of Christianity than to an individual doctrine: preservation of type, for instance, or "chronic vigour," since the instance of these in a number of interrelated doctrines argues more powerfully for the genuineness of the network than of its particular elements. The evidence accumulated through the application of the notes has more cogency when taken as a whole--we have described Newman's method as an "accumulation of probability"--than any individual point displays. Overall, however, Newman's notes provide a thorough and reasonable test of the genuineness of the doctrine of the co-equal Trinity for the individual who desires not a logical demonstration, but a final reaffirmation of this fundamental tenet of Catholicism.

The purpose of this study, as initially stated, has been to examine the development of the doctrine of the Trinity from its second-century conception to its sixth-century statement. It should be mentioned, however, that the co-equal view of the Trinity as presented by Augustine has not satisfied all Roman Catholic theologians. Karl Rahner, for instance, seems to argue for the doctrine of co-equality without coinherence.<sup>1</sup> Yet the on-going Trinitarian debate does not threaten the conclusion of our study; in fact, it strengthens it. It is

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<sup>1</sup>  
Karl Rahner, The Trinity, trans. Joseph Donceel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1970), pp. 82-90.

a further affirmation of the genuineness of the process of development in the Trinity that the doctrine continues to demand attention, to expand and mature. "The idea never was that throve and lasted," says Newman, "yet...incorporated nothing from its external sources."<sup>1</sup> "A power of development is a proof of life, not only in its essay, but especially in its success."<sup>2</sup> We should not expect the doctrine to remain forever constant while men keep questioning and contemplating the data of their faith. That it does not, according to Newman, speaks only in its favor.

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<sup>1</sup> Newman, p. 190.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

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