## CONTENTS

Biblical Abbreviations  
Prologue  
Foreword

### PART ONE

**FUNDAMENTAL DOGMATICS**

| Introduction | 3 |
| Revelation | 3 |
| Faith | 5 |
| Introduction to the Notion of Revelation and Its Theological Development | 6 |
| The First Stage of the Elaboration of the Theological Concept of Revelation: From the Council of Trent (1545–1563) to Vatican I (1869–1870) | 7 |
| The Second Stage of the Elaboration of the Theological Concept of Revelation: From Vatican I (1869–1870) to Vatican II (1962–1965) | 9 |

### CHAPTER 1

**Revelation in the Old Testament**  

| I. Revelation and the Word of God | 13 |
| II. The Creative Word: Natural or Cosmic Revelation | 16 |
| III. Supernatural or Historical Revelation | 19 |
| A. Primitive Revelation | 20 |
| B. The Word of the Covenant | 21 |
| C. The Prophetic Word | 24 |
CHAPTER 2
Christ, Fullness of the Revelation of God 27

I. Christ, Fullness of the Creative Word 28
   A. Creation Has Been Made in View of Christ 29
   B. The Humanity of Christ, Fullness of Creation 31
   C. The New Creation in Christ 32

II. Christ, Fullness of the Word of the Covenant 36

III. Christ, Fullness of the Prophetic Word 40

IV. The Fullness of Revelation and the Fullness of Time 41

CHAPTER 3
Revelation and the Church 45

I. The Transmission of Revelation in the Church and by the Church 45
   A. Revelation Ended with the Apostles 46
   B. The Church: Summoned and Engendered by the Word of God 47

   C. The Church Presents the Word of God to Men 49
      1. Tradition and Scripture 49
      2. Tradition and the Magisterium 53

   D. The Apostolic Church and the Post-Apostolic Church 56

II. The Infallibility of the Church and Her Infallible Magisterium 58
   A. The Infallibility of the Church “In credendo” and “In docendo” 59

   B. The “Sensus Fidei” of the People of God and the Magisterium 61

   C. Extension of the Infallibility of the Church 64

III. Immutability and Development of Dogmas 66
   A. Dogma and its Immutability 66

   B. Dogmatic Development in the Church 69
Contents vii

C. Historicity and Permanent Value of Dogmatic Formulas 71
D. The Interpretation of Dogmatic Formulas 74

CHAPTER 4
Theological Reflection on Revelation 78

I. Revelation as the Communication of God in the Word 78
A. The Essence and Characteristics of Historical Revelation 78
B. Revelation and Revealed Truth 81
C. Human Mediation in Revelation 84
II. Revelation and History 86
III. Revelation and Salvation 89
IV. Revelation, the Church, and the Vocation to Sanctity 90

CHAPTER 5
The Relationship Between Scripture and Tradition 95

I. Biblical Testimony 95
II. Reflection of Christian Authors 97
A. Scripture and Tradition according to the Fathers of the Church 98
B. Theology Prior to the Council of Trent 101
C. The Council of Trent and Post-Tridentine Theology 104
D. The Theology of the Twentieth Century and Vatican Council II 108
III. Conclusion 111
A. Unity and Distinction 111
B. Interdependence 112
C. Relationship with Regards to Material Content 113
CHAPTER 6
Faith in God According to the Bible 116

I. The Faith of Abraham 116
   A. Faith as Obedience to God 117
   B. Faith as Confidence and Abandonment in God’s Hands 118
   C. Faith as Fidelity to God 120

II. Supernatural Faith: Participation in God’s Self-knowledge 121
   A. The Intellectual Dimension of Biblical Faith 121
   B. Faith and Truth according to the Bible: The Object of Supernatural Faith 123

III. Wisdom and Biblical Faith 126

CHAPTER 7
Theological Reflection about Biblical Faith 130

I. Faith as an Interior Gift of Revelation 130
   A. Indications in the New Testament 131
   B. Theological Reflection 132

II. Faith as Man’s Response to Revelation: The Act of Faith 136
   A. Intelligence and the Will in the Act of Faith 137
   B. Grace and Freedom in the Act of Faith 139
   C. The Certitude of Faith 140

