

There are certain elements that are more important than others. Despite this fact, *both are necessary*. The entire faith, as will be seen, is structured in this way. The Tradition of Catholic thought has translated this vision with the two Latin conjugations *et-et* (both/and), which is contrasted with the other model of western Christianity, the protestant one, which instead focuses on an *aut-aut* (either/or). In the Catholic vision, however, to choose one aspect and exalt it to the point of denying its corresponding *synthetical* aspect is heresy, in the etymological sense of the term, from the Greek *airesis*: choice. [...].

In recent times, however, even large sectors of Catholic theology have allowed themselves to be conditioned more or less consciously by this model. It should be said with conviction, and not for a mere *captatio benevolentiae*, that recent theology has also produced notable and, probably, lasting fruits. For example, it has brought greater balance to certain ways of presenting doctrine, which also run the risk of being unilateral. Thus, in moral theology, there has been a certain emphasis on the intention of the subject alongside the act carried out; in sacramental and liturgical theology, there is an emphasis on grace and the interior participation of believers with respect to the celebration of the ritual; in ecclesiology there has been a better recovery of the mystical element alongside the institutional aspect, etc. But in attempting such a rebalancing, it has often taken us to the other extreme. In the present context it has produced a spiritualistic reading of the Christian faith that in its ultimate outcome, probably unforeseen and unintended, denies the Incarnation of the Word.

The supreme synthesis that has been ruptured is thus, before any other, that between God and man in Jesus Christ, the cause and model of every other synthetic composition of the faith. By detaching the Word from the flesh, Jesus is left as a Palestinian man of the first century: an “apocalyptic prophet” that lived in the Second Temple period. Holy Scripture, then, is no longer the “matter” permeated by the invisible presence of the Holy Spirit that has inspired it, but remains only a human book, to be read and interpreted like all other ancient books of the Middle and Near East. Exegesis becomes only historical-critical, researching the literal sense of the Bible, while the other senses of Scripture are completely forgotten. The synthesis between Spirit and matter is reduced: the writing remains a merely human product and the Word of God does not resound in it.

And because the Spirit is so impalpable, it will then be the material element on which theology will concentrate: it becomes a theology of this world, of terrestrial realities, of politics, of social liberation, of feminism... God is up there in Heaven, far away: let us concern ourselves with the earth! If theology is to be significant—this is the *slogan* for the battle—then it needs to put its focus on man and the world. It can be said that with the synthesis between Heaven and earth broken, theology becomes deist: God exists and has created the world, but He is far from here and is not interested in us (the *deus otiosus* of the pagan myths returns). We must therefore take care of it ourselves. The responsibility of theology—and also that of the shepherd of souls, or rather, in the language that is approved of today, one must say *leader* of men—is a responsibility not of speaking of what is “spiritual” and invisible, but it is to work for a better world.

Gagliardi, Mauro. *Truth is a Synthesis: Catholic Dogmatic Theology*. Steubenville: Emmaus Academic, 2020.