

# Bernard Lonergan and Avery Dulles on the Development of Doctrine

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this paper will be to compare the sense of the development of doctrine based on Bernard Lonergan and Avery Dulles. An explanation of the thought of Frederick Crowe, SJ, and William Loewe will represent an application for the Lonergan position. Notably, the thought of Crowe will be explored from his *Theology of the Christian Word*, and the idea of Loewe will be explained from his essay, "Jesus the Savior: Soteriology and the Stages of Meaning." The thought of Avery Dulles will be analyzed based on his work, *Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The history of Christianity has been very dynamic as faith in Jesus Christ has spread across continents and centuries, encountering and shaping cultures and societies (Reynolds, 1991). Since the early days of Christianity, the preservation and transmission of an authentic understanding of Jesus, discipleship, Scripture, and other facets of faith have been of utmost importance. Many of the early creedal statements were, in fact, precise clarifications of contested matters of faith so that Christians would know what beliefs were acceptable expressions of beliefs in such cases (Bennett, 2021).

As Christians today, we are concerned with questions along the same line: are our faith and theology today continuous and consistent with the faith of the earliest followers of Jesus (Siberine & Kimball, 2019)? Clearly, theology has gone through various stages and used different methods throughout history (Tomalin et al., 2019). If we accept that there has been a development of doctrine, then the Catholic faith is not just a brick handed from one generation to the next (Ciraulo, 2021). Certain core elements exist, but a continual reflection on faith has added content (Watkins, 2020). As present members of the Church, we are also faced with a question in the present day of how theology can go forward, and our sense of the development of doctrine can affect the method we choose (Cessario, 1995).

The purpose of this paper will be to compare the sense of development of doctrine based in Bernard Lonergan and Avery Dulles. An explanation of the thought of Frederick Crowe, SJ, and William Loewe will represent an application of the Lonergan position. Particularly, the thought of Crowe will be explored from his *Theology of the Christian Word* and the thought of Loewe will be explained from his essay, "Jesus the Savior: Soteriology and the Stages of Meaning." The thought of Avery Dulles will be analyzed based on his work, *Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*.

## 2. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 2.1. Frederick E. Crowe, S.J.

Frederick Crowe sets out to map the concept of the “word of God” from the time of Jesus until today. As he points out, the word of God has in fact been interpreted from the beginning of Christian evangelization, when Christians began to preach the message of salvation beyond the local Israelite context, encountering a variety of people and cultures (Riley, 1980). It took a long development of Christianity before we could be forced to reflect on this process. In faith, we see Scripture as unbounded by time, considering it to be as true as ever (Parker, 1978). Yet, we know that “any word spoken by and through a human agent is bound to betray the particular conditions of the human speaker” (Dulles, 1972). This point can become a source of debate on receiving the Scriptures. In sum, Crowe succinctly states that “any community that exists across space and time but claims continuity with a beginning long ago and far away is...going to have to face the problem of reaching across that time and space to make an ancient and distant word effective in the here and now” (Egan, 2007).

Hence, Crowe takes up this task in seven chapters representing seven development stages. Of course, as believers, we desire this process to be authentically continuous so that our faith may be well-grounded. Crowe’s intended purpose is mainly to “write a history of a concept” (Cassidy, 2006). Crowe states that in the past two-thousand years, some stages represent more significant shifts than others. This essay mainly focuses on the latter stages presented by Crowe which lead to the present time because they are momentous in the various challenges encountered.

#### 2.1.1 An Overview of Development

First, we can see that there have been different approaches to what development in theology means, which often concerns Scriptural interpretation. Looking to the earliest times of the Church, including the Gospels, we can see that the New Testament interprets the Old Testament in light of Christ. Further developments of the interpretation of Scripture responded to other needs, such as how “allegorical interpretation” of the Old Testament was used to defend its integrity when confronted by Marcion and others who tried to divide the God of the Old Testament from the New. The various methods of Scriptural interpretation developed into the “fourfold meaning” of Scripture (Dulles, 1981).