III. The Theological, Christological, and Ecclesiastical Character of Faith in the New Testament 141
   A. Theological Character of Faith 142
   B. Christological Character of Faith 143
   C. Ecclesiastical Character of Faith 144
CHAPTER 8
The Communal and Personal Dimensions of the Faith

I. Faith and Person
   A. The Absolute Characteristic of the Personal Adherence of Those Who Believe with Supernatural Faith
   B. Personal Character of the Believed Truth in Supernatural Faith
   C. The Radical Transformation of the Believer

II. Faith and the Communion of Persons
   A. The Collective Response of Supernatural Faith in the Old Testament: Israel as a Nation of Believers
   B. The Communal Response to God in the New Testament: The Church as Subject of Faith
   C. Ecclesiality: The Response of Christian Faith

CHAPTER 9
Faith and Works

I. The Fullness of Mary’s Faith in Response to Her Vocation
   A. Obedience, Confidence, and Fidelity to Christ in Mary’s Faith Response
   B. The Efficacy of Mary’s Response of Faith for the Good of the Church

II. Works of Faith
   A. The Root of the Operative Dynamism of Christian Faith
      1. The Relationship between the Operative Capacity of Faith and Adherence to the Creating and Saving Word
      2. The Coherence between Doctrine and Conduct in the Life of Christians
      3. The Eschatological Tension of Supernatural Faith
B. Specific Actions of Faith:
To Be Personally Shaped in Christ and
to Collaborate with Him in the Work of Redemption 168
1. Christ, Teacher and Model 169
2. The “Actions of Faith” 169
3. Faith as Discernment of the Divine Will,
   and the Willingness to Follow God’s Wishes 170
4. Identification with Christ
   and Participation in His Mission:
The Believer as Disciple and Apostle 171

III. Faith and Prayer 172
A. The Structure of Faith and the Dialogue of Prayer 172
B. Revelation of the Trinity in Christ and in Prayer 174
C. The Filial, Personal, and Community Character of Prayer 175
D. Prayer, Freedom, and Conversion 176

PART TWO
FUNDAMENTALS OF APOLOGETICS

Introduction 181

CHAPTER 10
The Object and History of Apologetics 184

I. The Dialogue of Faith with Non-Christian Culture
   and Thought in the Second through Fifth Centuries 187
   A. The Apologists of the Second Century 188
   B. The Apologetics of the Alexandrians in the Third Century 190
   C. The Apologetics of Existential Character:
The Testimonies of the Martyrs
   and the Writings of St. Augustine 192
II. The Deepening of the Dialogue between Faith and Reason during the Second Millennium 195

A. Reason before Believing: A General Approach to Credibility 197

B. Signs and Credibility of Revelation 200
   1. The Medieval Doctors 201
   2. The Protestant Reformers 202
   3. Classical Apologetics 204
   4. The Birth of the Sciences of Religion 206
   5. The Study of Revelation from New Perspectives: Fundamental Theology 208
   6. The Renewal of Apologetics 209

C. Fideism: Denial of the Possibility to Show the Credibility of Christianity 211

D. A Particular Case of Fideism: The Radical Distinction between the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith 213

E. The Phenomenon of Non-belief and Atheism 218

F. Reason after Believing: A General Vision of its Relation with Faith 222

III. Christian Dialogue with Other Religions at the Beginning of the Third Millennium 224

A. Religion in the Theological-fundamental Perspective 225

B. The Value of Religions 229

C. The Christocentrism of Revelation and Salvation 232

CHAPTER 11
Credibility of the Word of God in the Old Testament 236

I. The Great and Admirable Salvific Actions of God in Favor of Israel 236

A. The Proper Character of These Events as Reasons to Believe: To Be a Sign 237
B. The Liberation from Egypt as a Reason for Believing
   and as a Sign of Faith 240
   1. Exodus as a Historical Event 240
   2. Analysis of the Faith Journey Carried Out
      by the Israelites in the Exodus 241
   3. The Attribution of the Victory over Egypt to Yahweh 242