Apart from developments restricted to Scripture itself, Crowe shows Athanasius who saw the introduction of “*homoousios*” in the vocabulary of the Church as legitimately necessary in the face of conflicting interpretations of Scripture; for Athanasius *homoousios* was a term that expressed what was already found in Scripture. Therefore, Athanasius’ sense of development is very limited. Crowe points out that Augustine’s approach is similar, as he did not see a change or addition to doctrine, but a growth in understanding of existing doctrines (Dulles, 1991). Much later, Newman was faced with the fact that there truly were developments that were more significant in how they seemed to change from previous doctrine. Still, he also sought to reconcile these changes, concluding that there is a “virtuality contained in the [more fundamental] idea” (Crowe’s words). Crowe sees Newman’s thought on development as an important step toward the present theological conversation. One of the essential keys that follow for Crowe regards our understanding of history.

#### 2.1.2 Crowe on the Word of God Through History

In the sixth stage of development, explained in Chapter Six, “The Primary Word: Jesus Christ Yesterday and Today,” Crowe treats a development in recent centuries that seeks to interpret history as a word of God. He describes a variety of senses of the significance of history from the Fathers of the Church. Still, he then focuses on a more recent development, represented by the thought of Wolfhart Pannenberg.

To give a broad scope of Crowe's description of history as the word of God, we can say that an essential understanding of God's word and action is the sense that God speaks through the events and course of history. In this view, there is a highly significant culmination in the coming of Jesus Christ. Still, it is an event in broader history that can also tell us about God's actions and relationship with humanity. We already see a sense of interpreting historical events in the Old Testament, such as Psalms that describe to us that victory against enemies shows that God has "made his judgment known from heaven" (Dulles, 1996). The Exodus and Babylonian captivity (Crowe only mentions Exodus) are also vital signs of the people's relationship with God, manifested in their condition as a whole people. According to Crowe, though, the Old Testament understanding "shows history as a source for our knowledge of God" but "does not articulate the notion of...history as a medium [which God uses] to speak a word to us" (Benac, 2022).

Crowe points out two different approaches to the action of God in events:

Saint Thomas Aquinas formulated a principle that is available to us for a theology of history as God's word, but he did not apply it widely. The spiritual writers applied the principle to every least event in public or private life, but they lacked any means of controlling their interpretation except that supplied by their own piety; this was quite sufficient when it was merely a matter of seeing God's will in every event and accepting it obediently; but it was quite inadequate for any specific interpretation of God's meaning or for any positive action that God might be supposed to be enjoining on the individual person.

In short, whereas the tradition of Christian spirituality shows an inclination toward seeing God at work in daily life, it is more challenging to definitively come to the point of interpreting public historical events as to what it shows of God's intention. Speaking of history as God's word needs a philosophical grounding that can be used theologically. This philosophical grounding is found in Pannenberg, who spoke of the challenge of first understanding history in what it was in itself, and then being able to bridge the context to what it means to us; for example, a text of Scripture needs to be understood in its context before it can be used to comment on a different context (McGrath, 2016). In this sense, there are two 'horizons' that can converge within a broader horizon. This sets a philosophical relationship between the person of the present and the events of history. Crowe elaborates on this in much more detail.

The next step is theological, which Crowe proposes within this framework. A whole word of God can be identified with "the...realities of creation" and thus "the totality of history" which we could say is the broad horizon. Within this fundamental word, various founts of God's word such as "prophecy, doctrine, scriptures" and so on are human expressions that seek to convey "the inexhaustible meaning of this primary word" (Cessario, 1995). The same is true of Jesus Christ, as we can see that the various authors of the New Testament all express a message about Christ and salvation in various ways. Crowe points out that this view of history and development significantly diverges from Newman's thought because it does not necessitate a development of doctrine restricted to the potentialities within revelation (such as the model of a seed that grows and manifests what was potentially contained within it). Instead, "We have the possibility of going back to the beginning whenever we wish...with a new set of great ideas". According to this view, it seems that we are not restricted to developing what has already been created, but can go back to the root sources with new paths and methods of interpretation.

Finally, Crowe notes a problem of the discernment of God's action in history: we have a certain faithful trust in the New Testament authors as they present Christ to us, but it seems hard to come to any similar kind of trust in a present attempt to discern history. He states, "The array of sciences I have invoked is a far cry from the word of prophet or evangelist" (Reynolds, 1991).

### 2.1.3 The Path Forward for Crowe

At the culmination of his presentation of a history of the word of God, Crowe proposes his vision for the path forward. As was noted, there is a temporal gap between our present reality and the beginning of Christianity, the origin of the New Testament Scriptures, etc. Yet, "We need a present word spoken to us in our immediacy." Crowe's path forward has a theological basis, noting that the Father has "one salvific plan" which has been effected through "the Son and Spirit" (Riley, 1980). We could understand this through the events of the Incarnation and Pentecost. There is also a complementarity of objective and subjective, interior and exterior: Jesus' ministry had obvious objectivity in the way people saw him acting; of course, the "Spirit...[has had] public manifestations too," such as in Acts of the Apostles, "but he is also given inwardly to the individual person". Crowe relates this to the variety of Holy Spirit spiritual gifts that St. Paul lists in 1 Corinthians 12, which are distributed in diverse ways among believers. The working of the Holy Spirit becomes central to the path forward for Crowe.

Crowe elaborates on Lonergan's philosophical and theological developments, which posits the importance of a relationship between the internal and external. A purely internal approach to the word of God would become very subjective. Crowe cites Lonergan as stating that "not only the inner word that is God's gift of his love but also the outer word of the religious tradition comes from God". Therefore, we can sum up that God's word is manifested in Jesus Christ, in Scriptures that seek to express the story and meaning of Christ, in God's actions in history, before and after Christ, and in the interpretation of God's action in history. The possibility of "authentic interpretation...is the Holy Spirit present interiorly" (Parker, 1978).

Crowe also suggests the possibility of the contribution of various sciences to the theological task of the present, positing that his model of history as revelatory allows "a high degree of pluralism in the interpretations, approaches, traditions, sequences of thought". In the present time, it seems to suggest that the variety of sciences and philosophies could all relevantly contribute to expressing something of the meaning of Christ:

I would say that the meaning of the Son is a further dimension of his intelligibility; it is that intelligibility understood not just as a creation with its inner nature and laws, but understood as a word that is meant. And that intelligibility is subject to investigation by the array of sciences that we can invoke but Saint Thomas could not. Biology, psychology, sociology, political science, and the rest – all of them throw light on what Jesus was and what God means to say to us through and in him. Again, there are the phenomenological, existentialist, personalist philosophies that can be brought to bear on the intelligibility of Jesus and consequently his meaning for us. Third, there are the new theologies, the theology of work, the theology of the world, the theology of prayer...(Dulles, 1996).

So, Crowe's proposition for the present moment seems based in new theological methods and the guidance of the Holy Spirit who speaks internally to the believer.

### 2.1.4 Some Conclusions on Theology of the Christian Word

To sum up some thoughts on Crowe's work, he presents well the challenge presented by the temporal distance between Jesus' time and our time, which is also confronted with the belief that God speaks to us now through the faith received in Scripture and tradition which we have received. Crowe also expresses well how this historical awareness is more recent. For a long time, development occurred without a focused reflection on the development itself. Crowe also points out that God's word is also expressed through the events of history. Still, his story of a theory of new interpretations of history seems to seriously falter on the point that such interpretations in the present seem to lack an authoritative ground that would tell us we ought to believe or act on some particular interpretation.

Crowe points out well the Holy Spirit's role in helping us correctly interpret God's revelation. But, here also, Crowe's presentation seems to have a danger of becoming too subjective. From this point, we can continue with William Loewe, who also represents the Lonergan position.