II. The Predictions of the Prophets and
    the Congruence of Their Lives and Teachings 245

A. The Vocation and Mission of these Holy Men Sent by God 246
   1. Biblical Terms used to Designate the Prophets
      Sent by Yahweh according to Their Mission 247
   2. Past, Present, and Future in the Mission
      of the Prophets Sent by Yahweh 248

B. Criteria for Distinguishing the Prophets Sent by Yahweh 248

CHAPTER 12
Credibility of Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, Son of God 253

I. The Presentation and Credibility of Jesus
   as Someone Sent by God to Save Mankind 256

A. The Self-Representation of Jesus of Nazareth
   as Sent by God to Establish the Kingdom 257
   1. Characteristics of the Expectancy of the Savior
      by the Jews in the Time of Jesus and Jesus’ Desire
      to Present Himself as the Messiah 258

B. Application to Jesus of the Criteria to Recognize
   the True Envoys of God 261
   1. Conformity and Coherence between the Doctrine
      of Jesus and the Doctrine of the Law and Prophets 262
   2. The Conformity and Coherence of Jesus’ Conduct
      with the Precepts of the Law 264
   3. The Prophecies of Jesus 265
C. The Saving Miracles Worked by Jesus, Signs of His Mission 269
   1. Analysis of the Historicity of the Saving Miracles Performed by Jesus of Nazareth 269
   2. The Miracles Performed by Jesus and the Saving Events Performed by Yahweh 271

D. The Merciful Love of Jesus for Men: A Definite Motive for Believing in Him as Messiah and Savior 273

II. The Authenticity and Value of Jesus’ Testimony about His Filiation to God the Father 278
   A. Testimony with Words: The Presentation of Jesus as Son of God 280
   B. Testimony with Actions: Jesus’ Miracles as Signs of His Person 282
   C. The Testimony of His Filial Obedience until His Death upon the Cross 284

III. Fullness of the Revelation of the Divinity of Jesus: His Glorious Resurrection 285
   A. The Resurrection of Jesus according to the Testimony of the Apostles: Historical Fact and Mystery 286
   B. Critical Discussion about the Historical Authenticity of the Information in the New Testament about the Resurrection 288
      1. Analysis of the Historicity of the Empty Tomb 290
      2. Analysis of the Historicity of the Apparitions 293
   C. Resurrection: The Highest Point of Historical Revelation and the Definitive Sign of Faith 300
      1. The Pre-Paschal Faith of the Apostles: Adherence to Jesus as Messiah and Son of God 300
      2. Paschal Faith: Absolute Personal Adherence to Jesus as the Messiah and Son of the Living God 302
      3. From Pre-Paschal to Paschal Faith: The Resurrection as a Definitive Sign 305
CHAPTER 13
The Credibility of the Church and her Testimony about Jesus of Nazareth 309

I. The Testimony of the Church about Jesus of Nazareth 311
   A. Moral and Theological Worth of the Testimony of the Apostles 311
      1. Moral Worth of the Apostolic Testimony about Jesus 311
      2. Theological Worth of the Apostolic Testimony 312
   B. The Value of the Testimony of Christians 314
      1. The Preaching of the Church’s Doctrine Has Always Proposed the Apostles’ Teachings about Jesus of Nazareth 315
      2. The Preaching and Evangelizing Action of the Church Has Always Been Accompanied by Signs and Miracles 316
      3. The Church Has Always Confirmed Her Preaching of Jesus and His Doctrine with Her Own Life 316
   C. The Value of a Massive and Persistent Testimony on a Personal and Collective Level 318

II. The Church as a Sign of Faith 319
   A. Theological Responses to the Issue of the Credibility of the Church 319
   B. The Church as a Sign of Faith and Reason to Believe in God and in Christ 320
      1. The Church as a Sign of God and His Saving Action 322
      2. The Church as a Sign of Definitive Salvation 323
      3. The Church as a Sign of the Crucified and Resurrected Christ 325
      4. The Church as a Sign of Christ that also Refers to His Passion and Resurrection 327
   C. Efficacy and Perceptibility of the Church as a Sign of Faith 327

III. The Contribution of Each Christian to Ecclesiastical Credibility 329
CHAPTER 14
A Reflection about the Relationship of Revelation, Faith, and Credibility 332