## 2.2. William P. Loewe

In "Jesus the Savior: Soteriology and the Stages of Meaning," Loewe's fundamental question regards whether "the history of theology" exhibits "more or less successful inculturations of the Christian religion" in different contexts, or whether there is "a thread of progress" that is not mere inculturation. In other words, is theology a brick handed down that never changes, or is the contrary true? To demonstrate that theology has progressed, he proposes a series of examples in soteriology that represent different stages and methods across history, leading to the present day. Each stage of development in theology responds to various questions and cultural factors of the time. Development occurs because new contexts bring new questions and challenges that previous theologies had not addressed. Loewe links these historical periods to Lonergan's stages of meaning. Here, we will examine the fundamental features of each stage Loewe proposes. Each stage has some sense of conversion, discipleship, and a method that responds to a context. Finally, we will consider Loewe's proposal for the present moment in theology and conclude with some comments on what is significant in Loewe's approach (Dulles, 1972).

Loewe begins with the event of Christ himself, who proposed the Kingdom of God with a promise of final freedom from evil and a 'fulfillment' of all that the human heart longs for. Jesus called people towards a conversion of discipleship which would manifest the values of the Kingdom he proposed. Finally, Jesus Christ died, and his resurrection was a sign of the fulfillment of the promise to come for all those who will continue to follow him. With the coming of the Holy Spirit and the impulse to share faith in Jesus with others, the first Christians "began the Christological process," which is undoubtedly true of the New Testament texts produced by the Christian communities (Egan, 2007). In this context, the method of interpretation of Christ was grounded in the faith they had inherited from their Jewish tradition, which provided many keys for understanding Christ. Furthermore, in the historical context, such explanations were full of significance to those who heard the proclamation of Christ. Loewe describes Christology in this stage as "symbolic narratives" and Soteriology as grounded in "image and metaphor." As for Lonergan's stages of meanings, Loewe describes this period as exhibiting the "common sense" stage, which "designates the development of consciousness through which whole societies and their cultures are generated." This common sense effectively transmitted appeals to conversion and discipleship in this context. From these early years burst forth the process of intense reflection on faith.

Loewe proposes Irenaeus as a model of further development in theological reflection. Such reflection on faith was urgently needed in the context of the diffusion of Gnosticism. In response to Gnostic meta-narratives that interpreted Christ according to their esoteric beliefs, Irenaeus proposed "an equally comprehensive counternarrative whose plot was at once wholly traditional and equally an expression of his own creative originality" (Cassidy, 2006). For Irenaeus, salvation does not depend on any "single element of the story...but rather the entire story, each part of which draws its significance in relation to the whole". Thus, the context of the Gnostic narrative that deviated from orthodox faith created the need for an appropriate method to respond to the challenge. In this case, it was a narrative that clarified Christian belief consistently with its origins. Overall, still close temporally to the beginnings of Christianity, the method does not appear exceptionally different from the previous stage, which used images, symbols, metaphors, and the narrative of the people of Israel. On the other hand, we could look to the history of the early Christological councils for a clear example of the need to clarify Christian faith in Hellenistic philosophical terms (although Loewe does not go into this topic). Such an example shows a clear difference from the earliest Christian proclamation of Christ and, thus, a significant development.

Next, jumping centuries down the road, Loewe shows how a new context produced questions that needed answers. He describes the matter briefly, indicating that Irenaeus's soteriological question was "What is the story?" but Anselm of Canterbury had to answer, 'How does it work?'. Both Anselm's questions and answers seem to be culturally and historically conditioned. Loewe describes the exigencies Anselm responds to as a question of "intelligibility." The images and stories that Christians had proposed were not necessarily convincing for those who had not inherited the Christian tradition and were not near the earlier Israelite context. So, Loewe states, Anselm has to show why "God became human." (Dulles, 1987). Anselm's response, therefore, is an explanation in a theoretical framework that shows why humans needed salvation and how Christ could save us. His theoretical method shows how metaphysically, human sin disturbs the order of the universe, thus dishonoring God, and how Christ's free self-offering is pleasing to God beyond the weight of human offense. Anselm's thought is further contextually influenced by feudal society (the political/social realm). Loewe mainly links the idea of satisfaction to Anselm's experience of "monastic spirituality and its practice of penance". Thus, the context called for a metaphysical answer, and the response is likewise contextually texture. Although the method is different from the previous narrative approach, Loewe claims that there is, in fact, continuity because "theory exists...for the sake of the narrative whose intelligibility it serves". It seems that Loewe means that for Anselm, answering his day's pressing questions was necessary before accepting the Christian narrative. Regarding Lonergan's framework, Anselm can represent a new stage of meaning expressed through theory (Dulles, 1991).