I. Credibility as a Gift of Revelation: Its Fundamental Structure 333
   A. The Anthropological Roots of Faith: The Apologetics of Immanence 334
      1. Christ and the Search for the Sense of Our Own Existence 336
      2. Christ, and What Man Is and What He Aspires to Be 339
      3. Saving Gestures of God and the Human Hope of Attaining True Happiness 341
   B. The Theology of Miracles 342
      1. The Need for Facts that Confirm the Truth of Words 342
      2. Historical Development of the Theology of Miracles 344
      3. The Discernment of Miracles 351
   C. The Theology of Prophecies 353

II. The Perception of Credibility: An Intelligent and Free Process 355
   A. The Role of Freedom in the Experience of Miracles 356
   B. The Role of Freedom in the Personal and Progressive Assimilation of Miracles 358
   C. The Role of Freedom in the Convergent and Unitary Integration of Miracles and other Spiritual Elements of Persons 359

III. The Genesis of the Act of Faith 361
   A. The Theological Issue of Analysis Fidei 362
   B. The Concurrence of Reason, Freedom, and Grace in the Genesis of Faith 365

IV. Harmony of Reason and Faith in the Life of the Believer 367

Endnotes 373
Bibliography 429
Index 463
Index of Authors 473
CHAPTER 1

REVELATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The divine plan of salvation begins with Creation: God created the world from nothing, brought creatures into being, and gave each one of them unique characteristics. In this chapter, we will study how God reveals himself via creation and how, on the basis of this first manifestation, he communicates with mankind by means of his intervention in history.

I. Revelation and the Word of God

In the Old Testament, there is no specific term or concept that corresponds to revelation. Yet, there are several ways employed to make reference to God’s intervention in human history. Among them, the term that most clearly represents a revelation of God to man is, the divine speech, that is, the word of Yahweh.\(^1\)

*Word* in the Hebrew language is *debar*, or *dabar*. Its origins are uncertain; its corresponding verbal root could indicate the idea of “being behind of” and “push,” or “to express what is inside” and so would mean “to talk” (and think), as well as “to produce.”\(^2\)

The word *debar* in the Old Testament has a broader meaning than our term *word*. Sometimes it means a locution that expresses an idea, a thought. At other times, it means either the thing to which that locution refers or to an action or an event. For instance, *dibre Selomo*
(cf. 1 Kgs 11: 41) does not mean “the words of Solomon” but “the acts or works of Solomon.”

The word has, therefore, its own efficacy, not only to signify—i.e., to make known, etc. (*noetic value*)—but sometimes it also has power to carry out what it means (*dynamic power*). Examples of this double dimension of the word in the Old Testament are the blessings and curses, which, once they have been pronounced, have a sort of efficacy of their own. They cannot be retracted (cf. Gen 27: 33–35; Jos 6: 26 related to 1 Kgs 16: 34).

In the Greek translation of the Septuagint, *debar* is sometimes translated as *logos* and sometimes as *rhéma*. The first principally means the noetic value; the second, the dynamic value of the word because, besides meaning “word,” *rhéma* means “thing.” The original Greek text of the New Testament uses both *logos* and *rhéma* to express the Hebrew idea of *debar*. On the other hand, the Latin text of the Vulgate occasionally translates *rhéma* as *res*, “thing” (cf. Gen 18: 14), and at other times it is translated as *verbum*, “word” (cf. Lk 1: 37).

This double dimension of *word* is eminently shown in the Old Testament, when it deals with the Word of God (*Debar Yahvé*, translated to Greek as *ho logos tou Theou* or *tó rhema tou Theou*). So, we read in Isaiah 55: 10–11, “For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and return not thither but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and prosper in the thing for which I sent it.”

The Word of God is revealing; it communicates knowledge to men. It is also effective, which is to say, the Word of God influences human history. It is the cause of concrete events, conducting history and, moreover, it carries out the history of Israel as the people of God.

Divine Revelation is united to the Word of God in the Old Testament in such manner as to make the rest of the divine manifestations (theophanies, dreams, etc.) ways of transmitting the Word.