Next, Loewe pulls us closer to our present time through a subsequent stage represented by Martin Luther and Friedrich Schleiermacher. On the one hand, Luther represents a return to "symbolic discourse of religious experience." Still, on the other hand, the experience is different: it is not that of the early Christian in Palestine, but the experience of a Christian in Luther's time. In this context, conversion is seen as a "transformation of consciousness". The context of this development seems to be Luther's struggle, fearing a God he perceived as wrathful and finding redemption in a Savior who paid the price of sin. Schleiermacher takes up this path of personal religious experience of internal transformation in their relationship with Christ, along with noting the importance of "tradition and community...[which mediate] the redemptive activity of Christ" (Cassidy, 2006). In this way, Schleiermacher linked the internal conversion "evoked by Jesus...in His earthly ministry" with the conversion that occurs now through "the life of the Christian community". Yet, Loewe notes that Schleiermacher struggled to answer the question of continuity, regarding whether the present experience of Christianity faithfully carries forth what Christ accomplished; Loewe concludes that Schleiermacher, functioning within inadequate philosophical frameworks, could not pull through with a good answer (Dulles, 1991).

### **2.2.1 The Path Forward for Loewe**

Loewe concludes by proposing the present moment's needs to answer the soteriological question in our day effectively. Naturally, the needs are culturally conditioned, presenting challenges such as metaphysics that can restore "the objectivity of meaning and value" many have lost. Furthermore, he points out that the present prominence of psychology will have to be accounted for in trying to describe what conversion means. Interestingly, whereas he presented individuals who presented developments in theology, Loewe believes that "theology [in the present] must become both collaborative and interdisciplinary" and that it cannot privatize faith, but rather put it in conversation with "social forces" represented by various contextual theologies (Dulles, 1972).

### **2.2.2 Sub-conclusions on Loewe's Presentation**

Loewe presents the various stages of development in terms of temporal and cultural shifts that ask new questions not yet asked. This equally requires a new response. Therefore, development occurs naturally and must happen. As a reader, I would ask Loewe whether the changes in society that ask

further questions will necessarily lead theology down a more profound or insightful path. For example, Luther and Schleiermacher represent a shift towards interiority, but some of their theological developments also clashed with Catholic theology, such as the debate on justification. Finally, Loewe notes well that theology must be in the conversation among disciplines and various social forces to give a clear answer to the people of our time, which is consistent with the sense of development he previously presented.

### 2.3. Avery Dulles

The thought of Avery Dulles will be presented from some of his reflections in *Craft of Theology: From Symbol to System*. His thought will be organized by considering his sense of development, the sources he points to as necessary in theology, and his path forward for theology.

#### 2.3.1 Sense of Development

Unlike the works of Crowe and Loewe, the thought of Dulles on the development of doctrine will not be presented as a detailed analysis across the swath of history, from Jesus and early Christianity to the present. His sense of development will be explored within the context of recent centuries. In "Toward a Postcritical Theology," the first chapter of *Craft of Theology*, Dulles presents a general overview of theology in terms of 'precritical,' 'critical,' 'paracritical,' 'countercritical,' and 'post-critical.' These terms can be related to his description of various approaches to theology in the second chapter, which is propositional-cognitive, experiential-expressive, and ecclesial-transformative.

Dulles identifies Christian theology as precritical from the Fathers of the Church up until the rise of Criticism in the Enlightenment. To say that theology was precritical means that "criticism was not leveled at the canonical sources themselves". That is, developments of theology in these periods were evaluated based on "Scriptures and...the definitions of popes and councils". This can be related to Crowe's analysis that it took a long time before the question of development could even be considered, as development occurred naturally without questioning development itself. In the second chapter of *Craft of Theology*, Dulles describes various styles in which theology has been done. The Propositionalist-Cognitive approach can be temporally placed within Scholasticism and the precritical period. The theological lens saw doctrine as "informative propositions about objective realities" and revelation as information about God. Theology was "a deductive science" (Riley, 1980).

With the rise of the Enlightenment, criticism evaluated sources used as authoritative. Thus there is the rise of critical methods in theology that began to apply systematic methods to evaluate sources. This criticism was unsettling, and there were a rise of responses, such as the Kantian paracritical approach which wanted to protect theological doctrine from such criticism by stating that the purpose of theology was to "describe and analyze the dictates of religious feeling," whereas criticism could be limited to science. In terms of style of theology, this would correspond with Dulles' category of Experiential-Expressive theology, which saw doctrine as "expressive symbols of the inner sentiments of the faithful" and revelation as "privileged inner experiences". This also calls to mind Schleiermacher and Catholic Modernism.

Another reaction to criticism was the countercritical, which tried to use the rational program in defense of Christianity through logical proofs, such as the use of miracles and by seeking to prove the absolute historical truth of the Scriptures. Neo-Scholasticism falls into this category, applying the propositional-cognitive mode of theology again in a newer context. Dulles proposes postcriticism as the more recent stage, which questions some of the problems of criticism. Such problems include an inclination toward disbelief, an excessive subjectivity in criticism, and a neglect of how there is a "social dimension of knowledge. Dulles' proposition for a style of theology seeks to take up the postcritical task of correcting the excesses of criticism; he names his model of theology as Ecclesial-Transformative. In this style of theology, doctrine regards "communally authoritative rules of speech and behavior,"

and revelation is “a real and efficacious self-communication of God...to the believing community”(Cassidy, 2006).

### 2.3.2 Principles and Sources for Theological Development

Several fundamental principles seem to guide theological development in the thought of Avery Dulles. It was noted how Crowe firmly put the development of theology within the lens of the work of the Holy Spirit within Christians, in an internal discernment. When Dulles speaks of theology, he is not neglecting divine inspiration, but some of his key themes are geared toward structural and systematic approaches. For example, he states that “Theology is...a disciplined reflection on faith...[which] attempts to distinguish methodically between truth and illusion and to ground its affirmations on principles rather than on blind impulses” (Dulles, 1991). Another important principle for Dulles is the ecclesial reality, and participation in the life of the Church is essential for him, if one seeks to participate in theological efforts.

Some of the primary theological sources for Dulles are the liturgy, Scripture, tradition, and participation in the life of the Christian community itself. Scripture, naturally, is fundamental. In “The Uses of Scripture in Theology,” the fifth chapter of *Craft of Theology*, Dulles describes various methods used to interpret Scripture, finding value in many of them while also showing shortcomings of multiple methods. Given his proposal of a post-critical theology that balances criticism with an ecclesial-grounded faith commitment, his proposal for a Scriptural hermeneutic is not surprising: “My own present leaning would be toward a method that makes use of historical-critical studies to assure a solid foundation in the biblical sources themselves, but does so under the continuous guidance of tradition and magisterial teaching”. This hermeneutic expresses the fact that there was a value to criticism, which questioned traditional sources, but then seeks to balance the approach with ecclesial commitment.

Dulles also points to the importance of tradition in the Church, which he mainly describes in Chapter Six, “Tradition as a Theological Source.” Noting the variety of attitudes towards tradition and its relationship to Scripture from the time of the Council of Trent up to the present, he proposes a generally accepted sense of tradition in the theological sphere of our post-Vatican II reality. Within his list of ten generally accepted theses, he notes that the tradition of the Church itself made possible the establishment of a canon of Scriptures. In this sense, in conversation with Crowe, if we expect that God can speak to us through Scripture today, it is impossible to separate it from the fact that the Church first helped us to know that these particular texts can be trusted as conveying God’s message to us, thus showing the importance of tradition as we approach Scripture. Furthermore, Dulles points to tradition as the source that “provides an element of continuity in the development of Christian doctrine” (Placher, 2001).

Dulles also develops a lot of thought on the role of symbols in naturally transmitting meaning. This helps support his promotion of the liturgy as an essential source of theological development. Furthermore, symbols have the potential to not only speak to a person, but to teach a person by calling them to see matters in a new way, and effective religious symbols “serve to sensitize people to the presence of the divine in their own lives.

### 2.3.3 Dulles’ Path Forward in Theology

Dulles is open to continued development in theology and believes it necessary for “The good health of the Church”. He also finds it essential to seek a balanced approach that is both continuous with the past and creative, insofar as necessary, to work with present theological questions. Dulles’ approach also grounds the work of individual theologians by pointing out the need to review the magisterium who can give official approval of a proposal, along with the “second magisterium” of other theological scholars who can also share their opinions. This can relate to Loewe’s sense of the need for networking.

One of Dulles' contributions to a path forward is a response to the diversity of theological approaches: his observation is that various theologians speak of similar matters from different contexts, sometimes making it difficult to put them in conversation. So, he would propose synthesizing various theologies as models and bearing the fruits of each model. He offers to apply this method to particular fields of theology, and gives the example of ecclesiology, and he also uses this method in his approach to Scriptural study (Dulles, 1991).

### 3. CONCLUSION

Crowe does well to trace the development of theology and the sense of the word of God across the centuries. But, coming to the task of continuing in the present moment, it can be posited that Crowe faces difficulties of continuity and authority in the development of doctrine, which seem to stem from the lack of attention to an ecclesial sense in his proposition. Although Crowe describes Lonergan's sense of the necessity of public tradition that can give grounding to personal interpretations, it seems to not come across strongly enough in the wide view of Crowe's work. It seems crucial that if we have a sense of continuity of belief that can ground our faith, the Church provides that, even if we can point to failures in various points of the life of the Church. For example, Scripture could be interpreted in many ways, and we can find a variety of interpretations in the tradition of the Church. But, the tradition within the Church also provides a robust framework that can help show that specific interpretations are misguided (such as the prosperity Gospel). Also, Crowe's sense of starting a new theological development not grounded in previous developments seems to have some dangers. Crowe himself noted this. In one sense, we could say that this happened with critical Enlightenment methods, which appeared to be a rupture from previous thought. But in the end, such critical methods seem to have been incorporated well through a balanced approach, such as in historical criticism of Scripture that is now accepted in Catholic scholarship.

Loewe's analysis of development in theology is very well composed, showing the nature of social factors that cause a need of updating in theology to deal with new questions that had not previously been asked. He has a good sense of the need for collaboration in the present moment. Exploring the relationship between conversion and psychology looks pertinent to the present moment. Loewe, for his part, could also use some of the ecclesial sense that Dulles has. Dulles, for his part, grounds his sense of theological developments in the Church, but also notes a variety of shortcomings in the systems of the past. The theological task is also an open field, but he places clear boundaries by showing the necessary relationship with the magisterium and other theologians as theological work is done. He has a very rich explanation of the role of liturgy, symbol, Scripture, and tradition as sources for theology.

For example, we can see that the transmission of Sacramental life within the history of the Church also puts us in relationship with God here and now, and also with the foundation of the Church from the earliest times. We could say that even Sacraments have developed (such as the mode of reconciliation), yet they are grounded in the fundamental apostolic tradition. So, the Church seems essential in giving a foundation of continuity within any development of doctrine. Otherwise, we lose a reference point of authority, which is also a source of unity as Christians.

Perhaps a positive aspect of Crowe that was not explicit in the passages examined from Dulles would be that the Holy Spirit is not limited to the structures we typically use. Of course, the Holy Spirit works in the Church, and it is essential to remain in communion with the Church. But we also know that the Holy Spirit cannot be limited and may work or guide us unexpectedly. Nevertheless, even if the Holy Spirit may guide individual Christians towards something new, such developments can still be expected to have communal effects which would be appropriated through theological reflection within the Church.

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